

JOHN ALBERT BENDEL'S GNOMON AND "CHIASMUS"

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Around 1740 Johann Albrecht Bengel urged New Testament exegetes to recognize the presence of chiasmus in New Testament texts and to pursue exegesis of such passages based on the rhetorical force of their chiastic forms. A century later some English and American New Testament scholars translated the work containing this exhortation, *Gnomon of the New Testament*, from Latin¹ into English², and a few other British scholars³ began to pay heed to Bengel's views on seeing and responding exegetically to chiasmus. Beyond its early acceptance in the scholarly community, Bengel's *Gnomon* gained enduring popularity among pastors and laymen, as is apparent from its having motivated a series of English translations, some of which went through multiple "editions" or reprints even up to the present. Consequently, the question of this paper is why, given such historical popularity of the *Gnomon* and its emphasis on chiasmus, do pastors and laymen remain so uninformed about biblical chiasmus⁴, and

¹ *Joannis Bengelii Gnomon Novi Testamenti, in quo, ex nativa Verborum Vi, Simplicitas, Profunditas, Concinnitas, et Salubritas sensuum coelestium indicatur.*

² *Johann Albrecht Bengel's Gnomon of the New Testament, in which, from the natural force of the words, the simplicity, depth, harmony, and saving power of the heavenly meanings, is indicated.*

³ John Jebb, 1820; Thomas Boys, 1824; John Forbes, 1854.

⁴ I have only anecdotal support for this claim, but the reader may easily find confirmation by asking friends at church about chiasmus: What is it? Where is it used in the Bible? What is its importance?

why do contemporary scholars⁵ exhibit hesitation to identify chiasmic forms in biblical text and to do exegesis on that basis?

I. THE FORCE OF LANGUAGE

John Bengel (1687-1752), a Lutheran pietist educator and classicist, spent most of his career at the cloister school of Tübingen preparing future seminarians.⁶ Prior to the *Gnomon*, he distinguished himself primarily by his edition of the New Testament with *Apparatus Criticus* (1734).⁷ The scholarly acclaim given to this project⁸ was continued by that given to the *Gnomon* upon its publication in Latin in 1742.⁹ This exegetical commentary included, in places, Bengel's more recent preferences of Greek textual readings, thus providing an addendum to the *Apparatus*, yet the *Gnomon* easily stood out on its own merits as his *magnum opus*. Translators have retained the term "gnomon" in the English titles of the work partly due to the difficulty of finding an English equivalent and partly because "gnomon" describes the intent of this work: it roughly means "pointer," as in the pointer on a sun dial. John Bengel wanted to "point to" the meanings important Greek words, phrases, and rhetorical forms in the New Testament text which should govern exegetical work, but Bengel himself did not intend to provide

⁵ Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 1982; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 1991; Robert C. Tannehill, *Luke*, 1996; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 1997.

⁶ Andrew R. Fausset provides an intimate and extensive biography of John Bengel in his second preface to vol. 5 of his translation.

⁷ Johann Albrecht Bengel, *HKAINH ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ. Novum Testamentum Græcum ita adornatum ut Textus probatarum editionem medullam, Margo variantium lectionum in suas classes distributarum locorumque parallelorum delectum, apparatus subjunctus criseos sacræ Millianæ præsertim compendium limam supplementum ac fractum exhibeat, inserviente J.A.B.*, Tübingen, 1734 (4 vols.)

⁸ From which today he is often considered the father of New Testament textual criticism.

⁹ *Joannis Bengelii Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, Tübingen, 1742.

a thorough exegesis. Consequently the *Gnomon*¹⁰ proceeds structurally not by analysis of logical units such as pericopes, arguments, paragraphs, or sentences, but by commentary (gnomons, or, if one prefers, *gnoma*) on the words and phrases of individual verses sequentially throughout the New Testament.

In Bengel's lengthy Author's Preface he lays out his intentions for the commentary. In his dense Latin the "Praefatio Auctora" extends to 23 pages, divided into 27 sections, some of which run on for a few pages. Fausset gives a complete translation of the "Author's Preface," and in English it extends to a mere 61 pages. From my analysis of this Preface, Bengel's intentions, or emphases, for the work can be summarized as follows, starting from the most important based on the space Bengel devotes to each:

1. To exegete an authoritative Greek text, with choices among textual variants made on the basis of a rigorous methodology. (Author's Preface, Sections VIII, IX, and X, amounting to 30 pages of English text.)
2. To "exhibit the exact *force of the language* employed by any sacred writer,"¹¹ including Greek modes of emphasis, Hebraisms, and rhetorical forms. (Author's Preface, Sections IV, VII, XIV, XV, and XXIV.)
3. To put forward a specific interpretation of the Apocalypse, while studiously avoiding taking sides on other theological controversies. (Author's Preface, Sections XXII and VI.)

¹⁰The term "*Gnomon*" describes the whole work as well as each of Bengel's comments on the Greek in discrete verses of the New Testament, as in "the Gnomon on Luke 9:51."

¹¹ Fausset, *Gnomon*, 7.

This paper asks and answers a question related to Bengel's second concern: "pointing to" Hebraisms, including chiasmus, in the Greek New Testament. In his Preface¹² he states "Especial advantage, however, is obtained from a consideration of . . . the Hebrew style, and the $\chi\iota\alpha\sigma\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$ [chiasmus], which is of the greatest service in explaining the economy of the whole Epistle to the Hebrews."¹³ In the gnomon on Hebrews 1:4 he offers, ". . . [T]heir [Jewish] teachers greatly delight in this figure of speech in their writings. Therefore the [author] has adapted his style to the Hebrews . . ."¹⁴ And in the Index of Technical Terms Bengel clarifies that "The diction of the New Testament is not pure Greek; and it imitates the Hebrew usage . . . *in single words; . . . in forms of speech and phrases; . . . in grammatical figures; . . . in the universal (general) form of the Language.*"

According to Bengel, chiasmus is a "figurative mode of speaking" involving the rhetorical arrangement of "two pairs of words or propositions" having either "direct" or "inverted" relationship between the pairs.¹⁵ Direct chiasmus, paraphrasing with modern notation, would have the form ABA'B', and by more recent scholarship would be called parallelism, not chiasmus, while inverted chiasmus would have the form ABB'A', which by more recent scholarship would be generally known as chiasmus.¹⁶

¹² For ease of reference, "Bengel" and the "Gnomon" will refer in what follows to passages in Fausset's English translation of Bengel's *Gnomon*, unless otherwise stated. Andrew R. Fausset, Ed., *Gnomon of the New Testament*, Edingurgh,: T. & T. Clark, 1858, 5 vols.

¹³ Fausset, *Gnomon*, vol.1, 64.

¹⁴ Fausset, *Gnomon*, vol.5, 343.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 411.

¹⁶ Fausset, *Gnomon*, vol.5, 396-97. In more modern discussion (such as Lund, *Chiasmus*, viii-ix, and Dorsey, *Literary Structure*, 17f.), only the second of these is considered chiasmus, yet this does not diminish the strength of Bengel's advocacy of chiasmus. Others, such as John Breck (*The shape of Biblical Language* [Crestwood, NJ:SVSP, 1994], 18) limit "chiasmus" to a rhetorical form having an odd number of units, thus creating an unpaired center unit.

As a Hebraism, chiasmus received four kinds of emphasis in the *Gnomon*: 1) In Section XXIV of the author's lengthy introduction, he highlights the "especial advantage" gained by the exegete in noticing chiasmus and in using it to explain the meaning of biblical texts.¹⁷ 2) Moreover, in the gnomons on many specific New Testament verses he highlights the presence of chiasmus, and sometimes shows how it would influence exegesis. 3) Most of these uses of "chiasmus" are footnoted, directing the reader to an Index of Technical Terms appended to volume five, in which the term "chiasmus" receives three pages of explanation, including an exhortation to pay heed to this form in the hermeneutical process.¹⁸ 4) Finally, the Index of Subjects, Observations, and Authors includes the subject "chiasmus," giving a list of occurrences. This list, however, does not give a full accounting of all the times Bengel pointed to "chiasmus" in the body of the work. To remedy this, Appendix III of this article provides a new, exhaustive index of Bengel's references to "Chiasmus," along with some instances in which he notes the form without applying this term to it.

Among the scholars whose interest in John Bengel's *Gnomon* led them to translate it into English were John Wesley, Andrew R. Fausset and his collaborators, Charleton T. Lewis with Marvin R. Vincent, and finally William L. Blackley with James Hawes. I will discuss Fausset first, using it as a baseline for comparison to the others because it is both a complete translation (versus Wesley) and completely faithful to Bengel's Latin *Gnomon* (versus both Lewis-Vincent and Blackley-Hawes). I will comment on each

¹⁷ Quoted above.

translation in terms of the *Gnomon's* four emphases on chiasmus (in Fausset's translation) as listed above.

II. THE FAUSSET TRANSLATION

Andrew R. Fausset's five volume edition¹⁹ is the first complete translation and the most faithful to Bengel's project. Based on the second Latin edition (1759), edited by M. Ernst Bengel and supplemented with notes by J. C. F. Steudal in the 1830s, Fausset's English edition came out in 1857-58 with the help of three other translators.²⁰ Additionally, the editor gleaned relevant remarks from John Bengel's other theological writings and included them in the appropriate gnomon either in brackets or as footnotes. Due to the immense popularity of Bengel's work²¹, six more editions came out in England from 1859 to 1877. The publishers Wipf & Stock still offer a paperback reprint.

Fausset and his team of translators, "executed the translation with all possible pains and accuracy"²², excluding almost nothing from the Latin edition of 1759. Indeed, it is from Fausset's edition alone that English scholars who read little or no Latin (or German) have access to Bengel's explanation and emphasis on chiasmus in biblical text: the Author's Preface; the gnomons on particular verses of the New Testament

¹⁸ See Appendix I. Bengel's original Latin index of terminology, titled "*Index Terminorum Technicorum*," was written by his brother-in-law, John Albert Burk and was included with Bengel's full approval. In his Preface, the author twice points out to the reader the value of the "indexes" (Fausset, *Gnomon*, 64, 65).

¹⁹ *Johann Albrecht Bengel's Gnomon of the New Testament*, Ed. Andrew R. Fausset (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clarke, 1858) 5 vols.

²⁰ James Bandinel, James Bryce, William Fletcher

²¹ Even though it was generally accepted that Bengel's theological treatment of the Apocalypse was deeply flawed, Fausset and his collaborators chose to translate the offending material faithfully, with only a special Introduction to the Apocalypse to reveal many of the limitations of this part of the *Gnomon*.

²² Fausset, *Gnomon*, vol. 1, vi.

containing (in Bengel's opinion) this rhetorical form; the Index of Technical Terms with a lengthy entry explaining "Chiasmus;" and the Index of Subjects, Observations, and Authors. Since this translation provides the *complete* text of Bengel's *Gnomon*, I have taken it as the standard of comparison for the other three English translations. I turn now to a much earlier translation.

III. JOHN WESLEY'S "TRANSLATION"

Already in 1754 John Wesley provided for his Bible study groups and preachers a verse-by-verse commentary on the New Testament.²³ In the author's Preface, he describes his source material:

"I once designed to write down, barely what occurred to my mind, consulting none but the inspired writers. But no sooner was I acquainted with that great light of the Christian world (lately gone to his reward) *Bengelius*, than I entirely changed my design, being thoroughly convinced, it might be of service to the cause of religion, were I barely to translate his *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, than to write down many volumes upon it. Many of his excellent notes have I therefore translated. Many more have I abridged; omitting that part which was purely critical, and giving the substance of the rest."²⁴

Wesley's *Explanatory Notes* enjoyed great popularity both in England and America, coming out in many editions until the late 1800s. Wesley put out a series of "corrected" editions, but within decades antiquarian interests had publishers reissuing the 1754

²³ Wesley, John, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (London: Kelly, 1754), (New York: Carlton & Lanahan, 1754).

²⁴ Wesley, *Notes*, v.

edition in England and America. This earliest edition may still be purchased in modern reprints.

John Wesley, however, omitted *more* than “that part which was merely critical.” He provided the reader no orientation to Bengel’s purpose, scope, and uniqueness in the *Gnomon* (in other words, its Preface), thereby passing in silence any introduction to the presence and value of chiasmus in the New Testament. Nor were any of the *Gnomon*’s three indices included (Hebrew and Greek Words; Technical Terms; Subjects, Observations, and Authors), undoubtedly because Wesley’s purpose was more pragmatic, less academic. In the body of his *Explanatory Notes*, in the places where John Bengel identified chiasmus, John Wesley chose not to speak of these observations. Only in the places where his source found the largest and most elegant examples of chiasmus did Wesley also point them out, such as at Romans 2:17-20, Philippians 4:8, Hebrews 11:32-33, and Hebrews, 12:18-24, but providing only partial and rather vague translations and explanations.

Wesley’s admitted heavy dependence on the *Gnomon* in *Explanatory Notes* endeared John Bengel to Methodist exegetes for more than a century. These same exegetes, however, (unless they studied the Latin *Gnomon*) had almost no introduction through Wesley to chiasmus in the New Testament nor to Bengel’s advocacy of its value for exegetes.

IV. THE LEWIS AND VINCENT TRANSLATION

On the other side of the Atlantic, two scholars at Troy University in New York, Charleton Lewis and Marvin Vincent, brought out in 1860 a somewhat different edition

of Bengel.²⁵ ²⁶ In his Introduction, Charleton Lewis said, referring no doubt to Fausset's edition published two years earlier,

A translation of Bengel's Latin, without revision, would be of little value, save to scholars, who already have access to the original. For, not to speak of mere deficiencies, it contains too many acknowledged errors, both of criticism and of exposition, to be safely put in the hands of students. It was written one hundred and twenty years ago; and more mind and toil have been given to these subjects since, than in all time before. Their outlines, indeed, have only been drawn more clearly; but many lesser views have been changed, many discoveries made.

These often supplement Bengel, sometimes contradict him. And although in his style of exposition, his profound anatomy of words and thoughts, he still stands unrivalled; though he anticipated the best general features of the latest commentaries; yet he could not anticipate the detailed results of a century's research and discussion.²⁷

. . . But one course remains for the editor of Bengel. He must translate Bengel's text as it is, connecting with it such extracts from other writers as will guard the reader against views now refuted; and will further give some hints of the results of more modern criticism and exegesis. If less were done, the work would be

²⁵ *John Albert Bengel's Gnomon of the New Testament*, Charleton T. Lewis, Marvin R. Vincent (Philadelphia: Perkinpine & Higgins, 1860) 2 vols.

²⁶ The third edition of 1888 has been reprinted by Kregel in its 1971 publication, titled *New Testament Word Studies*.

²⁷ Lewis, *John Albert Bengel's Gnomon*, vol.1, 5.

very imperfect; if more were attempted, it would become rather a new book than an edition of Bengel.²⁸

Consequently, Lewis²⁹ took the step of editing out and editing in based on these “detailed results . . . of research and discussion:”

The chief value of the Gnomon is in its exposition of Scripture. I have striven to increase its value, by adding, in the most condensed form, such of the most valuable remarks of the best modern commentators as the plan of the Gnomon admits; those which open *the force of the words* of Scripture.³⁰

This meant changing a number of Bengel’s Greek textual preferences based on other ancient manuscripts, as well as extensively revising and correcting Bengel’s treatment of the Apocalypse. Among the places in the body of the *Gnomon* where Bengel pointed out instances of chiasmus, Lewis dropped five of them in favor of more authoritative textual variants which did not supply all the words or phrases that Bengel saw as constituting a chiasmus. And at Hebrews 12:18-24 Lewis simply disagreed with Bengel’s observations. Beyond these, Lewis retained all of Bengel’s frequent notices about the presence of chiasmus in the New Testament.

Lewis did, however, shorten the “Index of Technical Terms” where it spoke of the term “chiasmus.” The entry “Chiasmus” in Lewis³¹ is only about 25% as long as the

²⁸Lewis, *John Albert Bengel’s Gnomon*, vol.1, 6.

²⁹ Charleton Lewis had editorial responsibility for additions and deletions; Marvin Vincent shared the translation duties with Lewis.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Lewis, *John Albert Bengel’s Gnomon*, vol.2, 938-39.

same index entry in Fausset³² or in the Latin editions, leaving out all examples given in the original as well as a paragraph of exhortation on behalf of exegesis based on chiasmus. The reader may compare these index articles from Fausset and Lewis in the appendices to this paper.

V. THE BLACKLEY AND HAWES "TRANSLATION"

Charleton Lewis had said in his preface to *John Albert Bengel's Gnomon of the New Testament* that "This work will serve the English reader as a *Critical New Testament*."³³ Back in England in 1866, William L. Blackley and James Hawes brought out another translation entitled, perhaps borrowing the phrase from Lewis, "The Critical English Testament: Being an Adaptation of Bengel's Gnomon, with Numerous Notes, Showing the Precise Results of Modern Criticism and Exegesis."³⁴ Even though this subtitle calls it an "Adaptation," the work's Preface, in listing its distinct features, offers the CET as "An entirely new translation of the Gnomon itself . . . of the original Latin work."³⁵

The Preface goes on to point out ways in which the *Gnomon* is adapted to "general" English readers (thus the word "English" in its title): the Authorized English Version³⁶ replaces Bengel's critical Greek New Testament as the foundation of word order; and various changes and additions are included to avoid what previous the CET's content; consequently the AV's word order is the standard of reference rather than the Greek

³² Fausset, *Gnomon*, vol.5, 396-99.

³³ Lewis, *John Albert Bengel's Gnomon*, vol.1, 7.

³⁴ William L. Blackley and James Hawes, *The Critical English Testament*, London, Alexander Strahan, 1866, hereafter referred to as CET.

³⁵ Blackley, CET, viii

³⁶ Popularly known in the United States as the King James Version.

translations had not – “the author’s very terse Latinity.”³⁷ Given that John Bengel’s first two purposes as expressed in his Author’s Preface³⁸ were to provide learned commentary on an authoritative Greek text and to “exhibit the *exact force of the language* employed by any sacred writer,”³⁹ which was the Greek language, Blackley and Hawes invite the question as to whether their’s has now become an essentially different book than the source book. Blackley claims “to set forth to the public . . . a Critical New Testament, so compiled as to enable the reader, unacquainted with Greek, to ascertain the exact English force and meaning of the New Testament”⁴⁰ Bengel’s work explained the Greek biblical text; Blackley’s, the English. Bengel intended to explain the force and meaning of Greek words, syntax, and tropes, while Blackley hoped for a less detailed but still powerful explanation of the Authorized Version. Perhaps Blackley’s “adaptation” is the right description after all, and perhaps with the added modifier “loose.”

Beyond the points above, with regard to Bengel’s concern to highlight and exegete instances of chiasmus, the CET falls very short of its claim to present the *Gnomon* “*without any abridgement or omission*” [my emphasis], except for arguments based upon readings since proved corrupt, and abandoned by the general consent of theological scholars.”⁴¹ Instead it even offers certain obstacles to the general English readers in noticing, understanding, and making exegetical use of chiasmus, such as the following.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ See above, p. 3.

³⁹ Fausset, *Gnomon*, 7

⁴⁰ Blackley, CET, viii

⁴¹ Ibid.

Blackley and Hawes provide no end matter at all in CET, neither index of subjects and authors nor an index of technical terms. In place of the latter, attempts are made in the CET to provide brief explanations of rhetorical terms as they arise in the body of the work. Where Bengel pointed out chiasmus in his gnomons on the biblical text,⁴² Blackley and Hawes provide explanatory language that is either vague or inconsistent, or both, or provide none at all. The most complete and helpful explanation, if it may be called that, of an instance of chiasmus occurs in the commentary on 2 Corinthians 2:16: “If we put the antecedents and consequences side by side in this verse, we find a *chiasmus* [χιασμός means a cross relation of words, or clauses, coupled together: taken from the shape of the X].”⁴³

But for the vast majority of Bengel’s “pointers” to chiasmus in the Greek text, the CET provides the following language as explanations (listed from most frequently used, 17 times, to least frequently used, one time):

“cross reference”

“chiasmus”

[no explanatory terms]

“cross reference of pairs of words or clauses”

“cross reference of clauses”

“retrograde order”

“cross reference of pairs of words”

⁴² With the exception of a few instances when, like Lewis and Vincent, the CET disallows chiasmus based on older textual readings following Tischendorf.

⁴³ Blackley, CET, 507.

“in inverse order”

In other words, the general English reader of the CET receives almost no useful information about the “force and meaning”⁴⁴ of instances of chiasmus in the New Testament, neither its nature, rhetorical force, nor exegetical usefulness.

VI. STUMBLING BLOCKS

The translators of all four English versions of the Latin *Gnomon* give Bengel high praise for his grasp of the language of the New Testament as well as due credit for Bengel’s incisive exegetical observations. This, indeed, is why the *Gnomon* was frequently translated, widely relied upon, and frequently reprinted for over 250 years. Yet all of these translators advise the readers of one or two weaknesses of the *Gnomon* which were widely acknowledged.

All but Wesley⁴⁵ advised readers that the very field of scholarship for which Bengel was the “father,” textual criticism, had moved ahead so energetically that new discoveries by other scholars into the oldest and best Greek New Testament manuscripts either weakened or denied some of Bengel’s conclusions on which manuscripts to follow when dealing with variant textual readings. Fausset was aware of these questions, but thought that Tischendorf’s Edition of 1849, for example, had not “satisfactorily” disproved Bengel’s textual preferences.⁴⁶ Consequently, Fausset made no “improvements” on Bengel’s scholarship, adhering closely to the Latin *Gnomon* in his translation. Both the Lewis and Vincent and the Blackley and Hawes translations,

⁴⁴ Blackley, CET, viii.

⁴⁵ Who lacked hindsight due to being a near contemporary of Bengel.

⁴⁶ Fausset, *Gnomon*, ix, note.

however, made substantial emendations of Bengel in favor of manuscript evidence advocated by Tischendorf, and others.⁴⁷ But with regard to transmitting forward to English readers Bengel's educational project of recognizing and doing exegesis of chiasmus, these emendations of the *Gnomon* resulted in only a few instances of nullifying his advocacy.

What may have been more damaging to Bengel's efforts to highlight chiasmus was his treatment of the Apocalypse. Uncharacteristically compared to the rest of the *Gnomon*, Bengel had a theological agenda in his treatment of the final New Testament book: not only did he provide gnomons for its entire text, he also wanted to assert and defend his historicist view on the structure of the Apocalypse, a chiliastic (or premillennial) scheme of interpretation which set the parousia of Christ for June of the year 1836.

Following 1836, of course, his view was disproven. But what were the translators of this otherwise invaluable resource to do?⁴⁸ While Fausset remained committed to a full and accurate translation of Bengel's Latin, Lewis and Vincent abbreviated these argumentative sections and "freely used Alford's Commentary in our additions to the *Gnomon* . . .",⁴⁹ but Blackley and Hawes here made a complete break from Bengel:

This book, therefore, has been rewritten on the plan of the rest of the *Gnomon*, and the labors of many writers in the special field of unfulfilled prophecy have

⁴⁷ Lewis, *John Albert Bengel's Gnomon*, 7, and Blackley, CET, vii-viii.

⁴⁸ Even Newton, writing a century before Fausset, abridged Bengel's comments on the Apocalypse, but justifying this on practical considerations: "It did not suit my design to insert these: They are above the capacity of ordinary readers. Nor had I room to insert the entire translation of a book which contains near twelve hundred pages." Wesley, *Notes*, 650.

been laid under contribution to make this part of the Critical New Testament accord in scope and utility with the rest, while avoiding the errors of too curious computation which disfigured the original.⁵⁰

With regard to Bengel's educational side project in the *Gnomon*, that of training exegetes to recognize and exploit ancient rhetorical forms in the New Testament, in particular its Hebraisms, and among them chiasmus, this eschatological issue had a practical effect on the readers of the volume and on libraries which contained it: volume five of Fausset or Lewis, still containing either all (Fausset) or part (Lewis) of his treatment of the Apocalypse, has so fallen out of favor that this volume is difficult to find for sale with volumes one through four. Even in academic library collections volume five is frequently missing. As a result, readers often have no easy access to Bengel's Index of Technical Terms, in its complete form (Fausset) or in its highly abridged form (Lewis). Only in that Index, in the article on chiasmus, does the reader gain a full appreciation for Bengel's advocacy of the presence, power, and exegetical use of chiasmus in the New Testament.

VII. CONCLUSION

These two stumbling blocks, Bengel's text-critical decisions in some passages and his blending of a discredited eschatology with his gnomons on the Apocalypse, have to some degree eroded confidence in his otherwise highly praised work. For some readers, this may have been enough red flags to turn them away from what Bengel had to say

⁴⁹ Lewis, *John Albert Bengel's Gnomon*, 833.

⁵⁰ Blackley, CET, ix.

about chiasmus. Yet to a much larger degree, the key factor is the translator. The failure of most translations to bring to their readers Bengel's clear idea of the presence, power, and exegetical use of chiasmus lies with the translators of his work into English. Wesley wanted a clear and simple commentary for the "unlearned" and "ordinary reader"⁵¹, one unburdened with text critical discussions and unburdened with discussion of ancient rhetorical devices. Blackley and Hawes wanted a commentary for the "general" English reader, who not only would prefer English over Greek and would prefer the Authorized Version over a critical edition, but also apparently, to the minds of the translators, had the same distaste as did Wesley's leaders for Hebraisms and rhetorical devices such as chiasmus.

Lewis and Vincent kept almost everything of Bengel's in place, with the exception of dramatically shortening his article on Chiasmus in the Index of Technical Terms. In particular, they left out of the article every reference but two to places in the New Testament where Bengel identified the form to his readers, and they left out an entire paragraph of exhortation on the value of doing exegesis based on the presence of chiasmus. They seem to have taken every intention set out in the Author's Preface, that is, other than that of providing to the Church an exegetical commentary, as misguided in some way. Some of Bengel's preferences on Greek textual variants lacked the brilliance of Tischendorf's preferences, so they modified the *Gnomon* to reflect Tischendorf. For Bengel's discredited explanation of the Apocalypse they supplied instead Alford's explanation. And as to Bengel's second passion concerning the force of

⁵¹ Wesley, *Explanatory Notes*, 4

the words of the New Testament writers, they stripped a key element of his advocacy, the article on “Chiasmus,” stripped it both of its passion and its specificity.

The primary issue in the failure of this and other translations to bring forward to their readers Bengel’s clear idea of the presence, power, and exegetical use of chiasmus has been *the apparent disinterest of the translators* in doing so. These popular English translations of the *Gnomon* edited out most, or the most compelling, of what Bengel had to say about the presence of chiasmus in the biblical text and its use in exegesis. Thus from most English translations of this seminal resource on biblical chiasmus, laypersons, pastors, and scholars receive little motivation and training in seeing and explaining the force of chiasmus in the biblical text.

APPENDIX I:
BENGEL/FAUSSET “INDEX OF TECHNICAL TERMS”⁵²

CHIASMUS, *σχῆμα χιαστόν*, *decuasata oratio*, *αλληλούχια*, has its name from the Greek letter x, which is as it were the type (mould), according to which the sentence or words seem to be arranged. It is a figurative mode of speaking, when *two pairs* of words or propositions are so arranged, as that the attentive reader may understand that a relation subsists between both words or propositions of *the former* pair, and both words or propositions of *the latter* pair.

I. CHIASMUS is observed as being either *direct* or *inverted*,

Direct CHIASMUS is, when the *former* word or proposition in the first pair ought to be referred to the *former* word or proposition in the second pair: and the *latter* word or proposition in the first pair is, to be referred to the *latter* word or proposition in the second pair.

Inverted CHIASMUS is, when the *former* word or proposition in the first pair ought to be referred to the *latter* word or proposition in the second pair: and the *latter* word or proposition in the first pair ought to be referred to the *former* word or proposition in the second pair.

In a word: Let there be two pairs: A and B, C and D. If the relation is of the A to the C, and of the B to the D, there is a *direct* Chiasmus. If the relation is of the A to the D, and of the B to the C, it is *inverted* Chiasmus. If the relation is of the A to the B, and of the C to the D, then there IS NO *Chiasmus*, but the RELATION is IMMEDIATE. There are not found more than these three cases, which I will now make plain by as simple an Example as possible; In the Epistle to Philemon, ver. 5, we have an *inverted Chiasmus* (Comp. the Gnom.),— *ἀκούων σου* A) *τὴν ἀγάπην* B) *καὶ τὴν πίστιν, ν ἔχεις* C) *πρὸς τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν* D) *καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἀγίους.* A) is connected with D), *love—to all the saints:* B) is connected with C), the *faith* which thou hast in *the Lord Jesus*.

Let us imagine the *direct* Chiasmus: *ἀκούων σου* A) *τὴν ἀγάπην* B) *καὶ τὴν πίστιν, ν ἔχεις* C) *εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἀγίους,* D) *καὶ πρὸς τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν.* A) is connected with C), and B) with D).

Now let the four members proceed in the order which is without *Chiasmus*:— *ἀκούων σου* A) *τὴν πίστιν ν ἔχεις* B) *εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἀγίους,* C) *καὶ τὴν πίστιν* D) *πρὸς τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν.*

This is the order in which the apostle himself has made the words to proceed, in writing to the Ephesians, ch. i. 15 ; — — *ἀκούσας* A) *τὴν καθ' ὑμᾶς πίστιν* B) *ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ,* C) *καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην* D) *τὴν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἀγίους.* —So A) is joined with B), and C) with D).

Another most clear example of *inverted Chiasmus* is Matt. xii. 22, *ὥστε* A) *τὸν τυφλὸν* B) *καὶ κωφὸν* C) *καὶ λαλεῖν* D) *καὶ βλέπειν.*

II. Now let us see some other examples: Matt. v. 44, *ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν* A) *ἀγαπάτε* — — B) *εὐλογεῖτε* — — C) *καλῶς ποιεῖτε* — — D) *καὶ προσεύχεσθε.* This is a *direct Chiasmus*; of which even a trace is still to be observed in ver. 46, 47, *ἀγαπήσητε* — *ἀσπάσησθε* (*salute*). Therefore the four members are arranged in two pairs, of which this is the mutual relation,: A) and C); then B) and D). That the Chiasmus in this passage is not a mere work of the imagination, the relation of Luke attests, which makes the four first members advance in this order: A) *ἀγαπάτε* — B) *καλῶς ποιεῖτε* — C) *εὐλογεῖτε* — *προσεύχεσθε* (the true order without

⁵² Fausset, *Gnomon*, v.5, 396-99.

Chiasmus).—Ch. vii. 27, 28; with which comp. ver. 32, etc.—John v. 21—27:

A) ver. 21. ὡςπερ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ἐγείρει — — οὐς θέλει ζωοποιεῖ.

B) ver. 22. οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ κρίνει οὐδένα — — τὸν πέμψαντα αὐτόν.

C) ver. 24. ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁ τὸν λόγον — — θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν.

D) ver. 25. ἀμ. ἀμ. λ. ὑ. ὅτι ἔρχεται ὥρα — — καὶ οἱ ἀκούσαντες ζήσουσιν.

There are four members: A) concerning quickening, B) concerning judging, C) concerning judgment or condemnation, D) concerning the resurrection. Therefore **it** is an instance of *inverted Chiasmus*. The Gnom. on the passage. Furthermore,

E) ver. 26 ὡςπερ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ — ἐν ἑαυτῷ

F) ver. 27 καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ — — ἐστίν

G) ver. 28 ὅτι ἔρχεται ὥρα — — καὶ ἐκπορεύονται

H) ver. 29 οἱ τὰ ἀγαθὰ — — ἀνάστασιν κρίσεως

Here again there are four members: E) concerning life, F) concerning judgment, (G) concerning the resurrection, H) concerning judgment or condemnation. It is therefore a *direct Chiasmus*. Hence there results a double series pervading nine verses:

A—D—E—G, and B—C—F—H.

Acts xx. 21, διαμαρτυρούμενος A) Ἰουδαίοις τε καὶ B) Ἕλλησι τὴν εἰς τὸν θεὸν μετάνοιαν, D) καὶ πίστιν εἰς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. The relation is between A) and D) and between B) and C): Therefore it is an *inverted Chiasmus*, as above, Philem. ver. 5.—Rom. ix. 24,

οὐκ εἰμι ἐλεύθερος A) ἐξ Ἰουδαίων ἀλλὰ καὶ B) ἐξ ἐθνῶν C) the clause concerning the *Gentiles* is treated of in ver. 25: ὡς καὶ ἐν τῷ Ὡσηέ — — D) that concerning the *Jews* is treated of in ver. 27, Ἡσαΐας δὲ κράζει — —, It is an *inverted Chiasmus*: For the apostle names A) *the Jews*, B) *the Gentiles*; and then treats, *in inverted order*, C) concerning the *Gentiles*, D) concerning the *Jews*.—1 Cor. ix. 1, etc., is an *inverted Chiasmus* according to the view taken in the *Gnomon* on the passage. But the more received reading arranges the two members in the first verse that there results a *direct Chiasmus*. Let us see both:

A) ver. 1, οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος, B) οὐκ εἰμι ἐλεύθερος

C) ver. 2, concerning the *Apostleship*: οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν — —.

D) ver. 4, concerning his *freedom*: μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν — —,

The relation is between A) and C), and between B) and D); therefore it is a *direct Chiasmus*.

A) οὐκ εἰμι ἐλεύθερος; B) οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος;

C) οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν — — D) μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν — —.

The relation is between A) and D), and between B) and C); therefore it is *inverted Chiasmus*.

III. CHIASMUS, taken in a wide sense, exists also in the case of members which exceed the number four: for instance,—Rom. ii. 17. 20, εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπινομάζῃ,

A) καὶ ἐπαναπαύῃ νόμῳ,

B) καὶ καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ,

C) καὶ γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα,

D) καὶ δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα,

E) κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου.

F) πέποιθάς τε σεαυτὸν ὁδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν,

G) φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει,

H) παιδευτήν ἀφρόνων,

I) διδάσκαλον νηπίων,

K) ἔχοντα τὴν μὀρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ — —.

This is a *direct Chiasmus* of ten members, arranged in twice five clauses. It is shown universally, 1) what the Jew assumes to himself: A, B, C, D, E: 2) what more he arrogates to himself in relation to others: F, G, H, I, K. A and F specially correspond; B and G; C and H; D and I; in fine, B and K, *which two at the same time denote the cause of the antecedent members*. See a passage almost the counterpart of this, ch. viii. 34, 38, 39; and Phil. iv. 8, 9. Comp the Gnom.—See an *inverted* or *retrograde* Chiasmus of six members in the Gnom. on 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

IV. Often there is the *greatest* use in the employment of this figure, and it is never without some use, viz., in perceiving the ornament, in observing the force of the language; in understanding the true and full sense; in making clear the sound Exegesis; in demonstrating the true and neat Analysis of the sacred text; as is everywhere shown in the Gnomon. See especially the Gnom, on Heb. i. 4, *τοσοῦτω*, by *so much*, and Bengel's *Evang. Fingerzeig*, Tom. vi. p. 2, *Vorrede von dem Nutzen der gnomonischen Auslegungsart*. § 196, 197.

CHIASMUS is altogether worthy of being observed diligently, and is such that we hope by the knowledge of it hermeneutical studies will be still further assisted. This hope truly can hardly be snatched from us by those who so despise the name and province of Chiasmus, both *direct* and *inverted* [both of which are taught by Bengel], as to deny that it has any weight in investigations of the text: nor even by those who endeavour to accuse of strange novelty the doctrine concerning this class of Figures. For that CHIASMUS, whether *inverted* or *direct*, was both acknowledged and approved of long ago by the learned, I could without difficulty make plain, by the testimonies of Bochart, Crusius, Flacius, Ickenius, Scapula, and others, were it not that I should thus have to transgress the brevity which I have thought desirable to impose on myself.

APPENDIX II:
BENGEL/LEWIS "INDEX OF TECHNICAL TERMS"⁵³

CHIASMUS, so called from the Greek letter *X*, which is, as it were, the figure according to which words seem to be arranged. It is the arrangement of *two pairs* of words or propositions, so that a relation subsists between both words or propositions of *the former* pair, and both words or propositions of *the latter* pair.

I. CHIASMUS is either *direct* or *inverted*.

Direct CHIASMUS is, when the *former* word or proposition in the first pair must be referred to the *former* word or proposition in the second pair; and the *latter* word or proposition in the first pair to the *latter* word or proposition in the second pair. Matt. v. 44, *But I say unto you*. — (A) *love*—(B) *bless*, — (C) *do good*— (D) *and pray*. The relation is A and C, B and D.

Inverted CHIASMUS is, when the *former* word or proposition in the first pair must be referred to the *latter* word or proposition in the second pair; and the *latter* word or proposition in the first pair to the *former* word or proposition in the second pair. Philemon v. 5, *Hearing of*. — (A) *thy love*, (B) *and faith, which thou hast*—(C) *toward the Lord Jesus, and*, (D) *toward all the saints*. A is connected D, B is connected with C.

II. CHIASMUS, in a wide sense may also consist of more than four members: Rom. ii. 17, 20, And if [Eng. Ver., *Behold*] *thou art called a Jew*.

(A) *and resteth in the law,*

(B) *and makest thy boast of God,*

(C) *and knowest his will,*

(D) *and approvest the things that are more excellent,*

(E) *being instructed out of the law,*

(F) *and art confident that thou thyself art a guide to the blind,*

(G) *a light to them which are in darkness,*

(H) *an instructor [sic] of the foolish,*

(I) *a teacher of babes,*

(K) *which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth of the law.*

This is a *direct Chiasmus* of ten members, arranged in twice five clauses. It is shown generally, (1) what the Jew assumes to himself: A, B, C, D, E; (2) what more he arrogates to himself in others: F, G, H, I, K. A and F specially correspond; B and G; C and H; D and I; in fine, E and K, *which two at the same time denote the cause of the antecedent members*.

⁵³ Lewis, *John Albert Bengel's Gnomon*, 938-39.

APPENDIX III:
A NEW AND EXHAUSTIVE INDEX OF "CHIASMUS" IN FAUSSET'S TRANSLATION OF THE
GNOMON

Gnomon	Form	Called "chiasmus" unless otherwise noted:
Matt. 5:44	ABA'B'	"direct chiasmus"
Matt. 12:22	ABB'A'	"inverted chiasmus"
John 1:14	ABB'A'	
John 5:21	ABA'B'	
John 7:37		entertains, but rejects chiasmus here
John 8:25	ABA'B'	
John 10:3	ABB'A'	"inverse Chiasmus"
Acts 2:19	ABA'B'	
Acts 2:46	ABB'A'	not identified as "chiasmus"
Acts 20:21	ABB'A'	"inverted Chiasmus"
Rom. 2:14	ABB'A'	not identified as "chiasmus"
Rom. 2:17-20	ABCDEE'D'C'B'A'	not identified as "chiasmus"
Rom. 6:12	ABB'A'	not identified as "chiasmus"
Rom. 8:32	ABA'B'	not identified as "chiasmus"
Rom. 8:34-39	ABCD'A'B'C'D'	not identified as "chiasmus"
Rom. 11:33,34	ABA'B'	
Rom. 13:13	ABB'A'	
1 Cor. 9:1	ABB'A'	
1 Cor. 13:14	ABA'B'	
1 Cor. 13:5	ABCC'B'A'	adds "retrograde"
2 Cor. 2:15-16	ABB'A'	
2 Cor. 4:1	ABB'A'	
Gal. 4:4,5	ABB'A'	
Gal. 4:25,26	ABA'B'	not identified as "chiasmus"
Eph. 3:16	ABB'A'	
Eph. 3:18	ABA'B'	
Eph. 4:12		"all without a Chiasmus"
Phil. 4:8	ABCD'A'B'C'D'	adds "a manifold and elegant Chiasmus"
Phil. 4:11	ABA'B'	"direct Chiasmus"
Col. 2:18	ABA'B'	
1 Thess. 5:23		"There might be supposed and elegant Chiasmus"
2 Tim. 2:24,25	ABB'A'	
Philem. 5	ABB'A'	
Heb. 1:4	ABA'B'	
Heb. 1:9	ABA'B'	
Heb. 2:9	ABA'B'	
Heb. 2:10-13	ABCC'B'A'	
Heb. 2:17	ABA'B'	
Heb. 3:1	ABA'B'	
Heb. 3:8,9	ABA'B'	

Heb. 3:12-18	ABCC'B'A'	
Heb. 4:14	ABA'B'	
Heb. 4:15	ABA'B'	
Heb. 4:16	ABA'B'	
Heb. 5:7	ABA'B'	
Heb. 6:7	ABB'A'	
Heb. 8:3,4	ABA'B'	
Heb. 8:10	ABA'B'	
Heb. 9:1-5	ABB'A'	
Heb. 10:19-21	ABB'A'	
Heb 10:22-24	ABA'B'	
Heb. 10:33-34	ABB'A'	adds "inverse order"
Heb. 10:38,39	ABB'A'	adds "a very suitable Chiasmus"
Heb. 11:1ff	ABB'A'	
Heb. 11:32,33	ABCDEFGG'F'E'D'C'B'A'	adds "retrograde order"
Heb. 12:18-24	ABCDEFGA'B'C'D'E'F'G'	"sevenfold opposition"
Heb. 12:22-24	ABA'B'	
Heb. 13:10-16	ABB'A'	

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