

From the Editors

David R. Bauer

Inductive Bible study is concerned, of course, with hermeneutics; and hermeneutics is the science of meaning. Thus, one should expect that insights from biblical hermeneutics may be relevant and indeed may potentially inform in a significant way other disciplines in their search for meaning in their respective areas of knowledge. Yet, such an application of insights from biblical hermeneutics to other fields of knowledge has up to this point been practically nonexistent.

This volume of the *Journal* seeks to address this failure in cross-disciplinary conversation. It is particularly appropriate that the cross-fertilization between biblical studies and other academic disciplines should be broached by practitioners of inductive Bible study. For the pioneers of the inductive Bible study movement emphasized that all knowledge in the world is profoundly interconnected, and that one can enter into this vast range of knowledge at any point and move from discipline to discipline, with a view toward experiencing how every sphere of knowledge contributes to all the others. Indeed, the founders of The Biblical Seminary in New York, the institution in which the inductive study of the Bible was originally centered, dreamed of establishing a university in which inductive Bible study would inform every other discipline in the university curriculum, and conversely would be itself informed by every other discipline.

Unfortunately, such an institutional vision never materialized. But the epistemological vision has remained latent in inductive Bible study through the years.

This issue features articles by three scholars who represent diverse disciplines. But they share an understanding of, and enthusiasm for,

inductive Bible study; all of them took significant work in inductive Bible study during their seminary educations. And they share, too, a desire to see the insights of the inductive study of the Bible inform their own disciplines.

Dr. Lindy D. Backues explores ways in which biblical hermeneutics intersects with the hermeneutics associated with the social sciences, and especially with cultural anthropology. Both are concerned with the interpretation of narratives. For even the portions of the Bible that belong to genres other than narrative have a profound narrative sub-text. And cultural anthropology is concerned with the narratives embedded within human societies. Here Backues unveils the vast areas of overlap between the study of the Bible and the study of indigenous cultures. This article is actually the first of three installments from Backues. The other articles will appear in subsequent issues of the *Journal*, and will more specifically apply the principles of inductive Bible study to cultural anthropology.

Dr. Kenneth W. Brewer considers the contribution of inductive Bible study to systematic theology. Brewer notes the incongruity between the claim made by virtually all Christian bodies that their beliefs are based upon the Bible and the reality of increasingly disparate doctrinal views among them. Brewer traces this diversity in doctrinal formulations on the side of theologians to the (often unacknowledged) role of philosophical and ideological influences in the development of doctrine, and on the side of biblical scholars to the multiplicity of exegetical methods and hermeneutical perspectives. Brewer insists that inductive Bible study offers assistance in that it insists upon reading the biblical text on its own terms, with a process that seeks to reflect the very character of the text itself; it can thus lead the Church, in its various theological manifestations, to a consensual way of interpreting the Bible that will at least mitigate the chaos of multiple and sometimes conflicting doctrinal construals.

Finally, Dr. Anthony J. Headley probes the ways in which inductive biblical study, especially as presented in *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics*, by David R. Bauer

and Robert A. Traina,¹ can inform the field of counseling. Headley probes the similarities between the documentary character of the biblical text and document-like nature of human beings, and insists that these similarities form a bridge between inductive biblical hermeneutics and the practice of counseling. Such a bridge is suggested also by the consideration that both biblical study and counseling focus upon the meaning of language; insofar as counseling centers on verbal interactions with the counselee, the interpretation of discourse is just as central to the therapist as it is to the biblical interpreter.

A final note is in order regarding the sequencing of the volumes of *The Journal of Inductive Biblical Studies*. The present issue of *JIBS* is the Winter Volume 6 No. 1 for 2019. Despite appearances, we have not skipped Volume 5; rather, Volume 5 is a dedicated stand-alone paper-printed collection of essays in Honor of Robert A. Traina: *Method in Teaching Inductive Bible Study—A Practitioner’s Handbook* that also contains 54 pages of unpublished material by Dr. Traina, “Method in Bible Teaching,” courtesy of his surviving children. In the volume, twenty-one essays treat Traina’s Pedagogy; IBS and the Academy; IBS Impacting the Curriculum; Pedagogy, Assessments, and Technology; and Developing Disciples with IBS in the Church. Appendices include a number of syllabi for undergraduate and graduate level courses.

This book honoring Dr. Traina is the first of the new *JIBS* Monograph Series published by GlossaHouse and will be released in the early Spring 2019. Contributions in order of appearance are made by David R. Bauer, Fredrick J. Long, Chris A. Kiesling, Kenneth L. Schenck, Eugene E. Lemcio, John Dendui, Gareth Lee Cockerill, Dorothy Jean Weaver, John N. Oswalt, Lindy D. Backues, Michael D. Matlock, Rick Boyd, Mark Cannon, Alan J. Meenan, Eugene Wen Zhi Quek, Chad M. Foster, and Matt Friedeman. This book provides a breadth of information for the implementation of IBS in the classroom, curriculum, and church from the leading educators and pastors who have been formed by the pedagogy and IBS methodology of Dr. Traina.

¹ David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina, *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).