Kierkegaard's Perception of the Bible*

by ALASTAIR McKINNON

Though there have been a number of studies of Kierkegaard's use and understanding of Scripture[1] we are still far from having any very clear grasp of what might be termed his perception of the Bible; certainly our progress in this area is not at all commensurate with its importance for a thorough understanding of his thought. In this brief study we attempt to lay the foundations for a fundamental grasp of that perception by the apparently simple procedure of showing the extent to which he regarded the various books of the Bible as central and, a different but related matter, the way in which he associated these books with one another. This is done with the help of a three dimensional model which provides a spatial representation of Kierkegaard's perception of these relations. Briefly, proximity to the centre of our model indicates the extent to which a book is central and distance between books the extent to which they are associated with one another.

Theoretically at least these questions could be answered using only the methods of traditional scholarship. This would however involve a careful study of literally hundreds of Scripture references and it is not at all clear that the human mind is capable of storing and collating such a mass of complicated and sometimes conflicting information. Further, as we all unhappily know, the human mind tends to attach particular importance to evidence supporting those theories it already entertains. In the present study we

1 Cf., e. g. P. Guillamore Hansen, *Søren Kierkegaard og Bibelen*, København, 1924 and Paul S. Morimoto, *Kierkegaard and the Bible: An Index*, Princeton, 1953. Cf. also Jørgen Pedersen, "Søren Kierkegaards bibelsyn"; Kalle Sorainen, "Einige Beobachtungen im Bezug auf die lateinischen Übersetzungen Søren Kierkegaards aus dem griechischen Neuen Testament"; and Wolfdietrich v. Kloeden, "Ausformung und Vertiefung von Begriffen bei S. Kierkegaard als Folge seines Bibelstudiums"; all in *Kierkegaardiana* IX.

matrix. Put another way, the task of the computer, or rather of the KYST[3] programme, is to array all these books within a given space so as to provide the best possible representation of their associations as indicated by all the corrected values in our cooccurrence matrix. Thus the extreme proximity of Matt. and Lk. is a function of their very strong tie with one another together with the association of each with every other member in the set. In fact, the programme is designed to provide the optimal representation of all relations between all items giving due weight to every single association in the matrix. In short the programme "puts it all together" and the relation of the books in our model represents a real advance upon the association indices in our corrected matrix. It is perhaps worth adding that these dynamics of the programme are justified by the fact that association, like similarity, is a transitive relation. Briefly, this is why the distances in our model take precedence over the association indices in our matrix.

In this same connection it is perhaps worth noting that books associated with a large number of other books tend to go to the centre of our model while those associated with only one or two others tend to remain on the periphery. This explains why books which are central in our model are also central in Kierkegaard's perception of the Bible; in fact, they are central because they are associated with a relatively large number of other books. This we take as evidence that these books are central in the accepted sense of that term. But more about this in a moment.

Before discussing our results the following points should be noted. Though Minear and Morimoto include references contained in the *Journals*, we have omitted these for the following reasons. The proportion of journal entries then available in English was relatively small and in this respect at least not particularly representative. The *Samlede Værker* is a whole and should be treated as such unless there are good reasons for doing otherwise. Finally, we hope in the future to do a similar study based upon our own machine-readable text of the *Samlede Værker* and naturally wish to be able to make a valid comparison between its results and those of the present study.

---

3 KYST is the acronymic title for the *K*ruskal-*Y*oung-*S*hepard-*T*orgerson Multidimensional Scaling Program written by Dr. J. B. Kruskal, Bell Telephone Laboratories, Murray Hill, N. J. and Dr. F. W. Young, Psychometric Laboratory, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C. assisted by Judith Seery, Bell Telephone Laboratories, Murray Hill, N. J.

Minear and Morimoto report Kierkegaard as referring to 52 books of the Bible but we have excluded 11 of these for a variety of reasons. Ezek. is mentioned only once and that time in the *Journals*. Num., Jer., Zech., and Jud. show few occurrences and, crucial for this study, no cooccurrences with

		Gen.	Exod.	Lev.	Deut.	Josh.	Judg.	I Sam.	I Kgs.	Neh.	Job	Pss.	Prov.	Eccl.	Isa.	Dan.	Ecclus.	Wis. Sol	Matt.
Gen.	(115)																		
Exod.	(28)	7.0																	
Lev.	(1)	0.0	0.0																
Deut.	(10)	2.9	12.0	0.0															
Josh.	(3)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0														
Judg.	(7)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0													
I Sam.	(7)	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.0	0.0	0.0												
I Kgs.	(4)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0											
Neh.	(1)	9.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0										
Job.	(59)	1.2	9.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0									
Pss.	(44)	1.4	17.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.5	0.0	7.9								
Prov.	(22)	2.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0							
Eccl.	(82)	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	2.4						
Isa.	(20)	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	3.4	0.0	0.0					
Dan.	(6)	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0				
Ecclus.	(7)	7.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.8	0.0	0.0	8.1	0.0	0.0	0.0			
Wis. Sol	(1)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	21.3	11.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		
Matt.	(621)	7.5	3.0	0.0	5.1	0.0	1.5	1.5	2.0	0.0	1.0	1.8	4.3	4.0	10.8	4.9	3.0	0.0	
Mk.	(256)	2.9	1.2	0.0	9.9	0.0	2.4	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	1.3	1.4	5.6	2.6	2.4	0.0	90.8
Lk.	(515)	6.2	1.7	4.4	1.4	0.0	3.3	1.7	0.0	0.0	1.1	2.7	1.9	1.9	4.9	0.0	3.3	0.0	87.5
Jn.	(240)	3.6	4.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	5.8	0.0	4.3	5.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.0
Acts	(57)	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	4.8
Rom.	(107)	0.9	1.8	0.0	6.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.8	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.0	7.4
I Cor.	(139)	2.4	3.2	8.5	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	5.4	1.9	3.8	0.0	3.2	0.0	12.6
II Cor.	(61)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	1.4	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7
Gal.	(34)	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8
Eph.	(29)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.0	0.0	2.2
Phil.	(50)	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.7
Col.	(9)	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
I Thess.	(26)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2	0.0	4.4	0.0	14.8	0.0	3.1
II Thess.	(7)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5
I Tim.	(20)	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6
II Tim.	(15)	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1
Tit.	(1)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Heb.	(56)	3.7	0.0	0.0	8.5	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.1	0.0	0.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9
Jas.	(66)	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	3.7	2.6	0.0	5.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.8
I Pet.	(33)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	5.2	7.4	0.0	7.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6
II Pet.	(6)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.9
I John	(45)	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	6.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	0.0	5.4
Jude	(1)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Rev.	(19)	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.5	0.0	0.0	6.4

Table 1. Corrected Cooccurrence Matrix

any other books. II Sam., I Chron., Lamen., and Hab. show only a single cooccurrence with any other book thus making it impossible for the programme to fix their positions with the required degree of certainty. Mic. and Tobit were originally excluded on the false assumption that they did not

	Mk.	Lk.	Jn.	Acts	Rom.	I Cor.	II Cor.	Gal.	Eph.	Phil.	Col.	I Thess.	II Thess.	I Tim.	II Tim.	Tit.	Heb.	Jas.	I Pet.	II Pet.	I John	Jude
Mk.																						
Lk.	70.8																					
Jn.	33.9	35.0																				
Acts	4.1	5.8	0.9																			
Rom.	3.6	7.7	6.9	9.0																		
I Cor.	6.4	11.2	6.6	4.5	5.7																	
II Cor.	4.0	5.1	7.4	1.7	3.7	8.7																
Gal.	3.2	1.5	6.6	2.3	14.9	4.4	8.8															
Eph.	2.3	2.5	1.2	4.9	5.4	6.3	7.1	12.7														
Phil.	2.7	5.6	13.7	9.4	2.7	8.4	7.2	7.3	5.3													
Col.	2.1	0.0	10.8	4.4	6.4	0.0	0.0	5.7	6.2	4.7												
I Thess.	3.7	5.2	0.0	2.6	0.0	1.7	7.5	0.0	7.3	0.0	0.0											
II Thess.	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	0.0	7.0	0.0	0.0	7.4										
I Tim.	2.8	2.0	2.9	3.0	6.5	3.8	2.9	0.0	4.2	0.0	0.0	8.8	8.5									
II Tim.	1.6	3.4	0.0	3.4	2.5	0.0	6.6	0.0	4.8	7.3	0.0	5.1	9.8	0.0								
Tit.	0.0	0.0	19.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0							
Heb.	5.0	10.0	10.4	3.5	6.5	0.0	3.4	2.3	0.0	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	0.0						
Jas.	3.8	7.1	4.8	4.9	3.6	1.0	1.6	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3					
I Pet.	2.2	2.3	6.7	0.0	6.7	8.9	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	5.8	3.4	0.0	3.9	4.5	0.0	16.3	8.6				
II Pet.	5.1	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			
I John	3.7	3.3	2.9	2.0	7.2	2.5	0.0	5.1	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	2.0	9.2	5.2	6.1		
Jude	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.8	0,0
	1.4	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	3.4	0.0

of 41 Books of the Bible.

cooccur with any other books and when this mistake was discovered it was too late and too expensive to re-run the programme. In fact, Micah should have a corrected cooccurrence score of 37.8 with I Sam. and 4.4 with Lk. while Tobit should have one of 2.3 with Matt. and 5.6 with Rom. One can conclude from this the general direction in which each of these works would lie from the centre of our model but Tobit and, almost certainly, Mic. would fall outside the space presently bounded by it. This is also true of II Sam. and I Chron. which have a corrected cooccurrence score of 44.7 and which, not cooccurring with any other book, occupy the same point in space. In fact, had these last four books been included they would have forced the remainder into such a small space that the results would have been very difficult to interpret. This is another good reason for limiting the present study to the remaining 41 books listed in Table 1.

The results of this investigation are given in two distinct but related forms: the corrected cooccurrence matrix in Table 1 and the ordinates and pictures of the three-dimensional model in Table 2 and Figures 1a and 1b respectively. The matrix shows the association index for all pairs of books treated in this study and the pictures their overall relations within a three-dimensional space. Each of these results is valid within these limits and the reader is invited to study them carefully for himself because they are the answers to our questions and because, in the space available, we can only hint at some of their more obvious implications.

Finally, it is worth noting that there is a large and gratifying measure of agreement between our matrix and model. This can be seen by comparing the two and is further evidenced by the fact that our model shows a stress of only 0.100 on formula 1 of the KYST programme.

As already indicated, our first concern is to discover which books are central in Kierkegaard's perception of the Bible. Though our method is statistical we intend the traditional sense of this term, *viz.*, being perceived as the clue to and hence being allowed to shape and influence one's interpretation of the remaining books. Note that we are not here asking which book he describes as his "favourite" nor which he mentions most frequently.[4] In

---

4 Lowrie, for example, says that Kierkegaard found in the Epistle of James "his favourite texts" (Cf. *For Self-Examination* and *Judge for Yourselves*, Princeton, 1944, p. 41.) The frequency with which he mentions the books in this study is shown in Table 1.

fact, mere frequency of occurrence does not of itself mean that a book is central in this sense. This is obvious from the fact that, theoretically at least, one book might be mentioned 600 times but yet not cooccur with any other book, whereas another might be mentioned only 60 times and yet cooccur one or more times with every other book in our set. It is clear that under these circumstances the former would be peripheral and the latter central in both the accepted and our own sense of these terms.

Our model provides a very clear answer to our first question by putting the most central books closest to its centre and the more peripheral ones in the outer reaches of its space. One can therefore determine the relative centrality of each of these books by comparing their actual distances from the centre of our model; indeed, one can even group these books in terms of their respective degrees of centrality by imagining a series of concentric circles around the centre of our model. For those who have only the pictures of this model we have calculated a centrality index for each of our 41 books using the three ordinates shown in Table 2.[5] These values equal the actual distance in centimetres of each book from the centre. Of course, any division of such a list is to some extent arbitrary but we suggest the following as the most plausible:

- Mk. 0.47, Lk. 0.86, Matt. 1.77
- Gen. 4.09, I Cor. 4.64, Rom. 5.20, Jn. 5.31, Acts 5.38
- I John 6.04, I Pet. 6.39, II Cor. 6.67, Eph. 6.69, Prov. 6.88, Pss. 7.47
- Jas. 8.19, Heb. 8.29, Ecclus. 8.39, Eccl. 8.44, I Thess. 8.56, Phil. 8.69, Gal. 8.77, Isa. 8.86
- Col. 9.09, II Tim. 9.27, Deut. 9.34, Job 9.63
- Rev. 10.21, Exod. 10.27, Judg. 10.87
- I Sam. 11.08, Dan. 11.47, II Thess. 11.66, II Pet. 11.69
- I Kgs. 13.03, I Tim. 14.00, Lev. 14.08, Tit. 14.60, Neh. 15.84
- Jude 17.14, Wis. Sol. 18.94, Josh. 19.39

It is perhaps only fair to add that Pss. and Prov. are rather special cases in that references to these books are as likely to reflect extreme familiarity

---

5 This is done by adding the squares of all three ordinates and taking the square root of the result. In order to suggest the origin of this procedure we describe the distance (and space) as Pythagorean but it could equally well be described as Euclidean. Distances between points can of course be measured using the same principle.

	x	y	z
Gen.	0.390	0.097	−0.074
Exod.	0.635	−0.539	0.600
Lev.	1.157	−0.539	−0.595
Deut.	0.529	0.039	0.769
Josh.	0.681	−1.770	0.405
Judg.	0.819	0.209	−0.684
I Sam	−0.297	−0.022	1.067
I Kgs.	0.971	0.761	0.420
Neh.	1.405	0.674	−0.286
Job	0.596	−0.747	−0.115
Pss.	0.730	−0.112	0.113
Prov.	0.106	0.667	0.129
Eccl.	0.188	0.566	0.597
Isa.	0.064	−0.549	−0.692
Dan.	0.177	0.796	−0.806
Ecclus.	0.469	0.666	−0.202
Wis. Sol.	0.648	1.526	0.916
Matt.	−0.101	0.051	0.030
Mk.	−0.012	0.034	0.030
Lk.	0.052	−0.063	0.026
Jn.	−0.175	−0.396	0.307
Acts.	−0.425	−0.017	−0.329
Rom.	−0.044	−0.106	0.507
I Cor.	0.338	−0.154	−0.285
II Cor.	−0.661	−0.085	−0.019
Gal.	−0.669	−0.501	−0.264
Eph.	−0.380	0.370	0.407
Phil.	−0.388	−0.773	0.089
Col.	−0.842	0.072	0.334
I Thess.	−0.509	0.448	−0.522
II Thess.	−0.870	0.741	0.233
I Tim.	−0.317	0.674	−0.212
II Tim.	−0.751	−0.324	0.437
Tit.	−0.988	−1.070	0.101
Heb.	0.105	−0.770	0.288
Jas.	0.163	−0.785	−0.168
I Pet.	−0.219	−0.412	−0.436
II Pet.	−1.063	0.275	−0.401
I John	−0.096	0.241	−0.595
Jude	−1.534	0.751	−0.144
Rev.	0.119	0.277	−0.975

Table 2. Three Dimensional Coordinates of 41 Books of the Bible.
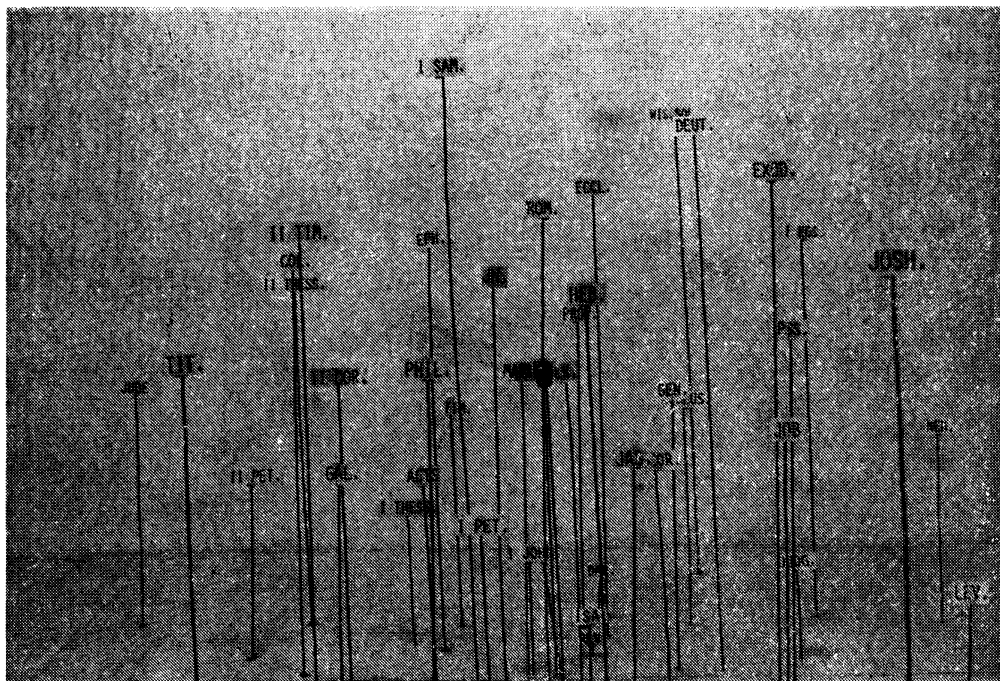
Figure 1a. Model of 41 Books of the Bible (front view).

with their text as strong association with the other books with which they cooccur. Indeed, given their peculiar character, it is not easy to see how they could be central to one's perception of the Bible in the same way as, for example, Gen. might be. It should also be noted that, since our model is simply the best fit possible within a three dimensional space, the distances and indices mentioned above should be regarded as approximate. These reservations apart however, these results are too clear and obvious to require further comment at this point.

It may be worth calling attention to the high correlation between our centrality indices for these books and the number of other books with which each is associated. For example, Matt., Mk., and Lk., the most central group, cooccur with 36, 31, and 31 other books, respectively. II Tim. and Col., from the middle group, cooccur with 13 and 11 other books. Josh. and Jude, from the last group, each cooccur with only 2 other books. Finally, II Sam., and I Chron., which lie quite outside our space, cooccur only with each other.

Figure 1b. Model of 41 Books of the Bible (top view).

It is therefore clear that these indices provide a substantially accurate estimate of the relative centrality of the various books.

It is perhaps worth noting that our ordering of these books is significantly different from another and perhaps more obvious one which could be constructed from the number of times each book is mentioned, which information is shown in brackets immediately following the name of the book in Table 1.

Indeed the absolute value of the correlation coefficient of these two lists is only 0.647, itself significant at the .001 level. We can therefore conclude that our ordering is quite distinct from and at least largely independent of the number of times each book is mentioned.

As already indicated, our second concern is to show how Kierkegaard associates the various books of the Bible with one another. Some of the relevant evidence is given in Table 1 and, particularly, Table 2 and Figures 1a and 1b. It is however very important to stress that our real answer *is* our model itself, that it contains a great deal of precise and detailed information, and that no amount of plain language commentary can begin to approximate its subtlety and accuracy. Indeed, such commentary is a poor substitute and is required only because the reader does not have direct access to this model. It follows of course that one can skip the next two or three pages if he is able to visualize this model from the pictures provided.

Of course the most obvious feature of our model is the clear separation between the books of the Old and New Testaments. It is true that the latter tend to occupy the centre of our space while the former appear as a kind of shell around this core but the separation is nevertheless for the most part clear and distinct. This is entirely plausible and should help to convince any who still doubt the soundness of our approach. It cannot, I think, be an accident that our model should reproduce so clearly a division which is so evident in the Bible and so strongly underscored in Kierkegaard's own thought.[6]

Of the smaller clusters, the most obvious and interesting is that of Matt., Mk., and Lk. Indeed, we can indicate both the importance of this cluster and the connection of our two concerns by describing this as the central cluster in our set. In this connection note that Jn. shows relatively weak ties with each of these three books and, consistently with this, lies some distance from this cluster; in fact its nearest neighbour is not any of the Synoptics but rather Rom.

As we might expect, the books traditionally associated with St. Paul tend to cluster together. These include Acts, Rom., I and II Cor., Gal., Eph., Phil., Col., and I and II Thess. In terms of this group Heb., Col., and II Thess. are

---

6 Cf., e. g., *Pap.* IV A 143, quoted in *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, ed. and transl. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, Vol. 1, 206, p. 84.

all more or less outlyers but it is only fair to add that Kierkegaard would hardly welcome the prospect of seeming to support modern critical views. I Cor. is also something of an outlyer but this appears to be due to the fact that it is associated with 9 of our O.T. books.

I and II Tim. and Tit. are widely separated from each other but each is closely associated with one or more other books. I Tim. is close to both I and II Thess.; II Tim. to II Cor. and Col.; and Tit. to Jn. and Phil. It seems likely that these are important clues to Kierkegaard's understanding of these particular books.

The remaining minor epistles are widely spread throughout our model and apparently not particularly associated with one another. However, apart from Jude, each is close to one or more other books in our set. Jas. is close to Phil., Heb., I Pet. (as well as Job and Isa.); II Pet. to I Thess.; and I John to Matt., Mk., Lk., Acts, I Cor., and Rev. Again, these appear to be clues to Kierkegaard's understanding of these books.

Rev. is rather isolated but shows some tendency to cluster with Dan. and, as indicated, I John.

Of the books of the Pentateuch, Gen., Exod., and Deut. show some tie with other another. Lev. is an outlyer and Num., as already noted, failed to meet the criteria for inclusion in this study.

Prov., Eccl., I Sam. and, possibly, Wis. Sol. form a cluster but note that Job, though ordinarily included with the Wisdom Literature, lies almost across our model and at a considerable distance from each of these works. In fact, its chief ties appear to be with Exod., Pss., Isa., Heb., Jas., and I Pet.

None of the Deuteronomic historical works appear to be particularly associated with one another. Judg., I Sam., I Kgs., and Josh. are all widely separated and neither II Sam. nor II Kgs. meet the minimum conditions for inclusion in this stydy.

Neh. is an outlyer whose only strong direct ties are with Gen. and Ecclus.

Jer. occurs only three times in Kierkegaard's works and, as already mentioned, shows no occurrences with any other book. Isa., the only other prophetic book mentioned, is close to I Pet., I Cor., and Jas. and, according to our matrix, has significant ties with all four gospels and, especially, Matt.

Our matrix shows that the apocryphal Ecclus. has strong ties with Gen., Neh., Prov., Eph., and I Thess. However, each of these works lies in a

different area of our model and this work has therefore been left more or less stranded between them.

Our model shows one other clear overall pattern which is puzzling but so clear that it must be mentioned. Briefly, all books consisting of two or more parts are widely separated from one another with the first being almost invariably preferred to the second and other instalments. This is clear in the case of I and II Cor., I and II Thess., I and II Tim., and I and II Pet. but it is also equally true of I and II Sam., and II Kgs., and I and II Chron. It is also true of the various Epistles of John; indeed, while the first of these is relatively central in Kierkegaard's perception of the Bible, the second and third are not even mentioned. I confess I do not know what to make of these facts but it is clear that Kierkegaard does not associate the first and later instalments of these books with one another.

In our opening paragraph we spoke of the results of this study as laying the foundations for a better grasp of Kierkegaard's perception of the Bible and, with that, a deeper understanding of his thought. We trust that the reader has already seen some of these connections; in any event our space is limited and we must confine ourselves to noting some of the more obvious conclusions which may be drawn from these results.

It is clear that Kierkegaard regarded the Synoptic Gospels as the heart of the Bible and that he clearly distinguished between these and the Gospel of John. We can therefore conclude that he read and interpreted the remaining books in the light of these three Gospels and that he saw the Bible as concerned primarily with the historical Jesus and, perhaps especially, with his teaching. This is implied by our results and is wholly consistent with his own emphasis upon Jesus as Teacher.[7]

Though the books of the Old Testament occupy much of the right side of our model, they tend to be only loosely associated with one another, are less central than those of the New Testament, and, with only one or two exceptions, are not as closely connected with the Synoptics. Indeed, they form a kind of outer shell around this central group, a shell which is thin at the

---

7 Cf., e. g., *The Gospel of Suffering*, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 216–19; *Christian Discourses*, London, 1952, pp. 292–95; and *Training in Christianity*, London, 1946, pp. 86–95 and 123.

top (I Sam.) relatively thick through the centre, and thin again at the bottom (Isa. and Dan.). We conclude therefore that these books are on the whole less central in Kierkegaard's perception of the Bible than those of the New Testament. We shall have more to say about this in a moment but meanwhile remark that this is entirely consistent with Kierkegaard's own remarks on this subject.[8]

It is perhaps worth noting that Gen. appears to be the one clear exception to these general conclusions. It shows a tie with most of the books of the New Testament and, perhaps particularly important, relatively strong ties with Matt. and Lk. Indeed, it seems to be the chief means by which the Old Testament is linked with the New. Not surprisingly, therefore, it is more central than any other Old Testament book. This appears to reflect and is centainly consistent with the marked emphasis upon Adam and, especially, Abraham in Kierkegaard's writings.[9]

Isa. occupies a relatively central place in our model and is associated with no less than eleven different books of the New Testament. It is, then, plainly important in Kierkegaard's reading of the Bible. However, this is not true of most of the other prophetic books. Jer. is mentioned only three times and Amos, Hosea, and Micah, like most of the remainder, not at all. It is then clear that the prophets are much less central in Kierkegaard's reading of the Bible than in the traditional Christian one. Indeed, I would suggest, they are also less important in his Christianity, the real precursors of which appear to be Abraham, Job and, though this is of course not shown in the present study, Socrates.[10] Certainly these three appear to play the role traditionally assigned to the Old Testament prophets and this, I suggest, accounts for much of the distinctive character of what we should perhaps call Kierkegaardian religious faith.

It is perhaps worth noting that the traditional Pauline literature is quite important and that many of these books show a strong tie with and a distinct tendency to cluster around the Synoptic Gospels. This, of course, is consistent with the traditional picture of Kierkegaard as sympathetic to and influenced by St. Paul.

---

8 See note 6 above.
9 Notably, of course, in *The Concept of Dread* and *Fear and Trembling*, respectively.
10 I develop this thought in a forthcoming study "Abraham, Job, and Socrates: Precursors of Kierkegaardian Religious Faith."

It is perhaps also worth noting that Apocalyptic appears to be of only minor importance in Kierkegaard's perception of the Bible and that at least some of the Apocryphal literature (e. g., Ecclus.) is more important than one might expect.

There are of course many other conclusions to be drawn from these results but I conclude instead with a comment concerning their nature. Their production has been so relatively simple and their form so unconventional that the reader may well fail to recognize their real nature and importance. In fact, our model provides an objective spatial representation of relations actually present in Kierkegaard's writings and, presumably, his mind; a representation which takes account of his entire corpus and which presents these relations with a precision, accuracy and detail which could not be attained with a more conventional approach and which certainly cannot be adequately summarized in any plain language commentary of whatever length. It gives a readily intelligible presentation of complex and important relations about which the reader can now judge for himself. In fact, it is an impartial representation of one important aspect of the origin text and, as such, a new basic datum which is valid in itself and even more important than any particular conclusions which anyone might draw from it. These may seem extreme claims but will be immediately obvious when, as I hope, we have comparable models for other major Christian thinkers such as, for example, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and Barth. Given such models, we would then all see that they accurately represent one's distinctive perception of the Bible and, equally, provide valuable clues for the understanding of one's thought.