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CONTEMPORARY THINKING ABOUT JESUS

AN ANTHOLOGY

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Compiled by
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To

TOM *and* ANN

WHO HAVE ALREADY BEGUN
THEIR THINKING ABOUT JESUS

PREFACE

JESUS is the most uniquely attractive figure to walk upon this tiny planet. If men have pondered the mystery of themselves, they have even more contemplated the mystery of Jesus. All men have revered him; yet all have not understood him thoroughly, and their conclusions about him have been diverse. Certainly he cannot be ignored by any thoughtful person; men *must* think about him, even though their final answers about who he was and what he was may end in query. As a contemporary interpreter has said, "Jesus is the enigma of the centuries. What to make of him has been a problem to both the saint and the skeptic."

Jesus is too big and too great for any individual mind to comprehend. To stand within the walls of a modern theological library and gaze upon the books related to Jesus but reminds one of the vast problem of interpreting him. To understand him best, we must talk to one another about him, we must share scholarly appreciations, we must pool our interpretive results. To look at him in this co-operative fashion will not give us dogmatic certainties concerning him, but it will bring to us a finer, more comprehensive estimate of his grandeur and significance.

This anthology has one purpose: to give to its readers the privilege of communing with a galaxy of scholars about Jesus. These thinkers are men and women from different schools of New Testament interpretation. Some see Jesus through "the eye of faith"; others treat him with cool and careful objectivity. Some acclaim form criticism as a cardinal tool for analyzing the gospel frameworks in which his words and acts are set; others are skeptical about such an evaluation of gospel traditions. A few are persuaded that Jesus was a thoroughgoing eschatologist whose teachings were an "interim ethic"; others feel that much of the eschatological interpretations were added by the Christian community; and still others believe Jesus taught a "realized eschatology." Some picture him living in history as a prophet or wandering rabbi; others hold that he thought of himself as Messiah; others interpret him as living merely on "the edge of history"; and yet others envision the church as the continuing center where Christ abides in history. Nevertheless, however wide the variation in many of their conclusions, they agree in two basic ways: all utilize in their various manners the helpful suggestions of modern biblical criticism, and all view Jesus with reverent scholarship.

Unfortunately even a large anthology has space limitations. Only fifty-five persons could be allowed to speak in these pages, whereas probably twice that number deserve a place. Furthermore, many who deserve to be heard more than once could not be accorded a second opportunity without sacrificing the value of a wide representation of diverse viewpoints. The need for presenting the principal variations of interpretation on important

problems has also prevented including works on all subjects relating to Jesus. For example, it is obvious that the selections concern chiefly Jesus as seen in the four Gospels; what Paul and others had to say is too big a problem—or set of problems—to be included. This has meant that several well-known scholars are omitted because their most stimulating writings lie in areas outside the range of the book.

The anthology has been organized in five sections: The Nature of the Synoptic Gospels, The Portrait of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus' Relationship to History, Eschatology and Ethics, and Modern Evaluations of Jesus. Part III includes the problem of the historicity of Jesus as well as the related matter of his place in the Christian view of history. Certain theories of eschatology or "noneschatology" so affect the interpretation of Jesus' ethics as to have necessitated linking these two subjects in Part IV. Though different headings might have been chosen, these five seem to cover the most stimulating areas of interpretation concerned with Jesus; they comprehend quite fully the religious atmosphere where men think most deeply about him, and are broad enough to permit inclusion of selections that directly or indirectly bear upon such problems as the church, the incarnation, miracles, the resurrection, the meaning of the cross, Christology, sacraments, and religious-ethical relationships in Christianity.

Acknowledgment is due the authors and publishers who have granted permission to reprint excerpts from their copyrighted works in this volume. Original sources are in each case indicated by a footnote and are also given in the Index of Titles. The Biographical Index of Authors furnishes brief information about each writer, including a list of some of his other works and a sentence appraisal of his interpretive position. It is the hope of the compiler that introduction to these writers through the reading of their selections in this volume will lead many to seek fuller acquaintance with them in their complete books, and further that the rewards of such intellectual friendship will stimulate use of the Bibliography to discover an even wider circle of noteworthy modern thinkers about Jesus.

THOMAS S. KEPLER

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Part I

THE NATURE OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

THE SYNOPTIC TRADITION

James Mackinnon

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS, so named from their common presentation of the life and teaching of Jesus, are primarily a record of the primitive tradition in which his deeds and his sayings were preserved. All three Synoptists describe the preaching of Jesus as the Gospel, and though the term came to be applied to their writings and to the teaching of the apostles, it originally meant the message of Jesus as he delivered it in Galilee and elsewhere, and as the apostles imparted it in their mission preaching and in the instruction of their converts. It was their evident intention to relate what Jesus actually taught and did, as this was preserved in the primitive tradition, whether written or oral.

The Synoptic tradition represents the tendency to rivet the developing Christianity to the historic Jesus. It shows clearly that, in spite of the more speculative tendency to which Paul gave so marked an impulse, there existed a keen interest in the Jesus who lived and taught and suffered on earth. In this respect it is a counteractive to Paul's insistence on the spiritual Jesus in contrast to Jesus "after the flesh." The writers appear to have shared the more developed view of the Christ. But they did not share Paul's slight estimation of the earthly life of Jesus, whilst, like him, stressing his death, resurrection, and exaltation. A large part of their narratives is, in fact, concerned with these supreme events, and this feature shows that in the Gentile-Christian communities, to which they belonged, these events counted most. At the same time, the primitive tradition recounting the life and teaching of Jesus was accorded a far more important place in the thought of the community than appears from the Epistles of Paul. The early preaching of Peter, as recorded in the Acts, makes this clear enough. The Gospel of Jesus as well as the Gospel about Jesus was cherished as a precious inheritance. It is this Gospel that the Synoptists profess to hand down in written form, and to the interest of the community in it we owe the fact of its preservation.

This interest was religious rather than historical. The writers are not historians in the modern scientific sense. The tradition survived in the community because of its religious importance and value. It formed an essential part of the mission preaching of the apostles and of the instruction of converts, and in the meetings for worship and edification. It was put into written form as thus utilised, and the writers chose the historic incidents and the didactic sayings which had a special value for the life of the community. It is not history for its own sake, but for its pragmatic utility that they record. They envisage the Gospel, to a certain extent, from the angle of its

From *The Gospel in the Early Church*, New York, 1933, pp. 193-207. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Longmans, Green & Company.

development in their own time, and have, more or less, left the imprint of this development on their narratives. An apologetic purpose lies also, to a certain extent, behind it. It is intended to vindicate Christian belief about Jesus from the objections of its Jewish opponents, to invalidate the offence of the Cross, to beget and confirm the conviction that the Messianic claim of Jesus is an assured fact, and that Christianity is the true development of Judaism and the God-appointed way of salvation. The didactic and apologetic element is indirectly discoverable in the narratives, and it appears explicity in the preface to the third Gospel. Luke writes his Gospel not merely to furnish Theophilus with an accurate account of the tradition, but to confirm his confidence in the instruction which he has received from the teachers of the Church.

Despite the pragmatic motive behind these Gospels, the writers have, on the whole, given a wonderfully realistic view of the person, life, and teaching of Jesus. The tradition which they narrate is substantially true to fact, if it has to be critically sifted. . . . . One may well ask, Is there such a thing as the Synoptic tradition? Happily the evidence which the Synoptists furnish, when judicially examined, enables us to reply in an emphatic affirmative. . . . .

It is a real human figure that acts and speaks in these Gospels. The birth stories seem to endanger its real humanity. A supernatural generation is incompatible with the full human life and suggests the demigod rather than the brother man. But these stories do not belong to the primitive tradition which, in the primitive preaching and in Mark, begins with the baptism by John. They are later apologetic additions to counteract Jewish calumny and strengthen the enhanced evaluation of the exalted Christ. In the primitive tradition, as recorded by Mark, the human Jesus is less idealised than in the late narratives of his fellow-evangelists, who appear more under the influence of later speculation or belief. In spite of this more marked influence, the human origin of Jesus appears in the course of the first and third Gospels as well as in Mark. In Mark, the oldest of the three and also the nearest to the actual Jesus, the human traits are very marked. Jesus gives full scope to the emotions of ordinary humanity. He adopts a stern tone towards the leper whom he heals. He is angry with his Pharisaic opponents. He gives vent to his indignation with the disciples for seeking to prevent the children being brought to him and shows his tenderness by taking them in his arms—human touches which Matthew and Luke omit. Mark alone tells the very human story of his mother's and brethren's impression that he was beside himself, and their efforts to save him from himself, which the other two evangelists also ignore. At the same time, while omitting such traits, the human figure is otherwise also depicted in their narratives. All three show him taking part in the social life of the time as a man among men. He eats with publicans and sinners and does not practise fasting, to the chagrin of the scribes and Pharisees. All three reveal the straining effect of his strenuous activity on mind and nerves, and the need for retirement to pray and seek strength and guidance in communion with God. This is especially noticeable in Luke, who, in emphasising his recourse to prayer,

emphasises his dependence on God. From him, too, we learn more particularly of his interest in, and attraction for women.

On the other hand, he is no mere sentimentalist. He requires of his followers the utmost self-renunciation in the practice of the new righteousness, the demands of the ethical Law. Even Luke outdoes Matthew in stressing not only the inexorable note of self-sacrifice which he demands in his followers, but the inflexible sternness with which he pronounces doom on unrepentant sinners. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." A man of overpowering strength of character and conviction, who fearlessly encounters opposition and ultimately carries the conflict with his opponents to a life-and-death issue. In the later stage of his mission—on the way to Jerusalem and in Gethsemane—he wrestles with inexorable doom in obedience to the will of God, and never falters in his tragic determination to fulfil it. The figure of Jesus is thus that of a real man. He is no creation of the religious fantasy, a God, the object of a cult invested with an artificial history, as the mythologists would have us believe. A real personality is present throughout these narratives.

On the other hand, there is an element of strangeness, mystery in this personality, which strikes us as, in some respects, alien to our modern thought. Jesus moves in an apocalyptic atmosphere which we find really difficult to assimilate, and which does not really appeal to the Western mind. We would gladly eliminate it, in its literal sense at least, from the narrative, if it did not form so integral a part of it. Jewish Messianism, with its fantastic reading of the riddle of human destiny, the divine ordering of the universe, its crude philosophy of history, is an encumbrance, not an enrichment of the Gospel. It is there, however, and if Jesus largely spiritualised it, he retained the catastrophic intervention in the near future, the supernatural transformation from the old order to the new. He is, in this respect, an otherworldly figure; human, indeed, but obsessed with this otherworldly train of thought. He is Messiah as well as man, the man whom God has chosen and commissioned to inaugurate His reign in a new order of things. This conception, though natural to a Jew, is alien to us, and the Jesus who embodied it is, and cannot but be, somewhat of an enigma. We might explain away the apocalyptic element in his teaching, or eliminate it, as some have attempted to do. But this would be to do violence to the record, of which the apocalyptic element is an essential. All three evangelists represent him as the Messiah, and it may, I think, be taken as certain that he did regard himself as invested with a Messianic function and mission. The keynote of Mark's Gospel is his Messianic Sonship. Matthew with his Jewish predilections emphasises, in addition, his descent from David, and there is no convincing reason to question this descent, though Jesus himself does not seem to have attached undue importance to it, and the first evangelist, as a member of the Gentile Church does not, ultimately at least, regard the Messiah in the narrow national sense. For the Gentile Luke the Messiah is from the outset the universal Saviour.

According to all three, the consciousness of his Messianic vocation came to him at his baptism. Such an illumination at a time of tense religious feel-

ing—the prophetic preaching of the Baptist—is psychologically explicable, and scepticism as to the historicity of the incident is unwarranted. Jesus most probably did not foresee all that this vocation implied. He had attained the conviction that God had chosen him as the instrument in bringing to pass His rule or kingdom on earth. What this ultimately involved—a cross, not a crown—he does not seem to have divined. This revelation came only with the march of events. Mark has a theory which his fellow evangelists adopt—that at first Jesus kept his Messiahship a secret, which only the demons, assumed to be gifted with supernatural insight, knew. He is generally recognized as a new prophet and adopts the prophetic role in preparing the people for the ultimate development. Mark's theory may be a later apologetic, intended to show the blindness of the Jews in failing to recognize the Messiah. At the same time, such demoniacs may, in their deranged fashion, and under the influence of the Messianic excitement of the time, have seen in Jesus the embodiment of their own fantasy. In any case, it was obviously advisable to discourage the danger of a popular commotion, which a premature announcement of his vocation might easily provoke. Hence the prominence of the preparatory prophetic mission in the Synoptists. It was only the growing antagonism of the religious leaders, who, in contrast to the people, adopted a critical and, erelong, a hostile attitude, that convinced Jesus that his Messianic vocation must erelong lead to the Cross. Then it was that, in the face of the deadly antagonism of the legalists—the local scribes and Pharisees and the representatives of the religious authorities at Jerusalem—it became clear that this vocation was that of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. Then, too, that the conception of the Son of Man, hitherto only vaguely mentioned, came into the foreground of his consciousness. The combination of these two conceptions—Suffering Servant, Son of Man—is the ultimate evolution of Jesus' thought of his Messianic vocation and function. He foresees his death. But he believes in his resurrection and exaltation and his future destiny as Son of Man; the speedy return to judge the world and establish the final reign of God in the new order or age. He believes, too, that his sacrifice will effect the deliverance or redemption from sin which the Messianic idea connotes, and gives his life a ransom for many.

All this, say the extreme critics, is merely a reading of history after the event. It is the reflection of the apologetic explanation of the death of Jesus, the offence of the Cross, and the failure of his mission, which we have seen in the primitive and Pauline preaching. Surely a hazardous, suppositious handling of history. Instead of being a later invention, this record of the later stage of Jesus' conception of his Messianic vocation and function seems to me to be in accordance with the actual situation. Making allowance for later colouring, this development alone explains the heroic persistence and self-sacrifice that carried Jesus onward to his doom. Only one who was inspired by the apocalyptic conviction reflected in this record could have faced this doom, and only one who really held himself to be the divinely commissioned Son of Man, as he declared to the High Priest, could have incurred the charge of blasphemy and determined his enemies to destroy him.

His belief in the resurrection he shared with his Pharisaic opponents, and this belief is, therefore, no anachronism. It, too, is necessary to explain the conviction that death was but the transmutation to a higher life. To him whose mind was steeped in the prophecy of Israel's vicarious suffering, it was assuredly no impossible conception that his vicarious sacrifice was essential for the realization of God's plan and purpose in the redemption of man.

In the Synoptic record Jesus is the Son of God in the filial as well as the Messianic sense. His vocation as Messiah came to him, we may fairly assume, through his profound sense of his filial relation to the Father-God. In all three Synoptics this Sonship appears, and in a distinctive utterance preserved by Matthew and Luke, it finds special expression. In this utterance Jesus claims to be the revealer of the Father in contrast to "the wise and understanding"—the Rabbis of his day. In the Gospel of Jesus the Fatherhood is a distinctive theme, and he claims to know and make known the Father in a deeper and more personal sense than in the current Rabbinic teaching. It is the outflow of his own spiritual experience, not of the current scholastic theology. His personal Sonship is a fact of experience, learned in profound communion with the Father-God, and, in a less degree, Sonship is predicable of all His children, who are also sons of God. . . . . The Jesus of the Synoptists is untouched by philosophy. The Synoptic tendency is rather to show Jesus in the light of Old Testament prophecy than of Hellenist philosophy, as in the Fourth Gospel. In the Synoptics his Sonship does not involve pre-existence. It does not express oneness with the Father in the Johannine sense. There is no pre-existence in the record, though it might be in the minds of the writers of it. Even the birth stories of the first and third evangelists, though meant to enhance his supernatural being, bring him into existence in time and know nothing of an eternal origin in God. He appropriates the Son of Man title, and in Jewish Apocalyptic ("Book of Enoch") this Messianic title is that of a pre-existent being. But this does not necessarily imply a belief in his previous existence. As used by Jesus, the title points forwards not backwards, though ultimately, under the influence of Paul, the Christian community interpreted it in a pre-existent sense. But the community did not attempt to intrude it into the primitive tradition. Had it done so the Synoptists would assuredly have revealed the intrusion. Instead, the tradition as reported by Mark, who is copied by Luke, pointedly rebuts any assumption of a timeless existence in union with God. "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God," which Matthew significantly modifies to "Why askest thou me concerning the good; one there is who is good."

All three evangelists depict the power of Jesus to work miracles. The healing ministry is a succession of miracles, and Jesus is besides invested with a supernatural power over nature. He can not only heal a variety of bodily ailments. He can raise the dead, still a storm by a word, multiply loaves and fishes indefinitely, walk on the water. This is in keeping with his vocation as a prophet and as the Messianic Son of God, and the intention of the writers evidently is to convey to their readers the impression of a sovereign command over natural law, exercised by Jesus as an essential of his Messianic

vocation. Not only his superior authority as a Teacher to that of the Rabbis, but his unique power to counteract by his healing ministry the demoniac effects of evil, the regime of Satan, and dominate nature is emphasised throughout. In their striving to deepen the impression of the story on their readers, the writers tend to overcolour the picture of his supernatural mission. At the same time, they have so depicted the mission that they enable us to control their own impression and the impression they seek to impart. The primitive tradition is there to speak for itself. From what it tells us, we can see that the cures effected by Jesus are the result of psychotherapy, in which the faith and insight of the healer and the faith of the patient contribute to the result. Modern medical science has no difficulty in accepting the recorded cases as examples of the effect of spiritual power over bodily disease. From the primitive tradition we further learn that his power as a healer is ascribed to the Spirit of God acting through him and using the appropriate means, spiritual and material. If, as indirectly appears, the writers regard these and other "mighty works" (δυνάμεις) as signs of Jesus' supernatural power, their narratives prove conclusively that Jesus did these works not to prove his divinity, as explicitly in the Fourth Gospel, but from an intense sympathy with the sufferers. To heal disease and alleviate human suffering is an integral part of his mission. It is an attack on the kingdom of Satan in preparation for the kingdom of God. He positively refused to grant the Pharisees the signs they demanded, and in doing so he gave vent to his impatience of this miracle-mongering craze. "He groaned in spirit," we read in Mark, over such demands as evidence of the lack of true religious insight and understanding.

Unfortunately this lack is apparent in the later Christian community as well as among the Pharisees. Hence the accretion of tales of the marvellous, of works of a magical character. Such tales intruded themselves into the tradition, as the result of the inventive imagination working on incidents which it magnifies into miracles. This tendency is observable in the first and third evangelists who attempted to heighten the miraculous power of Jesus as depicted by Mark, as well as to tone down or minimise the human element in Jesus. Matthew, in particular, shows a predilection for this legendary matter, as in the account of the walking on the water, which, in contrast to Mark, he regards as a sign of his divinity and, in consequence, makes the disciples worship him as the Son of God.

Equally noticeable is the attempt to handle the primitive tradition in the light of prophecy. The apologetic appeal to prophecy already, as we have seen, appears in the primitive preaching in proof of the thesis that Jesus must needs suffer, and that his life, death, resurrection, and exaltation are in accordance with the divine will as revealed by the prophets. It was further developed in the early Church as a proof that Christianity is the divinely ordained consummation of Judaism, the culmination of God's redemptive plan in Christ. It was read into the primitive tradition and colours the Synoptic record, especially in its Matthaean form, which systematically attempts to show that the acts and words of Jesus, from beginning to end, are the fulfilment of prophecy. It is also markedly present in Luke's con-

cluding chapter and in certain passages in Mark, repeated by his fellow-evangelists. In these Jesus himself appeals to the prophets in confirmation of his Messianic claim and in explanation of the tragic trend of events. There is no reason to question the fact that Jesus did find in prophecy guidance and strength in carrying out his mission. It may be taken as certain that he applied to himself the prophetic conception of the Suffering Servant and the Son of Man, which he adapted in a personal sense.

The appeal to prophecy is thus an integral part of the primitive tradition. It goes back to the example of Jesus himself. At the same time the tendency of the Synoptists to view present events in the light of the past is undoubtedly a later accretion. We may be certain that Jesus did not speak in parables in order to mystify rather than enlighten his hearers, as the evangelists assert in a prophetic saying ascribed to him in the early period of the ministry. This is evidently a reflection of later apologetic to explain why the Jews refused to accept the Messiah and his teaching. The same apologetic aim is observable in Luke's account of Jesus' exposition of prophecy to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. In this respect the Synoptic Gospel is a Gospel adapted to the times, and whether we accept its elaborate application of prophecy to Jesus as historically justifiable or not, it is plain enough that it did not bulk in Jesus' own teaching to the extent that it appears in the First and Second Gospels. . . . .

The universalist note appears in all three Synoptics, and here again the critics have seen a modification of the primitive tradition under Pauline influence. This raises the question whether Jesus was a particularist or a universalist? It seems to me that the tradition shows that he was both, whilst Matthew and Luke, and, less directly, Mark, tended to impute the later universalism of the Gentile Church to him. This note and this tendency are least observable in Mark. He knows only of one, or possibly two instances in which Jesus directly extends his healing mission to Gentiles—in the case of the Syro-Phoenician woman and, if the Gerasene maniac was a Gentile, in his case also. Even to the Syro-Phoenician woman Jesus emphasises his exclusive mission to the Jews. Unlike Luke, he and Matthew do not take Jesus into Samaria in the course of his progress southwards to Jerusalem. At the close of the mission—in the episodes of the anointing at Bethany, and the cleansing of the temple, and in the apocalyptic discourse—he appears frankly universalist. "Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world." "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." "The Gospel must first be preached to all nations." The first and third passages look like a later reflection of the Gentile mission, and as the apocalyptic discourse bears marks of later manipulation even in Mark, the third saying, at all events, is somewhat doubtful. It is significantly absent from Luke, who would certainly have included it had he found it in his version. Apart from these closing sayings, the primitive tradition in Mark is generally non-universalist. But it may well be that the lack of the larger spirit in the sayings recorded by the other two evangelists, at an early stage of the mission, is due to the writer's concentration on the deeds rather than the sayings of Jesus.

In Matthew universalism alternates with exclusiveness, till at the conclusion of the Gospel he, like Mark, becomes wholly universalist. In addition to the Syro-Phoenician episode, he gives that of the centurion, to whose request for help Jesus instantly responds, and whose faith he emphasises as the great thing, apart from race or privilege. In the teaching, of which Matthew gives large blocks, both features appear. On the one hand, the Twelve are to confine their mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They are not to go in the way of the Gentiles, or into any Samaritan city. On the other, in connection with the centurion episode, Jesus fervently accentuates the inclusion of the Gentiles in the kingdom and the casting forth of the Jews, and at the conclusion of the parable of the vineyard unconditionally proclaims that the kingdom of God shall be taken away from them and given to another nation. In Matthew, accordingly, we see the note of exclusion gradually disappearing as the mission progresses, and the larger universal spirit and outlook taking its place. This is probably true to the actual development which the antagonism of the representatives of Jewish legalism and exclusion tended to beget in the mind of Jesus. One who emphasised the Fatherhood of God and sought to spiritualise the current Judaism could hardly have conceived of his Messianic vocation in the exclusive, as he certainly did not in the nationalist sense. At the same time, the writer of the First Gospel, who also gives the three late universalist sayings in Mark, appears in the post-resurrection command, to teach and baptise all nations, to be ascribing to the risen Christ an utterance that expresses the mind of the Gentile Church rather than the actual injunction of Jesus. Though a Jewish Christian, he belongs to the universal Church and makes no secret of his universalism in bringing, in the birth story, the wise men of the East to do homage to the Saviour King of the Jews. Similarly, in the case of the reference to the Gentiles in iv. 14 and x. 18, in which the Gospel is to be offered to the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

In contrast to both Mark and Matthew, Luke is consistently universalist. He not only, like Matthew, introduces his own universalism into the birth story; not only preserves the story of the centurion, whilst significantly omitting the Syro-Phoenician incident and certain narrow-minded sayings recorded by Matthew, such as vii. 6 and x. 5-6. He has a predilection for the teaching in which the universalist note predominates. He makes Jesus extend his mission to the Samaritans and heal a Samaritan leper. Jesus chooses a Samaritan, in contrast to a priest and a Levite, as an illustration of the supreme law of love. Similarly, in the discourse at Nazareth, Jesus reminds his Jewish opponents of the mission of Elijah and Elisha to non-Jews. In the parable of the prodigal it is the lost son that is the father's joy to the chagrin of the elder. In that of the great supper it is parabolically the Gentile outcasts that take the seats which the invited guests have declined to occupy. . . . . As a Gentile he (Luke) has doubtless seen in Jesus the anticipator of Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. Substantially, his interpretation of the spirit of Jesus was justified by the larger outlook which the Third Gospel reveals in the friend of publicans and sinners.

ARE THE GOSPELS TRUE HISTORY?

Henry D. A. Major

WHEN A CHILD has been told a story the first question he asks is: Is it true? This is the question which plain men and women ask to-day about the account of Jesus contained in the Gospels. In days which have passed away, when every word of the Bible was believed to have been inspired by the Holy Spirit and so guarded against all form of error and untruth, this question could be answered, if one accepted the doctrine of Biblical infallibility, with a plain "Yes," or if one rejected it, with a plain "No." For modern students of the Gospels such answers are no longer possible. That the writers of the Gospels were honest and truth-loving men we may well believe, but they were not scientific historians, nor when they wrote their Gospels were they setting out to write scientific history. It is doubtful whether any of them were eye-witnesses of what they describe and relate. They had therefore to depend upon information derived from others, some if not all of whom were eye-witnesses. These "sources," as we call them, came to our Evangelists either in the form of oral traditions (i.e. stories told by word of mouth) or as written documents. These sources would not all be of equal historical value. Some would be more precise and accurate than others; some would come direct from those who had actually seen and heard what happened: other accounts would be second-hand or third-hand. A careful modern study of the Gospels enables the student to detect a number of the sources which the Evangelists have used and to assess their comparative value as reliable evidence. Generally speaking, the earlier the source, the more reliable it will be, but this is not always the case, for many other things have to be taken into consideration.

Was the original observer and narrator intelligent and free from prejudices? Was he only concerned to tell historic truth whether it was acceptable or unacceptable, or was he intent upon doing something else, e.g. securing belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, or composing a narrative which would be acceptable and edifying to a Christian congregation? If this were so, would it influence the truthfulness of his narrative? These and a number of similar questions have to be answered before we can answer the main question as to the historical value of the Gospels.

Because there are so many of these questions and the difficulty of answering them accurately is so great, we have a great number of contradictory conclusions put forward by those who are known as the "Higher Critics," or modern scientific students of the Gospels. These critics can be roughly classified into groups or schools. . . . .

From *The Mission and Message of Jesus*, by Major, Manson, and Wright, New York, 1938, pp. xvii-xxv. Copyright 1938. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Company.

I. The "Christ-Myth School"

First there is the Christ-myth school of criticism. It became popular in the twentieth century pre-War period. It was expounded in Germany by Drews, Kalthoff, and Jensen; in England by the Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson and George Mead; in America by W. B. Smith.

In Germany it was disposed of by a galaxy of great German Biblical
F. C. Conybeare in his volue *The Historical Christ.* In America, Professor
Shirley Jackson Case and Professor Thorburn dismissed it with costs. Its
latest exponent in France appears to be P. L. Couchoud.
critics headed by von Soden. In England it was hopelessly discredited by

Nevertheless, having been almost entirely eliminated from academic lecture halls, the Christ-myth theory survives, and even thrives, in secularist labour circles. It exhibits a variety of forms, but all its exponents are agreed in one conclusion: that there is no Jesus of history. Not because there was no Jesus, but because He had no history, or rather because we have no history of Him. Our Canonical Gospels are not histories of Jesus in any proper historical sense. The sayings and actions assigned to Him in them are fictitious. A man named Jesus may have existed and have been executed by Pontius Pilate, the Roman Procurator of Judaea, but the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Christian Church and the object of its cultus, is a religious myth and an ecclesiastical legend. These are the conclusions, generally speaking, of the Christ-myth school of critics.

According to this body of critics, Jesus did not create the Christian Church. The Christian Church created Him. This entirely reverses the teaching of our popular hymn, "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord," and perhaps what will seem more serious it also reverses the conviction of the primitive Christian apostle, St. Paul, that "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ."

Inspired possibly by the Greek Mystery Religions, with their "Saviour Gods" who lived and died and rose again for mankind, the Christian religion thus becomes the product of social conditions, ethical demands, mystical intuitions, and aspirations as they operated in Graeco-Roman civilisation in the first century of our era. It is not Galilee or Jerusalem, but Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, which are the creative centres of the Christian cultus. These Christ-myth theories must astonish plain readers of told that they are crassly ignorant of the creative power of religious mythical the New Testament who believe they find in that volume a wealth of historic evidence for the life and ministry of Jesus. But these people will be tendencies. Let it be admitted at once that there are mythical elements in our Four Gospels and clear evidences of this myth-creating tendency at work in early Christianity: but this is quite a different thing from believing that the whole Christian religion could have originated in this way.

The French *savant* who desired to found a new religion, and was told by Talleyrand that if he would succeed he must first be crucified and rise again the third day, was seriously misinformed. According to the Christ-myth school, all the founder of a new religion requires is to secure a small group of

adherents with no sense of factual veracity but possessed of powerful imaginations, dialectical abilities, and an intuitive perception of the social and religious needs of their environment and how to satisfy them by the creation of a religious myth—and the feat is accomplished.

We are all aware how much great movements and great men have owed to their environment. Men and movements born before their time perish unknown, not because they lack a sacred bard, but because they have an uncongenial environment. Certainly the time and place of the Christian religion constituted important factors in its success. Harnack's great book *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity* demonstrates this. But that will not mean that the Christian religion did not need a personal founder. A supreme personality, and this is pre-eminently the case with a moral and spiritual personality, seems in some mysterious way to inherit, not only all that is most vital in his individual, social, and religious ancestry, but also to draw unto himself all that is most vital in his contemporary environment. But this is not all. In him all these forces are united in vital union, not in the form of addition but of multiplication. As a consequence a new moral and spiritual creation ensues. All the higher religions have had personal founders. The highest form of religion is of this "founded religion" type. All that is most vital, original, and characteristic in this type of religion is the reflection of the personality of its founder, and so the new religion becomes in varying degree the apotheosis of the personality of its founder. He has created it. It did not create him. This is true of Buddhism, founded by the Buddha, Gautama; of Islam, founded by Mohammed; of Zoroastrianism, founded by Zoroaster; and it is equally true of Christianity, founded by Jesus Christ. It is impossible for any serious student of the origin and evolution of Religion to exclude Christianity from the class of "founded religions." The origin of the Christian religion is most adequately accounted for by finding both the sower and the seed in the historic personality of Jesus of Nazareth.

II. The "Form-Criticism School"

Akin in some of its conclusions to the Christ-myth school, although entirely different in its working hypothesis and methods, is the Form-criticism school. It is so named to distinguish it from the Source-criticism school, which has achieved such remarkable results. . . . .

The Form-criticism school makes use of the main results achieved by the Source-criticism school, but it claims to carry back its researches successfully into a much earlier stage in the rise of the Gospel tradition. It is generally accepted that Mark's Gospel was not written until at least a quarter of a century after the Crucifixion of Jesus; the Gospels of Matthew and Luke (in their final form) not until at least half a century after the Crucifixion; and the Fourth Gospel not until nearly three-quarters of a century after the Crucifixion.

Mark's Gospel was thus preceded by a period of oral tradition, in the later part of which period probably Q and possibly proto-Luke were composed. This period of oral teaching gave scope for accounts of the activities

and teaching of Jesus being shaped and arranged in accordance with the propagandist needs of the primitive Christian missionaries. How these needs or apologetic tendencies operated in the shaping or formation of the Christian tradition can be learnt by a comparative study of the written sources as we have them in the four Canonical Gospels. The general tendency is to conform Jesus and His acts and teaching, and even His apostles, more and more to the ideals and needs of the primitive Christian community. Hence historical fact becomes blurred and even lost as the idealising apologetic tendency prevails both in oral and written tradition.

These conclusions are not peculiar to the Form-criticism school. The researches of the Source-criticism school brought them to light. The particular contribution of the Form-criticism school consists in what may be described as the unstringing, rearranging, and rethreading of the beads which constitute our Canonical Gospels, particularly the Synoptics, and preeminently Mk. All students of Mark's Gospel recognise that a considerable portion of it consists of little paragraphs (later incorporated into Mt. and Lk.) relating actions and words of Jesus. These are the beads. The string upon which they are strung consists of the chronological succession of these incidents which is interwoven with their localisation, which consists not merely of the geographical localities associated with incidents and sayings but is supplemented by such further information as "on the road," "in the boat" (no doubt Peter's), "in the house" (also Peter's), "in the mountain," "on the beach," "in the synagogue."

The Source-critics regarded Mark's string as of supreme value for the historical understanding of the order of events and the development of the methods of the ministry of Jesus. The Form-critics, for reasons which I cannot give here, regard Mark's string as of no value at all. On this point I find myself in acute disagreement with the Form-critics.

Having unstrung Mark's beads, the Form-critics examine and classify them according to a theory of literary forms: as legends, paradigms, wonder stories, apophthegms, exhortations, etc. This is a task of some difficulty, as the beads in some cases are not easily assigned to a particular class. The Form-critics then arrange these various literary forms in a hypothetical chronological succession which they assume will be the order of the evolution of a religious tradition. Having done this they restring the beads in groups in this order, which they claim to be the true order of the beads, in contrast to the order which they have in Mark's Gospel. Moreover, they do not regard the beads as themselves being actual reminiscences of the actions and words of Jesus (as, for instance, are the sections in the *Memorabilia* of Socrates compiled by his pupil, Xenophon). The beads are for the Form-critics the creation of the primitive Christian teachers and missionaries. The primitive Christian leaders skilfully fashioned some of these beads to satisfy the curiosity and devotional and practical needs of the members of the primitive Christian communities. Other beads they fashioned to meet their own apologetic needs in their work of propaganda, which brought them into conflict with Jewish and pagan opponents.

These beads are thus the creation, very largely, of the oral period of

Christian propaganda which preceded the period of literary composition which brought our Synoptic Gospels into existence. Our Synoptic Gospels and their literary sources consist almost entirely of collections of these beads. According to the Form-critics the order of events in the ministry of Jesus has been lost. All we have in its place, and it is supplied to us by the Form-critics, is the order of the growth of the tradition about Jesus, which tradition is not based upon history but is the product of the needs of the Christian community.

Hence, according to the Form-critics, our Gospels present us with an interesting picture of the cultus, practice, expectations, beliefs, problems, prejudices of the Christian Church in the second half of the first century, but not with any reliable historical account of Jesus Himself.

We may rightly concede to the Form-critics that Mark's Gospel does exhibit apologetic tendencies which are more fully developed in later Gospels. This, of course, is not new: the Source-critics were teaching it forty years ago, as may be seen by reference to Menzies' *The Earliest Gospel* (pub. 1896). Nevertheless, although influenced by various apologetic tendencies, especially in the selection of its material and in certain cases in the interpretation of it, Mark's Gospel will be found on examination to provide both in its contents and in the order of events which it relates a generally reliable guide to the understanding of the Messianic mission of Jesus. The Form-critics have made us aware of the part played by the Church (the particular Christian community for which the Gospel was written). In the composition of the Gospel, the Church did not wield the pen: that was done by the Evangelist; but the Church acted as inheritor of the Christian tradition and cultus, and no Gospel which was not in general harmony with these could hope to survive as authoritative in the Christian Church. Hence, our Gospels are not pure histories: they are primitive Christian apologies or, as some would say, primitive Church catechisms which enshrine primitive Christian traditions, beliefs, and practices. But this must be emphasised: these traditions, beliefs, and practices had *a solid basis in historic fact.* It is this which the more extreme Form-critics deny.

III. The Jewish Prophet School

Another school of critics is convinced that Jesus was a historical personage—a Jew of Palestine, although possibly not of pure Jewish decent, if we accept what are called "the slanders of the Talmud" and the theories of Mr. Houston Chamberlain and his Teutonic allies.

Nevertheless, Jesus was an absolute Jew in His religion and felt Himself called upon, in the spirit of one of the eighth-century prophets (an Amos or a Hosea), to reform that religion. As a consequence He made fierce attacks upon contemporary Judaism and its leaders, and, like other of the goodly fellowship of the Prophets of Israel who had preceded Him, He suffered their fate, but at the hands of the Roman Procurator of Judaea.

Some of His most enthusiastic followers, after His death, became convinced that Jesus, the prophet of Galilee, was more than a prophet, and

proclaimed their conviction that He was the Messiah, God's Anointed One, the Son of God. This conviction was stimulated, if not originated, by the report of some of His disciples that they had actually seen Him alive after His crucifixion. As Professor Shirley Jackson Case of Chicago, the ablest and latest exponent of this view, expresses it: "The process of idealisation rapidly gathered momentum. Time dimmed historical memories as death removed those who had known Jesus in the flesh." And so Jesus, who had never claimed to be the Messiah, is exalted to God's right hand, and His adoring and expectant Church awaits His apocalyptic return from heaven with power and great glory to be the Judge, as God's vicegerent, of all mankind.

The underlying and basic conviction which all the Gospels preserve is that Jesus undertook His mission simply and solely because He believed Himself to be the Messiah; although according to the earliest Gospel (Mk.) Jesus kept that conviction in His own breast, and until others had surmised it He Himself would not confess it.

The view that the historic Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah seems to us to be open to the fatal objection that it renders His historic ministry inexplicable. If He had claimed to be a prophet, and no more than a prophet, why should His death disillusion His followers as to the validity of His claim? His fate was only too common in the history of the prophets, but no loyal Jew supposed for an instant that martyrdom discredited either their message or their mission. It was because Jesus claimed to be Messiah that His crucifixion discredited His claim in the eyes of His disciples and of Judaism generally, which claim was only revived as the result of His disciples' experiences both of His resurrection and of the outpouring of His Spirit into their hearts.

The Messianic secret with the stages of its unveiling and recognition in Mk. is so unexpected and so original as to make it very difficult to believe that it is not historically true, but is merely a *post-mortem* fiction invented by the primitive disciples of Jesus. This impression is deepened when we observe the tendency in Mt. to confuse or ignore the stages in the unveiling of the Messianic secret as given by Mk. This impression is strengthened by John's deliberate correction of Mk. on this point. Jesus, in the Fourth Gospel, proclaims His Messiahship from the very beginning of His ministry.

We may add that the Messianic conviction of Jesus is enshrined as strongly and clearly in Q (the earliest of our literary sources) as it is in John (the latest of our Canonical Gospels).

It seems to us that unless we are going to regard, not only our Gospels, but the literary sources they use as unhistorical, we must accept the Messianic consciousness of Jesus as one of the best-attested facts we possess in regard to Him. The conclusion in no way contradicts the view that the contemporary Galileans regarded Jesus as a prophet and described Him as such. Nor does it contradict the conviction of His very early disciples that He was a Rabbi possessed of extraordinary wisdom, originality, and insight.

IV. The Eschatological School

Yet a fourth school of critics concludes that the historical Jesus did claim to be the Messiah, and a Messiah of the strictly apocalyptic kind. There seem to have been at least two current and popular conceptions of the Messiahship in existence at this time:

(*a*) The Zealots, a party of fanatical Jewish patriots, expected the Messiah to be a Jew who would claim the Messianic office and as a great political and military leader would deliver Judaism from pagan domination and establish a great Jewish empire on earth. In short, the Messiah was to be the patriotic successor of the Maccabean princes, but on a vaster scale.

(*b*) The second contemporary view of the Messiah was that He was a pre-existent spiritual Being dwelling in the celestial sphere with the most Ancient of Days, and that at the moment determined by Divine decree He would descend from heaven with legions of angels and archangels and by means of their flaming swords utterly destroy the pagan world and establish as Jehovah's vice-gerent a Messianic empire on earth which would last a thousand years or more.

This, with variations, is the conception of the Messiahship contained in the Jewish apocalypses, of which the most significant (with the exception of the Book of Daniel) was the Book of Enoch, written several generations before the birth of Jesus. These Jewish apocalypses seem to have gained a wide popularity among devout Jews. They were bright tracts for dark times, and they gave hope and good cheer to many who through them were led to wait, not to fight with material swords, for the redemption of Israel. Jesus is presumed to have been an ardent student of this kind of literature, and so was led to believe Himself to be the Messiah, and a Messiah of the apocalyptic type. There are many phrases and passages in the Gospels which indicate this. Of course we all recognise in this year of grace that these apocalyptic dreams failed to be realised, both for the Jews and for the Christians. There was no celestial irruption of spiritual champions to rescue Judaism from the Roman yoke, or to deliver the Christian Church from her pagan persecutors. Both Jew and Gentile, as they looked at the sky, asked: Where is the promise of His coming? But no triumphant Messiah descending with His angels from heaven gladdened their sight. . . . .

Is there really no place for a *tertium quid?* Are we absolutely tied to the view that either Jesus did not claim to be the Messiah at all or else that He claimed to be the Messiah in the strictly apocalyptic sense?

I am myself compelled to hold that there is such a *tertium quid*, and that Jesus did claim to be the Messiah but not in the strictly apocalyptic sense. The conclusion that He claimed to be Messiah in a strictly apocalyptic sense seems to me unconvincing, and for the following reasons:

If Jesus claimed to be a Messiah of the apocalyptic kind, the most fundamental element in His Gospel is lacking in originality. If the mystical narrative of the triple temptation derived from Q is meant to teach that Jesus accepted as His own the apocalyptic model of Messiahship, then He ought to have confuted the Tempter with three quotations from the

Book of Daniel or the *Similitudes of Enoch*, and not from *Deuteronomy*.

Another objection to the conclusion that Jesus regarded Himself as an apocalyptic Messiah is that there are profound sayings attributed to Him which are not in agreement with apocalyptic conceptions. The Divine Father of Jesus whom Jesus adored is not the avenging Deity of the apocalyptists. The sons of the Kingdom which Jesus proclaimed are not of the seed of Abraham in accordance with the evangel of the apocalyptists, but are all those who possess the moral and spiritual qualities commended in the Beatitudes.

If there be, on these essential issues, such divergence from current apocalypticism, why must we assume that the conception which Jesus held of the Messiahship was strictly apocalyptic? It will no doubt be replied: Because there are many sayings attributed to Jesus in the Gospels which make this identification certain. There are no doubt many such sayings, but can we be sure that they are His? We are quite sure that some of them are not His. Matthew's Gospel, the most Jewish of the Gospels, alters passages taken from Mk. so as to given them an apocalyptic significance. That Gospel omits nonapocalyptic passages which are found in Mk. It also inserts a number of apocalyptic passages. This indicates a strong tendency in primitive Jewish Christianity not only to interpret the teaching of Jesus apocalyptically, but also to ignore teaching attributed to Jesus which conflicted with current apocalyptic beliefs, and even to put into His mouth apocalyptic sayings which are not His.

Moreover, are there not a number of profound and original sayings of Jesus which are in conflict with these crude apocalyptic conceptions? And ought we not to regard this non-apocalyptic element in the recorded teaching of Jesus as that which is essentially His; and the apocalyptic element as having come in from contemporary Judaism through John the Baptist and the early disciples of Jesus, who were all Jews and of the apocalyptic kind?

Further, had not the apocalyptic conception of the Messiahship, as of the Kingdom and as of the Deity, an apologetic value for the early Christian Church which the more profound spiritual and moral elements of the teaching attributed to Jesus had not? Is there no critical justification for the pre-Schweitzerian Liberal view that as Jesus filled the current Jewish concepts of the Kingdom with a new and original content, so He did also those of the Messiahship?

I would not maintain that no apocalyptic elements are to be found in our Lord's original teaching about the Kingdom. Judaism owed much spiritually to certain elements in Apocalypticism, and these, there is good reason to believe, Jesus retained and included: but those aspects of apocalyptic teaching which experience has shown to be false and futile, I am unable, in view of the conflicting character of the evidence, to regard as part of the original Gospel of Jesus. Genius is more prone to create than to borrow, to strike out new paths for itself rather than to follow pedestrians on the highway; and Jesus has claims, although there are many who would deprive Him of every element of originality, to be regarded as a supreme moral

and spiritual genius. Jesus, in Matthew Arnold's phrase, is not only above the heads of His reporters, but He is also above the heads of His modern critics.

There is one contributor, however, to the pages of the New Testament who did not take the apocalyptic view either of the Kingdom or of the Messiahship of Jesus. I refer, of course, to the author of the Fourth Gospel. He identified the Kingdom with eternal life to be entered into here and now, and the Messiahship of the Kingdom he identified with the mission of the Life-giver: "I am come that they may have life, and have it abundantly." How far he was historically justified in this view is no easy question to answer, but I am drawn to think that he had a more profound understanding of the essential teaching of Jesus than had those primitive Jewish disciples who are reported to have asked Jesus on the occasion of His ascension: "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?"

THE EVANGELIST'S PURPOSE

Ernest Cadman Colwell

ALTHOUGH WE STILL call the author of a gospel an evangelist, we seldom avail ourselves of the interesting analogies between the evangelists of the first centuries of the Christian era and those evangelists who are our contemporaries. In the first century, as today, the evangelist worked alone. He preached an adequate and sufficient gospel; what was essential was present in his own message; he needed no one to supplement his sermons. Although he had assistants, their duties lay outside the evangelistic area. In Paul's letters, for example, we have no hint that Timothy and Paul alternated as preachers. Four evangelists preaching in one tabernacle would strike the twentieth-century Christian as an amazing spectacle, and if he finds four evangelists in his New Testament, he may feel sure that this was not planned by the evangelists.

The earliest Christian communities were one-gospel communities. Before 125 A.D. there is no evidence of the use of more than one gospel in one community. Ignatius of Antioch, for example, who was martyred about 117 A.D., used Matthew alone. When Marcion made the first New Testament collection he used only the Gospel of Luke. In doing this he followed the practice of his contemporaries, for nothing could have seemed more strange to them than the use of two, three or four gospels. It is difficult for us who were born with four stories of Jesus to appreciate their situation. The rivalry between favorites from various localities culminated in the formation of our fourfold group only after a long and bitter struggle. As Harnack long ago pointed out, the strangest thing in the New Testament is the presence of *four* gospels. Embarrassment at the presence of four gospels was felt as early as the second century. Almost as soon as the Roman church accepted our fourfold canon, a young Syrian at Rome blended the four Gospels into one continuous gospel narrative—the *Diatessaron*.

It was both sensible and natural that the author of an early Christian gospel should conceive of his task as the writing of *the* gospel. No one of them planned to write volume two or volume three of the gospel; nor, we can be sure, did any one of them entitle his work "The Second Gospel," "The Third Gospel," etc. "The Gospel of Jesus Christ" (Mark 1:1) indicates the nature of the original titles of our Gospels. The very formality of the opening of Mark is evidence that the author intended his work to be *the* story and not one of many stories. Mark probably had at least one written source, the story of the last week and the resurrection; but

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From *John Defends the Gospel*, Chicago, 1936, pp. 1-14. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Willett, Clark & Company.

no one would insist that he intended his gospel to be read beside this earlier Passion gospel. For the finished work is in itself proof that Mark shaped his sources (oral and written) so as to produce a gospel that could be read without reference to other books or stories. The book written by Mark was a complete and independent story of the gospel of Jesus. As such a sufficient work, it was accepted at Rome, where it served the local community for some time as the Roman gospel.

In the case of Matthew we can see even more clearly the author's conception of his task as the writing of *the* gospel. Part of this increase in clarity comes from our possession of one of his sources, the Gospel of Mark. The possession of a copy of the Gospel by Matthew made the possession of a copy of the Gospel by Mark a superfluous luxury. Matthew incorporates all but about forty verses of the Gospel of Mark. It is for this reason that Matthew's Gospel has been called a fresh, enlarged and revised edition of Mark. Second editions are made to replace first editions, and Matthew would have completely eliminated Mark from Christian libraries if Mark had not already been strongly established in the powerful Roman Church.

Matthew supplemented Mark but was in no sense a supplement to Mark. He makes his additions to Mark within the pages of his own Gospel in the effort to produce a better gospel than that by Mark. The success of the effort is shown by the clear preference of the church for Matthew. The preservation of Mark to be read beside Matthew would have seemed incredible to the author of Matthew.

Luke also tried to write *the* gospel. That the tone of his comments on previous efforts is depreciatory was obvious to Eusebius:

> And when Luke began his composition, he himself set forth the purpose for which he made his arrangement. He shows that the number and diversity of those who too rashly had undertaken to make an account of the things which He [Jesus] had fulfilled makes it necessary for him [Luke] to free us from the contradictory opinions of the others. Therefore he handed down through his own gospel the accurate account of those things the truth of which he had adequately discovered both from his association and conversation with Paul and from the advantage of his association with the remaining apostles.

Eusebius has skilfully identified the key-words and fundamental significance of Luke's prologue. It is *because* of the existence of a number of divergent gospels that Luke writes *the* gospel so that Theophilus may have a single authority. What Luke tried to give Theophilus was a "security against stumbling or falling" which he could never feel in the confusion caused by the existence of competitive gospels. The presence of several divergent and even contradictory accounts of Jesus' career would disturb and unsettle the believer. To explain Luke's purpose as the writing of another gospel to be used beside "the many" makes his prologue a meaningless *non sequitur*. So conceived, it says, "Since there already are many gospels, I decided to write one more." What he actually says is: "Since there are many gospels, I decided to write the best gospel by combining all the excellences of present gospels; thus I hope to reduce manifold diversity to orderly unity and increase the security of the Christian tradition."

Luke's dependence on Mark is not so extensive as that of Matthew, and Streeter has suggested that Luke combined Mark with another early gospel (Proto-Luke) to form our Third Gospel. This is not to say that Luke expected Mark to rival his new gospel; on the contrary, his combination of Mark with another source which he regarded as at least equally valuable was designed to make the new gospel so much more useful than Mark that the Christian in search of a gospel would inevitably turn away from Mark to Luke.

Professor Cadbury, whose opinion in this area must carry the greatest weight, has claimed that Luke's purpose was the writing of an independent gospel:

> I think it is quite wrong to suppose that Luke or even John in writing assumed in the readers a knowledge of earlier gospels. The new work was in each case intended to stand by itself. It is we moderns who make the comparison, and only too often we suppose that the author anticipated such comparison, as though John were correcting or supplementing Mark and the other Synoptics, or that Luke were producing a different version to serve for a different community alongside of established and well known predecessors like Mark and Q. Each wrote to serve its own purpose, independently and without regard to others. At most an ancient author could hope to be a supplanter.[1] . . . .

The most important source used by the author of the Fourth Gospel was the Synoptic Gospels. . . . . [In using the Synoptic Gospels] the fourth evangelist not only omits and adds; he also makes drastic changes in what he uses. . . . .

All this omission, addition and change make the Gospel of John a new gospel. It shows plainly that the evangelist's purpose was to write the only gospel necessary to a knowledge of Jesus as the light and life of the world. But, when the purpose of the evangelist has been defined as the writing of *the* gospel, the definition of his purpose has been begun, but no more. What were the varying interests that fused together in his purpose? Why did he choose what he did from the wealth of Christian tradition about Jesus that came down to him? Part of the answer lies in the fact that John and his audience were Christians of more culture than those who listened to Paul and those who wrote and read the earlier gospels. That John's Gospel was written for people of some social standing is suggested by a study of its distinctive features.

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[1] H. J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke–Acts* (New York, 1927), p. 331.

WAS HE REALLY THE FOUNDER?

John Baillie

I

. . . . Of recent years a number of learned and responsible historical scholars have appeared to champion the view, in one form or another, that Jesus of Nazareth was *not*, in actual fact, the founder of the Christian religion, because what is most distinctive in its faith and life cannot be traced back to Him but originated after His death in the Pentecostal community itself or even in the mind of St. Paul.

This view is to be regarded as representing the extreme limit of a tendency in the historical criticism of the New Testament which has marked the whole modern epoch and which every competent enquirer now believes to be justified up to a certain point. Traditional theology, having been (as we now think) singularly deficient in historical sense, was unaware of any difference whatever between the teaching of Jesus and that of the apostolic age—as reflected most notably in the Epistles of St. Paul. The religion taught by Jesus and that taught by St. Paul were represented as being identical in every particular; as indeed must have been the case, seeing that both Gospels and Epistles were regarded as direct and undiluted (and perhaps even verbally accurate) messages from heaven. There was, however, a difference between the religion *practised* by Jesus and that practised by Paul, because Paul and Jesus occupied different positions in that redemptive scheme which was identically the same in the teaching of both: in that scheme Jesus was the Redeemer while Paul was but one of the redeemed. So the Christianity of the early Church was held to be more than the religion *of* Jesus, because it was also a religion *about* Jesus; but between the two there was no degree of discrepancy, because it was held that this religion *about* Jesus was the religion which Jesus Himself had taught His disciples to practise, though in the nature of the case He could not completely practise it Himself.

It is against this position that the historical scholarship of the last three-quarters of a century has entered so vigorous a protest. That this protest has been justified we are all now agreed. It is no longer possible for us to read our New Testaments without being very wide awake to the vastly different frameworks in which (to mention only that one example) are set the thinking of our Lord and the thinking of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. But a difference in framework is one thing, and a difference in essential message and intention quite another. And what is claimed by

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From *The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity*, New York, 1929, pp. 76-101. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

those recent writers to whom I referred at the beginning is just that the essential message for which the primitive and Pauline community is now seen to have stood cannot any longer be held to have had its real source in the mind of our Lord Himself. The religion *of* Jesus, we are now told, was one thing, while the Pauline religion *about* Jesus was quite another thing, the two being radically discrepant in many essential ways. The nature of this discrepancy is not always stated in quite the same fashion, but the extreme view may perhaps be said to be that Jesus was to all intents and purposes an orthodox Jew, with little in His teaching that was new, but with a greater than usual absorption in the apocalyptic outlook, whereas the religion that after His death grew around His name was, more than anything else, a variety of the Graeco-Oriental myth of a Dying God.

Here, plainly, is a problem which we must resolutely tackle, for there is hardly any historical conclusion which could be more deeply disturbing to the life of Christian devotion . . . . than this one which sets a gulf between our Christian faith and the mind of our Lord Himself, and cuts all deeper estimates of His significance at the root by denying Him His primary position as Founder. . . . .

And so I shall devote this chapter to an attempt to show that Jesus of Nazareth really was the Founder of Christianity and the Pioneer in all that is most distinctive in its faith and in its life.

It will be remembered that we found the essence of apostolic Christianity to consist in the experience of a divine-human fellowship in which each man stood in a relation of *agapē* towards God as Father and towards his fellow men as brothers. What I shall now try to show is that the conception and realisation of such a fellowship goes back in the fullest possible way to the spiritual insight of the historic Jesus.

II

As regards the ethical aspect of the apostolic fellowship—its conception of the love of man for man—this contention does not really stand in need of elaborate proof. It has often been remarked with reference to the Pauline Epistles that however unlike the Gospels they may be in almost every other way, yet in their ultimate pronouncements about conduct there is just no difference at all. The Apostle's thought seems often to traverse very different channels from that of His Master, but as regards the practical result of it, it always comes out at exactly the same point. Their theologies may look different, but at least their conceptions of Christian character are one and the same. Indeed the more attentively we read what St. Paul has to say about Christian character, the more do we come to feel that he is hardly doing more than painting the portrait of Jesus of Nazareth. "Love is very patient, very kind. Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; love is never glad when others go wrong, love is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient"—can we have any doubt who it was who sat in the studio of Paul's imagination for that famous little vignette of the ideal

man? And what doubt is there that the Apostle's own *agapē*, the *agapē* which drove him to the ends of the world in missionary enterprise, went back for its one source to the remembrance of his Master's love for the poor, for the sick, for those in prison, for the lost sheep, for the prodigal sons?

Nor is it merely with the silent spirit of his Master's life that St. Paul's teaching shows a close correspondence, but also with His spoken words. There is not a phrase in that description of love which St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that cannot be paralleled with a saying of Jesus. And we may set the long opening sentence of the same great chapter beside an equally familiar passage from the teaching of our Lord:

I may speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but if I have no love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal; I may prophesy, fathom all mysteries and secret lore, I may have such absolute faith that I can move hills from their place, but if I have no love, I count for nothing; I may distribute all I possess in charity, I may give up my body to be burnt, but if I have no love, I make nothing of it.

So you will know them by their fruit. It is not every one who says to me "Lord, Lord!" who will get into the Realm of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me at that Day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? did we not cast out demons in your name? did we not perform many miracles in your name?" Then I will declare to them, "I never knew you. . . . ."

Is it possible not to feel how closely the first of these passages is following the second?

It will be remembered that we summed up the meaning of brotherly love, as it was understood within the apostolic fellowship, as "the transference, by an act of imaginative sympathy, to all those with whom we have to do, of those sentiments of tenderness and affection which even the meanest of us bestow upon our own flesh and blood." But nothing is more certain than that this insight goes back for its inception to the mind of our Lord. It was He who first realised this deep and wide significance that is latent in family life and its sentiment of brotherliness. The distinctive Christian use of the word "brother" is plainly of His own institution. "One is your teacher," He said to His disciples, "and all you are brothers." And again, "Stretching out his hand towards his disciples, he said, Here are my mother and my brothers." Indeed there is no better way of summing up His whole teaching concerning our relations with those around us than by saying that, in all our dealings with them, brotherliness is to take the place of justice. We are to put aside all that miserable machinery that we have invented for dealing with those who are outside the circle of our immediate kin, and which is the joint product of fear and jealously and greed; we are to put aside legal justice and retributive punishment and satisfaction for wrongs inflicted and the *lex talionis* and all their wretched company; and we are to deal with all men as we would deal with our own brothers and our own sons. That is what the Christian spirit meant for Jesus, and it is also what it meant for every writer of the apostolic age.

But there was one particular implication of this Christian brotherliness

which we were led to emphasise in speaking of Paul and his contemporaries, and which we must now emphasise no less in speaking of the teaching of our Lord. The spirit of brotherly love, we saw, did not merely mean that we were to be patient and forbearing and forgiving in our dealings with our fellows, it meant also that we were to go out after them in arduous redemptive enterprise. Christian love, we found, was above all things else a *redemptive* love—a love that helps, a love that saves, a love that goes out to seek the lost. But now what is there that lies nearer the centre both of the preaching and of the practice of our Lord than this insistence upon the duty of exercising our love to a redemptive end? What parable is more central to His message than the parable of the Lost Sheep? What hours spent by Him are more revealing of His heart and mind than the hours He spent among the lost sheep of the house of Israel—among the halt and maimed and blind, among the publicans and sinners, among broken men and fallen women? When John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to Jesus with the question, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus replied, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, and the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." That is Jesus' idea of Christianity. That is how He conceives of the final religion. We are to look, He says, for nothing higher than that. We misunderstand Him, taking Him to mean that Christianity is attested or constituted by "miracles." Yet Jesus Himself always seemed to claim that there was nothing "miraculous" about His mighty works, which were no more than might always be the natural products of a little faith and a little love—"even as a grain of mustard seed"; and He declared also that to many workers of so-called miracles He would at the last be obliged to say "I never knew you." Ah no! It was not their spectacular quality or their unaccountability that made the deeds witnessed by John's disciples so plainly premonitory of the dawn of a new era, it was the *redemptive passion* that was in them. One of the most valuable services which the Jewish writer, Dr. Claude Montefiore, has rendered to the study of the Gospels has been his generous insistence, in book after book, upon the real and epoch-making originality of this contribution which Jesus makes to the spiritual advance of mankind. The Rabbis, he says in one remarkable passage,

> Welcomed the sinner in his repentance. But to *seek out* the sinner, and, instead of avoiding the bad companion, to choose him as your friend in order to work his moral redemption, this was, I fancy, something new in the religious history of Israel. . . . . It was, doubtless, often a daring method; even with Jesus it may not always have been successful. But it inaugurated a new idea: the idea of redemption, the idea of giving a fresh object of love and interest to the sinner, and so freeing him from sin. The rescue and deliverance of the sinner through pity and love and personal service—the work and the method seem alike due to the teacher of Nazareth.[1]

If it be really true, as a historical fact, that the inauguration of the idea

[1] *Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 57-58.

of redemption goes back to Jesus of Nazareth, and that this was the idea for which, both in His words and His deeds, He mainly stood, then the apostolic community made no great mistake in linking with His name the message they brought to "the circle of the lands."

No less clearly, however, are we able to trace back to Jesus Himself the final insight which we found to be implied in the apostolic conception of brotherly love—the thought that it cannot be effectively redemptive unless it be a *suffering* love. It might indeed be thought natural, and involved in the very nature of the case, that at this point St. Paul and his contemporaries should depend more upon the impression made upon themselves by the events of Jesus' own suffering and death than by any words that He spoke during His life. Yet in the first place, was it not the spirit in which Jesus faced these events that made so profound an impression upon them, rather than the actual happening of the events themselves? And in the second place, who was it after all who had first taught them what these events imported, but just Jesus Himself? Would the disciple's faith ever have recovered from the tragedy of Calvary, would the Resurrection faith ever have been possible to them, if Jesus had not long before said "The Son of Man must first suffer, and give his life a ransom for many," and "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished"? It is equally plain that Jesus realised the revealing light which His own experience of suffering threw upon the universal nature of all truly redemptive love. "Drink ye all of it," He said of the cup that represented His blood that was about to be shed. And even if we discount such sayings as "Greater love hath no man than this . . . ." and "Except a corn of wheat . . . ." as purely Johannine, and allow that the phrasing of such a saying as "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple" may bear upon it the mark of later history, yet we still have everywhere in the teaching of our Lord the same broad sentiment that no man can be His disciple who is not willing to leave father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters in order to the better performance of his redemptive duty. Undoubtedly our Christian discovery of the arduousness of the redemptive enterprise goes back to the mind that was in Christ Jesus.

"All that Christ asked of the world wherewith to save it," said Lamennais, "was a cross whereon to die."

III

We pass now to the other and greater relationship included in the Christian *agapē*—God's fatherly love towards us and the sense of sonship to which it gives rise in our human hearts. Can we claim that here too the Pauline and Johannine teaching has its essential roots in the mind of the Master?

It is to this question particularly that a negative answer has been given by the group of contemporary historians mentioned above. Their view is that in His conception of God and of all God's dealings with men Jesus Himself was an orthodox Jew, and that the distinctively Christian view

of God and His dealings is an original product of the apostolic mind, though some would allow it to be a product partly determined by the influence of the moral character of Jesus. "Jesus," writes Loisy, "does not even pretend to make God known under a new aspect." [2] There is no sign, writes Prof. Lake, "that Jesus felt that he had any new revelation as to the nature of God." [3] "The God of Jesus is the God of the Jews," he writes again in collaboration with Prof. Foakes-Jackson.[4] Of recent years Dr. McGiffert has seemed to be converted to this view. "The God of Jesus," he writes, "was the God of the Jews, pure and simple. . . . . The step which he had failed to take was taken by the apostle Paul. In his hands the new religion became a saving cult. . . . ." [5] "So far as the God of the Christians is different from the God of the Jews, it is due not to Jesus' teaching about God, but to the teaching of Paul and those that came after, or still more to the personality of Jesus and the interpretation his followers put upon it." [6] The meaning of all these pronouncements is clear: they mean that the new and forward step in religion on which the Christian Church founds is to be placed, not between the Rabbis and Jesus, but between Jesus and Paul.

I believe this view to be demonstrably false, and I shall try to indicate the lines on which a demonstration of its falsity may proceed.

The heart of the Johannine gospel is that "God is love." The heart of the Pauline gospel is that God is not a taskmaster who rewards us in strict proportion as we obey His rules, but a Father who, while we are still disobedient to His rules, seeks us out in love and accepts us into His fellowship of His own free grace. But it is not difficult to show that this great and emancipating conception of Deity not only had its ultimate source in that enhanced conception of brotherly love and forgiveness which Jesus preached and practiced as regards our man-to-man relations, but had also its proximate source in Jesus' own application of this new ethical insight to the thought of God the Father. It has always seemed to me that the burden of proof in this matter lies, not with those who affirm an identity of outlook between Jesus and His disciples, but with those who deny such an identity; for how the new religion could have grown out of devotion to the memory of one who was no more than a staunch supporter of the old would in itself be a fact loudly calling for satisfactory explanation. Now it is denied by all the historians mentioned above that our Lord placed any greater emphasis on the thought of God's fatherhood than was placed on it by other Jews of His day. Yet that *Paul* thought of Christianity as placing a new and peculiar emphasis on this thought is, as we saw in an earlier chapter, not denied by anybody. There is therefore a strong initial presumption in favour of the view that this emphasis had its source in the mind of Paul's Lord; and this presumption is, as I believe, sufficient to weigh down the scale of the Synoptic evidence on the matter until it becomes nothing less

[2] *L'évangile et l'église*, Ch. III
[3] *Landmarks in the History of Early Christianity*, p. 62.
[4] *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. I, p. 288.
[5] *The God of the Early Christians*, p. 193.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

than certainty. As to this Synoptic evidence I shall content myself with setting down the testimony of two contemporary Jews, which, though it may not go far, goes quite far enough to prove my point. Rabbi Joseph Klausner of Jerusalem writes as follows:

> The phrase "Our Father, who art in heaven" is so common in the *Talmudic* literature as to render quotation superfluous. . . . . In this also Jesus is a genuine Jew. Jesus, however, makes far more use of such expressions as "Father," "My Father," "My Father in heaven" than do the Pharisees and *Tannaim;* and often when he employs it, it receives an *excessive* emphasis.[7]

And he goes on to speak of Jesus' "*exaggerated* sense of nearness to God." The other writer is Dr. Montefiore, who says:

> We certainly do not get in the Hebrew Bible any teacher speaking of God as "Father," "my Father," "your Father," and "our Father" like the Jesus of Matthew. We do not get so habitual and concentrated a use from any Rabbi in the Talmud. And this habitual and concentrated use rightly produces upon us an impression.[8]

Far more decisive, however, than our Lord's use of any particular phraseology is the simple fact that He seldom put forward His admittedly new teaching about the love of one another without in the same breath carrying the analogy to that greater love which God bears to us. Love, He always seems to be telling us, is essentially the same thing in man and in God. "After this manner therefore pray ye, ... Forgive . . . . as we forgive . . . ." And we are not commanded even to love our enemies without being told that God loves *His* enemies. "Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again . . . . and ye shall be the children of the Most High: for he is kind to the unthankful and the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father is also merciful." After all, how identical that is with Paul's essential gospel! It was Jesus, not Paul, who first clearly declared what the prophets and psalmists of Israel had long ago begun to understand—that justice and law are not God's last words in His dealings with men. It was Jesus, not Paul, who first told us that God is not a taskmaster who loves only righteous men and rewards them in proportion as they have succeeded in keeping his rules, but is rather a Lover who seeks us out while we are yet sinners and bestows His gifts of His own free grace. It was Jesus, not Paul, who first told us that there is more joy in God's heart over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. It was Jesus who first in a parable made God say, "I will grant unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Dost thou look with envy, because I am generous? So the last shall be first, and the first last." And how essentially (even after we have discounted Luke's use of the word "justify" as being possibly due to Paul's own influence) is the Pauline gospel of salvation not by works but by grace through faith contained in Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, with its cry of "God be merciful to me a sinner" and its con-

[7] *Jesus of Nazareth*, American edition (1925), pp. 377 f.
[8] *The Old Testament and After*, p. 205.

clusion that "this man went down to his house justified rather than the other"!

There is, in fact, no historical perception which is more necessary to the proper understanding of the New Testament than the perception that the characteristic outlook of Paulinism has its roots firmly planted in this distinction on which Jesus was always insisting between two ways of facing life and approaching the Divine—the way of the Pharisee and the way of the publican in the parable. The distinction finds its first clear expression in the Beatitudes, where blessedness is promised only to those who are "poor in spirit" and "meek" and who "hunger and thirst after righteousness." It reaches its height in the selection of the little child as furnishing a type for the attitude of mind necessary for entrance into the privileges of the divine fellowship. "Of such is the Kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." What God requires of us as a precondition of acceptance into the kingdom of His love is not—so our Lord consistently taught—any kind of attainment, but only humility. It does not matter if we have nothing to *offer*, so long as only we are willing to *receive*. For Jesus, as for Paul, God's Kingdom is always a free *gift*. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." It is worth while to quote the testimony of the same two Jewish writers, Montefiore and Klausner, on this point. The former writes:

> The Kingdom . . . . is not so much a reward as a grace. Do what he will, man never deserves it; do his duty as he may, man has no claim for special recognition and reward. The Kingdom, when it comes, will be far greater and more glorious than any man can have merited. It is not the product of calculating justice and retribution; it is the outflow of God's free and exuberant love.
>
> I do not think that these few statements go beyond what Jesus actually says in the Synoptic Gospels, and I am also inclined to think that, though they are not without their parallels in the Rabbinic literature, they nevertheless may be regarded as comparatively new and original.[9]

Rabbi Klausner is still more emphatic in his attribution to Jesus of the teaching that our acceptance with God is in no way preconditioned by any merit on our part, but it is interesting to see that, unlike Dr. Montefiore, he utterly rejects this teaching as contravening the spirit of Judaism:

> There was yet another element in Jesus' idea of God which Judaism could not accept.
>
> Jesus tells his disciples that they must love their enemies as well as their friends, since their "Father in heaven makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends his rain upon the righteous and upon the ungodly." . . . . It follows, therefore, that God is not *absolute righteousness*, but *the good* before whom is no evil. . . . . He is not the God of justice, in spite of his Day of Judgement: in other words, *he is not the God of History*.
>
> With this, Jesus introduces something new into the idea of God. . . . . Not that Judaism does not also rate highly the repentant sinners. . . . . But the unrepentant *destroy the world*, they break down the *moral* order, and therefore destroy the *natural* order too. . . . . God is good; but he also requires justice. He is "merciful and compassionate, long-

[9] *Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 97 f.

suffering and of great kindness"; but, none the less, "he will by no means acquit the guilty." . . . . Jesus' idea of God is the very reverse.[10]

The assumption is constantly being made by writers of our day that the redemptive aspect of the Christian religion is purely Pauline in origin, and does not go back at all to the Jesus of the Synoptic narratives. Nothing could be less true. We have already seen how Jesus' own ministry was entirely given over to the enterprise of redemption. All His days were spent in going out after the lost sheep of His native land and seeking to win them back into the fold. And when people twitted Him about the strange company He was thus led to keep, His deliberate reply was, "I have not come to call just men but sinners." Yet no attentive reader of the Gospels can fail to be aware that He goes to these lost sheep armed, not merely with His own love, but with the love of Almighty God. He seeks them out Himself, but His essential message to them is that God is seeking them out. "The Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them"; and Jesus, to justify this redemptive passion of His, told them the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son; yet when He has finished telling them, it is only God's redemptive passion that He justifies! He does not say that likewise there is more joy in His own human heart over one repentant sinner than over ninety and nine just persons; He says that there is more joy in *heaven*—in the heart of God. And what is that but the gospel of redemption—

> "The patience of immortal love
> Outwearying mortal sin." [11]

In speaking of the religion of the apostolic age we found its crowning insight to be the realisation that the divine redemptive quest of the human heart somehow necessarily involves *suffering*, and that such suffering found its supreme embodiment in the Passion and death of Christ. There is a sense, no doubt, in which this teaching had to wait for the Master's death before finding expression. God could not be found in the Crucifixion until the Crucifixion had taken place. And in this respect, if in no other, it is true that the Christianity of the apostolic age represents a fuller gospel than any that could have come from the Master's own lips in the days of His flesh. So it might be held that instead of claiming that Jesus anticipated Paul in finding in His Passion a revelation of the suffering love of God, we must content ourselves with claiming, in the words of Archbishop Temple, that "His bearing throughout the Passion is the exact counterpart of His own teaching about God." [12] Yet this is not quite the whole truth. It is plain that, in looking forward to His own death, He found in it a divine—we might almost say a cosmic—significance. He knew Himself to have been chosen of God for this work of redeeming Israel's lost sheep, and He knew

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[10] *Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 379 f.
[11] Whittier, "My Birthday."
[12] In *Foundations* (ed. Streeter), p. 221.

also that His suffering and death were a divinely-appointed part of this work of redemption. And so in His forward view of it, hardly less definitely than in Paul's backward view, the Cross appeared as the final seal and proof of God's love for man. . . . .

IV

Meanwhile I think that we have fully established the Church's right to what we called the simpler view of its Lord's significance—His significance as the true Pioneer of its faith and Founder of its fellowship. I believe, indeed, that this side of Jesus' significance is clearer to us now than it has ever been before. That new feeling for the actualities of history which has come to our Western World during the last hundred years has resulted in our now having in our possession a truer picture of the Jesus of history than has been available to any previous generation of Christians since the apostolic age; and here we have, beyond question, one of the greatest gains—perhaps the very greatest—which the mind of our time has had to contribute to the further development of our Christian heritage. It is but too true that this century-long "quest of the historical Jesus" has had its perplexities, its set-backs, and even its moments of despair. But for myself I have no doubt at all that it has left us richer than it found us. It has brought our Lord far closer to our latter-day souls and to our latter-day problems than He could ever otherwise have been. It has given us a Brother of the very kind we need, one tempted and tried in the very ways in which life tries and tempts ourselves, yet victorious over life and showing us the way to victory. Never before has it been quite so true that His life was the light of men.

Of recent years there has been a tendency among a certain school of writers, who have combined a "modernist" open-mindness towards the historical criticism of the Gospels with a close attachment to the later "catholic" tradition, to draw sharp contrast between the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith," and to declare that their own interest is centered in the latter rather than the former. To this end they have been ready to make alliance with the school of historical writers whom we have in this chapter been concerned to criticise. They will tell you that Jesus, so far from having founded the Christian religion in all its fulness and richness, was an orthodox Jew with no new teaching of any kind. They will tell you that the true core and centre of the Christian religion lies not in the teaching of Jesus, nor in the spirit in which He went to His death, but rather in the fact (which became progressively clear and definite to the mind of the Church in the early centuries) that it was the second person of the Divine Trinity who here lived and died. Yet I am convinced that none of the alternatives at present confronting Christian thought has so little light of hope in it as this one. No more is needed for its complete collapse than the simple reminder that *if* there was nothing remarkable in the spirit in which Jesus faced His life or in His teaching about how life should be faced, *then* there is left to us no possible or thinkable ground for finding God present in Him in any greater way or degree than He is present in the rest of us. It was the impression made upon His disciples by the spirit and the words of the

historic Jesus which first suggested to them that higher view of His significance to which the Church has ever since clung; and it is only so far as the historic Jesus, as portrayed in the existent records, can still make that impression upon us, that we of to-day can hope to share that view and find it reasonable.

Thus to the attempted separation of the religion *of* Jesus and the religion *about* Jesus there is only one effective reply. There is no hope in the position that Christianity founds not in the former but in the latter. Nor is there any hope in the position that it founds in a combination of both, regarded as different and separate entities. The only hope lies in seeing that, in the last resort, and at heart, the two religions are one and the same. I believe, and I have tried to prove, that every essential root of the religion of Paul and the apostolic age is to be found in the mind of Jesus of Nazareth. And for myself I will add this, and I will say it in full remembrance of the many puzzles and perplexities which the study of the New Testament still continues to present to me—that the light of Christian truh which has illumined for me the dark and difficult road of life nowhere shines with so clear and pure a radiance as just in the Synoptic story.

THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS

Adolf Harnack

OUR AUTHORITIES FOR the message which Jesus Christ delivered are—apart from certain important statements made by Paul—the first three Gospels. Everything that we know, independently of these Gospels, about Jesus' history and his teaching, may be easily put on a small sheet of paper, so little does it come to. In particular, the fourth Gospel, which does not emanate or profess to emanate from the apostle John, cannot be taken as an historical authority in the ordinary meaning of the word. The author of it acted with sovereign freedom, transposed events and put them in a strange light, drew up the discourses himself, and illustrated great thoughts by imaginary situations. Although, therefore, his work is not altogether devoid of a real, if scarcely recognisable, traditional element, it can hardly make any claim to be considered an authority for Jesus' history; only little of what he says can be accepted, and that little with caution. On the other hand, it is an authority of the first rank for answering the question, What vivid views of Jesus' person, what kind of light and warmth, did the Gospel disengage?

Sixty years ago David Friedrich Strauss thought that he had almost entirely destroyed the historical credibility not only of the fourth but also of the first three Gospels as well. The historical criticism of two generations has succeeded in restoring that credibility in its main outlines. These Gospels are not, it is true, historical works any more than the fourth; they were not written with the simple object of giving the facts as they were; they are books composed for the work of evangelisation. Their purpose is to awaken a belief in Jesus Christ's person and mission; and the purpose is served by the description of his deeds and discourses, as well as by the references to the Old Testament. Nevertheless they are not altogether useless as sources of history, more especially as the object with which they were written is not supplied from without, but coincides in part with what Jesus intended. But such other great leading purposes as have been ascribed to the evangelists have been one and all shown to lack any foundation, although with each individual evangelist many secondary purposes may have come into play. The Gospels are not "party tracts"; neither are they writings which as yet bear the radical impress of the Greek spirit. In their essential substance they belong to the first, the Jewish, epoch of Christianity, that brief epoch which may be denoted as the palaeontological. That we possess any reports dating from that time, even though, as is obvious in the first and third Gospel, the setting and the composition are by another hand, is one of those historical arrangements for which we cannot be too thankful. Criticism to-

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day universally recognises the unique character of the Gospels. What especially marks them off from all subsequent literature is the way in which they state their facts. This species of literary art, which took shape partly by analogy with the didactic narratives of the Jews, and partly from catechetical necessities—this simple and impressive form of exposition was, even a few decades later, not any longer capable of exact reproduction. From the time that the Gospel was transferred to the broad ground of the Graeco-Roman world it appropriated the literary forms of the Greeks, and the style of the evangelists was then felt to be something strange but sublime. When all is said, the Greek language lies upon these writings only like a diaphanous veil, and it requires hardly any effort to retranslate their contents into Hebrew or Aramaic. That the tradition here presented to us is, in the main, at first hand is obvious.

How fixed this tradition was in regard to its form is proved by the third Gospel. It was composed by a Greek, probably in the time of Domitian; and in the second part of his work, the Acts of the Apostles—besides the preface to the first—he shows us that he was familiar with the literary language of his nation and that he was an excellent master of style. But in the Gospel narrative he did not dare to abandon the traditional type: he tells his story in the same style as Mark and Matthew, with the same connection of sentences, the same colour, nay, with many of precisely the same details; it is only the ruder words and expressions, which would offend literary taste, that are sparingly corrected. There is another respect, too, in which his Gospel strikes us as remarkable: he assures us at the beginning of it that he has "had perfect understanding of all things from the very first," and has examined many accounts. But if we test him by his authorities, we find that he has kept in the main to Mark's Gospel, and to a source which we also find appearing again in Matthew. These accounts both seemed to him, as a respectable chronicler, to be preferable to the crowd of others. That offers a good guarantee for them. No historian has found that it is possible or necessary to substitute any other tradition for the one which we have here.

Another point: this tradition is, apart from the story of the Passion, almost exclusively Galilean in its character. Had not the history of Jesus' public activity been really bounded by this geographical horizon, tradition could not have so described it; for every historical narrative with an eye to effect would have represented him as working chiefly in Jerusalem. That is the account given by the fourth Gospel. That our first three evangelists almost entirely refrain from saying anything about Jerusalem arouses a good prejudice in their favour.

It is true that, measured by the standard of "agreement, inspiration and completeness," these writings leave a very great deal to be desired, and even when judged by a more human standard they suffer from not a few imperfections. Rude additions from a later age they do not, indeed, exhibit—it will always remain a noteworthy fact that, conversely, it is only the fourth Gospel which makes Greeks ask after Jesus—but still they, too, reflect, here and there, the circumstances in which the primitive Christian community was placed and the experiences which it afterwards underwent.

People nowadays, however, put such constructions on the text more readily than is necessary. Further, the conviction that Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus' history had a disturbing effect on tradition. Lastly, in some of the narratives the miraculous element is obviously intensified. On the other hand, Strauss' contention that the Gospels contain a very great deal that is mythical has not been borne out, even if the very indefinite defective conception of what "mythical" means in Strauss' application of the word, be allowed to pass. It is almost exclusively in the account of Jesus' childhood, and there only sparingly, that a mythical touch can be traced. None of these disturbing elements affect the heart of the narrative; not a few of them easily lend themselves to correction, partly by a comparison of the Gospels one with another, partly through the sound judgment that is matured by historical study.

But the miraculous element, all these reports of miracles! Not Strauss only, but many others too, have allowed themselves to be frightened by them into roundly denying the credibility of the Gospels. But, on the other hand, historical science in this last generation has taken a great step in advance by learning to pass a more intelligent and benevolent judgment on those narratives, and accordingly even reports of the marvellous can now be counted amongst the materials of history and turned to good account. I owe it to you and to the subject briefly to specify the position which historical science to-day takes up in regard to these reports.

In the first place, we know that the Gospels come from a time in which the marvellous may be said to have been something of almost daily occurrence. People felt and saw that they were surrounded by wonders, and not by any means only in the religious sphere. Certain spiritualists among us excepted, we are now accustomed to associate the questions of miracles exclusively with the question of religion. In those days it was otherwise. The fountains of the marvellous were many. Some sort of divinity was, of course, supposed to be at work in every case; it was a God who accomplished the miracle; but it was not to every god that people stood in a religious relation. Further, in those days, the strict conception which we now attach to the word "miracle" was as yet unknown; it came in only with a knowledge of the laws of nature and their general validity. Before that, no sound insight existed into what was possible and what was impossible, what was rule and what was exception. But where this distinction is not clear, or where, as the case may be, the question has not yet been raised at all in any rigorous form, there are no such things as miracles in the strict sense of the word. No one can feel anything to be an interruption of the order of Nature who does not yet know what the order of Nature is. Miracles, then, could not possess the significance for that age which, if they existed, they would possess for ours. For that age all wonders were only extraordinary events, and, even if they formed a world by themselves, it was certain that there were countless points in which that other world mysteriously encroached upon our own. Nor was it only God's messengers, but magicians and charlatans as well, who were thought to be possessed of some of these miraculous powers. The significance attaching to "miracles"

was, therefore, in those days a subject of never-ending controversy; at one moment a high value was set upon them and they were considered to belong to the very essence of religion; at another, they were spoken of with contempt.

In the second place, we now know that it is not after they have been long dead, nor even after the lapse of many years, that miracles have been reported of eminent persons, but at once, often the very next day. The habit of condemning a narrative, or of ascribing it to a later age, only because it includes stories of miracles, is a piece of prejudice.

In the third place, we are firmly convinced that what happens in space and time is subject to the general laws of motion, and that in this sense, as an interruption of the order of Nature, there can be no such things as "miracles." But we also recognise that the religious man—if religion really permeates him and is something more than a belief in the religion of others—is certain that he is not shut up within a blind and brutal course of Nature, but that this course of Nature serves higher ends, or, as it may be, that some inner and divine power can help us so to encounter it as that "everything must necessarily be for the best." This experience, which I might express in one word as the ability to escape from the power and the service of transitory things, is always felt afresh to be a miracle each time that it occurs; it is inseparable from every higher religion, and were it to be surrendered, religion would be at an end. But it is an experience which is equally true of the life of the individual and of the great course of human history. How clearly and logically, then, must a religious man think, if, in spite of this experience, he holds firmly to the inviolable character of what happens in space and time. Who can wonder that even great minds fail to keep the two spheres quite separate? And as we all live, first and foremost, in the domain not of ideas but of perceptions, and in a language of metaphor, how can we avoid conceiving that which is divine and makes us free as a mighty power working upon the order of Nature, and breaking through or arresting it? This notion, though it belong only to the realm of fantasy and metaphor, will, it seems, last as long as religion itself.

In the fourth place, and lastly, although the order of Nature be inviolable, we are not yet by any means acquainted with all the forces working in it and acting reciprocally with other forces. Our acquaintance even with the forces inherent in matter, and with the field of their action, is incomplete; while of psychic forces we know very much less. We see that a strong will and a firm faith exert an influence upon the life of the body, and produce phenomena which strike us as marvellous. Who is there up to now that has set any sure bounds to the province of the possible and the actual? No one. Who can say how far the influence of soul upon soul and of soul upon body reaches? No one. Who can still maintain that any extraordinary phenomenon that may appear in this domain is entirely based on error and delusion? Miracles, it is true, do not happen; but of the marvellous and the inexplicable there is plenty. In our present state of knowledge we have become more careful, more hesitating in our judgment, in regard to the stories of the miraculous which we have received from antiquity. That the earth in its

course stood still; that a she-ass spoke; that a storm was quieted by a word, we do not believe, and we shall never again believe; but that the lame walked, the blind saw, and the deaf heard will not be so summarily dismissed as an illusion.

From these suggestions you can arrive for yourselves at the right position to take up in regard to the miraculous stories related in the Gospels, and at their net results. In particular cases, that is to say, in the application of general principles to concrete statements, some uncertainty will always remain. So far as I can judge, the stories may be grouped as follows:—(1) Stories which had their origin in an exaggerated view of natural events of an impressive character; (2) stories which had their origin in sayings or parables, or in the projection of inner experiences on to the external world; (3) stories such as arose in the interests of the fulfilment of Old Testament sayings; (4) stories of surprising cures effected by Jesus' spiritual force; (5) stories of which we cannot fathom the secret. It is very remarkable, however, that Jesus himself did not assign that critical importance to his miraculous deeds which even the evangelist Mark and the others all attributed to them. Did he not exclaim, in tones of complaint and accusation, "Unless ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe"? He who uttered these words cannot have held that belief in the wonders which he wrought was the right or the only avenue to the recognition of his person and his mission; nay, in all essential points he must have thought of them quite otherwise than his evangelists. And the remarkable fact that these very evangelists, without appreciating its range, hand down the statement that Jesus "did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief," shows us, from another and a different side, with what caution we must receive these miraculous stories, and into what category we must put them.

It follows from all this that we must not try to evade the Gospel by entrenching ourselves behind the miraculous stories related by the evangelists. In spite of those stories, nay, in part even in them, we are presented with a reality which has claims upon our participation. Study it, and do not let yourselves be deterred because this or that miraculous story strikes you as strange or leaves you cold. If there is anything here that you find unintelligible, put it quietly aside. Perhaps you will have to leave it there for ever; perhaps the meaning will dawn upon you later and the story assume a significance of which you never dreamt. Once more, let me say: do not be deterred. The question of miracles is of relative indifference in comparison with everything else which is to be found in the Gospels. It is not miracles that matter; the question on which everything turns is whether we are helplessly yoked to an inexorable necessity, or whether a God exists who rules and governs, and whose power to compel Nature we can move by prayer and make a part of our experience.

Our evangelists, as we know, do not tell us anything about the history of Jesus' early development; they tell us only of his public activity. Two of the Gospels do, it is true, contain an introductory history (the history of Jesus' birth); but we may disregard it; for even if it contained something more trustworthy than it does actually contain, it would be as good as

useless for our purpose. That is to say, the evangelists themselves never refer to it, nor make Jesus himself refer to his antecedents. On the contrary, they tell us that Jesus' mother and his brethren were completely surprised at his coming forward, and did not know what to make of it. Paul, too, is silent; so that we can be sure that the oldest tradition knew nothing of any stories of Jesus' birth.

We know nothing of Jesus' history for the first thirty years of his life. Is there not a terrible uncertainty here? What is there left us if we have to begin our task by confessing that we are unable to write any life of Jesus? How can we write the history of a man of whose development we know nothing, and with only a year or two of whose life we are acquainted? Now, however certain it may be that our materials are insufficient for a "biography," they are very weighty in other respects, and even their silence on the first thirty years is instructive. They are weighty because they give us information upon three important points: *In the first place, they offer us a plain picture of Jesus' teaching, in regard both to its main features and to its individual application; in the second place, they tell us how his life issued in the service of his vocation; and in the third place, they describe to us the impression which he made upon his disciples, and which they transmitted.*

These are, in fact, three important points; nay, they are the points on which everything turns. It is because we can get a clear view of them that a characteristic picture of Jesus is possible; or, to speak more modestly, that there is some hope for an attempt to understand what his aims were, what he was, and what he signifies for us.

As regards the thirty years of silence, we gather from our evangelists that Jesus did not think it necessary to give his disciples any information about them. But much may be said about them negatively. First of all, it is very improbable that he went through any Rabbinical school; he nowhere speaks like a man who had assimilated any theological culture of a technical kind, or learned the art of scholarly exegesis. Compare him in this respect with the apostle Paul; how clearly it can be seen from the latter's epistles that he had sat at the feet of theological teachers. With Jesus we find nothing of the kind; and hence he caused a stir by appearing in the schools and teaching at all. He lived and had his being in the sacred writings, but not after the manner of a professional teacher.

Neither can he have had any relations with the Essenes, a remarkable order of Jewish monks. Were that so, he would have belonged to the pupils who show their dependence on their teachers by proclaiming and doing the opposite of what they have been taught. The Essenes made a point of the most extreme purity in the eye of the law, and held severely aloof not only from the impure but even from those who were a little lax in their purity. It is only thus that we can understand their living strictly apart, their dwelling in particular places, and their practice of frequent ablutions every day. Jesus exhibits a complete contrast with this mode of life: he goes in search of sinners and eats with them. So fundamental a difference alone makes it certain that he had nothing to do with the Essenes. His aims and the means

which he employed divide him off from them. If he appears to coincide with them in many of his individual injunctions to his disciples, these are accidental points of contact, as his motives were quite other than theirs.

Further, unless all appearances are deceptive, no stormy crisis, no breach with his past, lies behind the period of Jesus' life that we know. In none of his sayings or discourses, whether he is threatening and punishing or drawing and calling people to him with kindness, whether he is speaking of his relation to the Father or to the world, can we discover the signs of inner revolutions overcome, or the scars of any terrible conflict. Everything seems to pour from him naturally, as though it could not do otherwise, like a spring from the depths of the earth, clear and unchecked in its flow. Where shall we find the man who at the age of thirty can so speak, if he has gone through bitter struggles—struggles of the soul, in which he has ended by burning what he once adored, and by adoring what he burned? Where shall we find the man who has broken with his past, in order to summon others to repentance as well as himself, but who through it all never speaks of his own repentance? This consideration makes it impossible that his life could have been spent in inner conflict, however little it may have been lacking in deep emotion, in temptation and in doubt.

One final point: the picture of Jesus' life and his discourses stand in no relation with the Greek spirit. That is almost a matter for surprise; for Galilee was full of Greeks, and Greek was then spoken in many of its cities, much as Swedish is nowadays in Finland. There were Greek teachers and philosophers there, and it is scarcely conceivable that Jesus should have been entirely unacquainted with their language. But that he was in any way influenced by them, that he was ever in touch with the thoughts of Plato or the Porch, even though it may have been only in some popular redaction, it is absolutely impossible to maintain. Of course, if religious individualism—God and the soul, the soul and its God; if subjectivism; if the full self-responsibility of the individual; if the separation of the religious from the political—if all this is only Greek, then Jesus, too, stands within the sphere of Greek development; then he, too, breathed the pure air of Greece and drank from the Greek spring. But it cannot be proved that it is only on this one line, only in the Hellenic people, that this development took place; nay, it is rather the contrary that can be shown; other nations also advanced to similar states of knowledge and feeling; although they did so, it is true, as a rule, only after Alexander the Great had pulled down the barriers and fences which separated the peoples. For these nations, too, no doubt it was in the majority of cases the Greek element that was the liberating and progressive factor. But I do not believe that the Psalmist who uttered the words, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee," had ever heard anything of Socrates or of Plato.

Enough: from their silence on the first thirty years of Jesus' life, and from what the evangelists do *not* tell us of the period of his activity, there are important things to be learnt.

He lived in religion, and it was breath to him in the fear of God; his whole life, all his thoughts and feelings, were absorbed in the relation to God, and

yet he did not talk like an enthusiast and a fanatic, who sees only one red-hot spot, and so is blind to the world and all that it contains. He spoke his message and looked at the world with a fresh and clear eye for the life, great and small, that surrounded him. He proclaimed that to gain the whole world was nothing if the soul were injured, and yet he remained kind and sympathetic to every living thing. That is the most astonishing and greatest fact about him! His discourses, generally in the form of parables and sayings, exhibit every degree of human speech and the whole range of the emotions. The sternest tones of passionate accusation and indignant reproof, nay, even irony, he does not despise; but they must have formed the exception with him. He is possessed of a quiet, uniform, collected demeanour, with everything directed to one goal. He never uses any ecstatic language, and the tone of stirring prophecy is rare. Entrusted with the greatest of all missions, his eye and ear are open to every impression of the life around him—a proof of intense calm and absolute certainty. "Mourning and weeping, laughing and dancing, wealth and poverty, hunger and thirst, health and sickness, children's play and politics, gathering and scattering, the leaving of home, life in the inn and the return, marriage and funeral, the splendid house of the living and the grave of the dead, the sower and the reaper in the field, the lord of the vintage among his vines, the idle workman in the marketplace, the shepherd searching for the sheep, the dealer in pearls on the sea, and, then again, the woman at home anxious over the barrel of meal and the leaven, or the lost piece of money, the widow's complaint to the surly official, the earthly food that perishes, the mental relation of teacher and pupil, on the one side regal glory and the tyrant's lust of power, on the other childish innocence and the industry of the servant—all these pictures enliven his discourse and make it clear even to those who are children in mind." They do more than tell us that he spoke in picture and parable. They exhibit an inner freedom and a cheerfulness of soul in the midst of the greatest strain, such as no prophet ever possessed before him. His eye rests kindly upon the flowers and the children, on the lily of the field—"Solomon in all his glory is not clothed like one of them"—on the birds in the air and the sparrows on the house-top. The sphere in which he lived, above the earth and its concerns, did not destroy his interest in it; no! he brought everything in it into relation with the God whom he knew, and he saw it as protected in him: "Your Father in heaven feeds them." The parable is his most familiar form of speech. Insensibly, however, parable and sympathy pass into each other. Yet he who had not where to lay his head does not speak like one who has broken with everything, or like an heroic penitent, or like an ecstatic prophet, but like a man who has rest and peace for his soul, and is able to give life and strength to others. He strikes the mightiest notes; he offers men an inexorable alternative; he leaves them no escape; and yet the strongest emotion seems to come naturally to him, and he expresses it as something natural; he clothes it in the language in which a mother speaks to her child.

THE ORIGIN OF THE GOSPELS

Charles C. Torrey

THE LANGUAGE OF the Four Gospels, as they have come down to us from the earliest times, is Greek, but Greek of a peculiar character. It is Hellenistic, but of no literary type, nor does it represent any spoken dialect. This does not mean that the writers are ungrammatical; on the contrary, each one of the four shows himself well acquainted with the details of morphology and syntax. They all write uncouth Greek, on page after page, but by no means in the manner of unlearned men. In the large vocabulary which they use there is nowhere to be found any barbarous or otherwise questionable element. Some locutions and usages which once were supposed to be peculiar to this or that evangelist have in recent times found their equivalents in the papyri, or elsewhere, and such parallels will continue to be discovered. The diction is only what might be seen in any literary work of the time, dealing with such matters as are treated in the Gospels. The peculiarity of the language lies solely in the idiom, which is more or less distinctly Semitic. Recognition of this fact has gained ground steadily in recent years.

It is very noteworthy that the four writings should exhibit such a degree of uniformity in this regard that it has been found possible to speak of "the language of the Gospels" as a variety of New Testament Greek. The four supposed authors wrote with somewhat different aims, at different times and places. They represent more than one type of education, and are decidedly unlike one another in literary method. Matthew, as all agree, wrote in Palestine, primarily for Jews. Mark is said to have written in Rome or Alexandria, and to have had in mind Gentile readers as well as Jews. Luke, a man of Greek parentage and training, dedicated his Gospel to a Hellenist, Theophilus, and is said to have written at Caesarea, or in Achaia. The Gospel of John is said to have been put forth at Ephesus, somewhat later than the other Gospels. Yet all four present the same curious jargon, half Greek, half Semitic. . . . .

It is widely customary at the present day to dismiss the problem by concluding that these writers were imperfectly trained men, each essaying a task for which he was not fitted by his education; they "used the Greek language, but thought in Semitic." Bilingual to a certain extent, able to engage in small talk and do small business with their Hellenist neighbours, and yet unfamiliar with Greek idioms, they reproduced in the foreign words the syntax of their mother-tongue.

This theory shatters completely on the marvelous use of words by the

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From *The Four Gospels*, New York, 1933, pp. 237-85. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Harper & Brothers.

evangelists. Where did Mk., or Jn., get his vocabulary? Certainly not from a lexicon, nor from better-informed neighbours. The man who is writing a language with which he is imperfectly acquainted is certain to employ *single words in a wrong sense, at least occasionally. If his knowledge of the* strange tongue is slight, and the work which he is composing is extensive, the examples of such inexact use will be many; while now and then a word will be introduced in a sense so plainly unidiomatic that the reader who is thoroughly familiar with the language will say to himself, Here we see the foreigner! . . . .

The evangelists were not dependent on dictionaries. Their Greek was not obtained from grammars and phrase-books, but from the speech of men, and from wide reading. Each one of the four is master of a very extensive and varied vocabulary: all sorts of terms technical, literary, philosophical, and religious; verbs of action or emotion, many of them unusual; elaborately formed adjectives and adverbs. And all this equipment is handled with learned accuracy, each word yielding precisely the shade of meaning intended; with no indication, at any point, of an uncertain hold. This means, of course, that these writers were on long-familiar ground. No man ever acquired the bones of a language without its meat. There is no such thing as a wide and exact use of *words* without a corresponding knowledge of *idioms*. . . . .

If the "language of the Gospels" was not freely composed, the natural hypothesis is, that it was translated. Semitic-Greek is familiar enough. . . . .

The origin of this "translation-Greek" is easy to understand. The interpreters sought to make available, with the least possible loss or alteration, writings of unique importance, the foundations and pillars of a faith which they believed essential to salvation. No one of them supposed himself to be writing vernacular Greek, or wished to write it; that was not his business. What he aimed at in every case was to produce something that could be understood by Greek readers, while remaining faithful to every word and idiom of the original. It was not only by far the easiest course, it was also the safest, to follow along word by word. There was no lack of knowledge of Hebrew, every one of the translators was thoroughly familiar with it; but the danger of error was constant, and no unnecessary responsibility could be assumed. . . . .

As is now well known, the mother-tongue of Jesus of Nazareth, of the Galilean villagers, of the people of Jerusalem and Judea, in short, of all Palestine, was a fairly homogeneous dialect of Western Aramaic. This had been the language of the land for centuries, and it continued to be the vernacular until long after the Apostolic age. The speech of the common people of Galilee differed in some noticeable respects from the Judean dialect; the literary language however was uniform, not only throughout Palestine, but also in the Jewish Dispersion. Wherever a word or phrase is quoted in its original form, in the Gospels or Acts, it is Aramaic. This was the language used all the time by Jesus and his disciples, and by all those with whom they spoke, in the varied transactions and discourses recorded in our Gospels. The Hellenist author of the second half of Acts records that

the charge given by Jesus to the Apostle to the Gentiles (26:14-18) was delivered in Aramaic ("the Hebrew language").

Josephus tells us that he originally composed his history of the Jewish War in "the language of our country," and sent it out to his compatriots in the extensive Dispersion to the north, south, and east; mentioning Parthia, Babylonia, Arabia, and Mesopotamia. Later, for the benefit of the Greek-speaking world, he wrote it out in Greek. Not only in western Asia, however, but also in Egypt and the Mediteranean lands, Aramaic was the language commonly spoken and written by the Jewish colonists. The younger Gamaliel, in his circular letter sent out from Jamnai to the countries of the Dispersion, at about the year 100, writes in Aramaic to "the Golah of Javan," as well as to those of Babylonia and Media. In regard to Egypt, in the later Ptolemaic period, we have some more definite information.

Throughout the Persian period, as is well known, and down to the time of the Mohammedan conquest, a period of about 1,200 years, Aramaic was by far the most important language of the great Semitic group. Even before Cyrus and his successors, moreover, this had begun to be the *lingua Franca* of western Asia. In the Assyrian empire, as Nöldeke remarks, "a very large proportion of the population spoke Aramaic"; though the language written in the cuneiform character was still, and for many centuries continued to be, the medium for official and business documents which required to be preserved. Even into northern Arabia Aramaic made its way before the Persian period. The cause of its later rapid spread and complete conquest was not the fact that the Persian officers adopted it as the means of communication with their western subjects, though this was a contributory influence; the real reason is to be found in the fact that it was perhaps the richest, and certainly the most adaptable, flexible language in Asia.

Aramaic was much better fitted to be a world-speech than either Hebrew or Arabic. Its representative Semitic (and withal very hospitable) vocabulary, the comparative regularity of its morphology, the ease, for instance, of forming abstract nouns, and the simplicity of its syntax, made it a speech very easily adopted by Semites and quickly acquired by others. "It lends itself far more readily to the linking together of sentences than either Arabic or Hebrew. It possesses many conjunctions and adverbs to express slight shades of meaning. It permits, moreover, great freedom in the order of words in the sentence. These qualities make it the natural vehicle of a clear and flowing prose style." [1] . . . .

Each of the four translators has his own habits of rendering, which form an interesting study, but cannot be described here. The native tongue of each of them, as has been said, was Greek. They all were masters of Aramaic; and yet Mk. could be led astray, in 7:3, by the unusual position of an adverb. His translation is evidently somewhat hasty, occasionally rough and disjointed, as though a first draft which was not revised. Greek Mt. is a prince among Biblical translators, and his work is uniformly ad-

[1] Th. Nöldeke, *Die semitischen Sprachen* (1899), p. 46.

mirable. Probably no scholar of his time, holding to the principles then recognized as essential, could have produced a finer result, worthy of its original. Luke, who easily surpassed the others in his collection, arrangement, and scholarly treatment of the available material, is the one whose work is most readily recognized as a translation. His manner of rendering is meticulously faithful, and the result is very often a painfully literal phraseology. He shows remarkable skill and ingenuity in fitting the Greek to the Semitic original. His lack of acquaintance with usage peculiar to *Palestinian* Hebrew and Aramaic is very striking and instructive. The translator of the Fourth Gospel had the most difficult task. He probably was remote in place from the home of the Gospel, and certainly remote in time from the date of its composition; yet it is not in these circumstances that the main difficulty lay. The close, sometimes obscure, reasoning of its author, who deals not only in theological subtleties but also in verbal conceits, would make trouble for any translator. The Aramaic text, moreover, contained a few slight but troublesome faults. Nevertheless Jn. wrote his Greek with more freedom than Mk. or Lk., and his work is a masterpiece.

In general, each of the two translators Mt. and Lk. adopts the Greek wording of his predecessor, or predecessors, *wherever a faithful use of his source permits him to do so*. The reasons for this proceeding are obvious. On the other hand, probably no ancient translator (not even Aquila) ever followed at all times a rigid rule. . . . .

Though the original Gospels disappeared from Palestine in the year 70 or soon after, Semitic gospels derived from the Greek were current, and possibly numerous, at a later day. Certain Jewish-Christian sects in the first centuries are known to have employed retroversions into Aramaic. Such were the "Gospel according to the Hebrews," and the "Ebionite Gospel," mentioned by a number of the earliest church fathers. Epiphanius and Jerome, especially, display great interest in these gospels, and Jerome tells us that he translated one of them into Greek and Latin. From the time of Eusebius onward, the opinion was quite generally held that the "Gospel according to the Hebrews" was the original of Matthew's Gospel. These translations would probably be found nearly worthless for critical purposes, if we had their text to compare. There is very good reason to believe that an especially able and complete (also occasionally expanded) retroversion into Aramaic, an "original" gospel very widely celebrated in its time (early second century?) and therefore translated into Greek with constant employment (from memory?) of the wording of the standard Greek text of that day, was the origin of our Codex Bezae and the "Western" text.

At the present day, at least, satisfactory retroversion of the Gospels into the original languages is of course quite impossible, and attempts to perform the feat *in extenso* are not likely to be useful. In great measure, indeed, the precise wording of the Aramaic or Hebrew is unmistakable, thanks to the unfailing faithfulness of the Greek translators. Very often, however, there is no way of determining which of two or more synonyms was employed; and in many passages, in which knowledge of Syriac, or of the *later* Jewish Aramaic, would make easy a rendering of our Greek into some variety

of idiomatic Aramaic, we cannot know what words the Palestinian dialect of the first century would have used. The Old Syriac (Lewis) Gospels can occasionally give a suggestion here, for there is evidence that they were translated by Palestinian Christians who had migrated, or fled, to the neighbourhood of Antioch. Very many traces of their native dialect appear in the Syriac; which, however, rarely has any great value for critical purposes.

The sketch of Gospel origins attempted in the preceding pages rests mainly on the results gained by New Testament scholars through long-continued research in historical, literary, and textual criticism. It has also been made possible by the new material brought to light in the Semitic field in recent years. Two things, especially, have held back recognition of the truth: first, the widespread unfamiliarity with the Aramaic language and its history; and second, the failure of modern scholars to interpret rightly the Hebrew Prophets (especially the Second Isaiah) and the Psalms, and to realize that the Jews of the first century *believed* the Old Testament scriptures and took them at their face value. When, for example, it can be said—and very recently it has been repeated with emphasis—that Lk. 21:20, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies," etc., shows that its author wrote after the year 70, it is time to enter a strong protest. Every Jew knew that *the beginning of the end* was to be the capture and devastation of the city by Gentile armies. This could have been learned unmistakably from Daniel, even if Zech. 14:2 had not said it in so many words! And again, the prophecies permitted no doubt as to the fact, stated clearly and repeatedly in all four Gospels, that the Messianic message was first of all for the Jews, and eventually *through them* for the Gentiles; that which actually took place. The Gospels gave the Hebrew people, both their common folk and their learned men, the opportunity which was theirs by right.

The evidence of the Palestinian-Aramaic origin of the Gospels does not rest solely on the linguistic argument, though the constant and unbroken presence of the Aramaic idiom, necessarily unseen by those who are not familiar with it, is in itself conclusive. The case cannot be made to rest on these or those mistranslations; even the least certain of them given some support by the great array. That which most of all has been needed is a coherent whole, a consistent theory of the Synoptic writings and of the origin of the Fourth Gospel, such as is here presented in brief outline; and a complete translation showing clearly the result.

There is however no possibility of speaking, at present, of "*compelling*" proof! Every difficulty in the Gospels has been "explained" again and again, and what has once satisfied may continue to satisfy. Every advocate of an original Semitic text of these wonderful records knows what a barrier is before him. The Greek is here; and his postulated original is gone, forever. He is inclined to say to himself that the only evidence that could make any impression on his colleagues of the Greek persuasion would be the resurrection of one of the Aramaic or Hebrew texts, say in Egypt. But on second thought he will add, doubtfully: "If they hear not my recon-

structed text, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead." He feels that through his suggested emendations certain difficulties are removed; but it is easy to say, and to believe, that they are cast out by Beelzebub.

A writer in a theological review has recently objected: "If this theory of Aramaic originals for considerable parts of the New Testament were to be admitted, the Greek text would lose its place as the ultimate authority." There is however (as the writer quoted would be the first to insist) an authority behind the Greek, and behind the Aramaic or Hebrew, which is quite untouched by any conjectures or conclusions as to the literary history of these records. It might conceivably have been the divine purpose that in the latter days men in various parts of the world should pay attention not only to Greek, the language of the early Gentile church, but also to Aramaic, the language of Jesus and his disciples. It would seem, after all, to be a question of fact rather than of dogma.

THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE OF THE GOSPELS

Edgar J. Goodspeed

MORE THAN FORTY years ago an aspiring young English scholar undertook to account for the resemblances and differences in the first three Gospels by the theory that they had all been translated from a primitive Aramaic Gospel, the expressions of which were understood differently. The idea was very seriously considered and debated by the leaders of critical study, but was definitely rejected for a number of reasons. One was that it created more difficulties than it solved, for it made the very numerous exact identities of Greek wording among the Gospels harder than ever to explain. Another was that there were no contemporary Aramaic documents extant with which to compare the supposed Aramaic idioms demanded by the theory.

This scholar's method was to pick out here and there expressions in our Greek Gospels that sounded to him like constructions used in Aramaic, the everyday speech of the first-century Jews of Palestine, and translate them as best he could into that idiom. If the Aramaic he thus produced could then, by supposing some misunderstanding or miswriting of it, be translated back into a Greek form that gave an easier meaning, or into the parallel, slightly different form given in another Gospel, the theory was considered supported.

The subjective character of this method is obvious and it did not long continue to hold the interest of New Testament scholars. Recently, however, it has been revived in various novel forms, with much talk of new sources and new evidence. In reality no new sources or evidence favorable to these solutions have come to light. On the contrary, all the discoveries of the past forty years have made such solutions more and more improbable. For one thing, they should of course, if sound, increase the rhetorical power of the Gospels, the Oriental vigor of their imagery; but they invariably dilute and diminish these. This in itself is enough to show that the procedure is a mistaken one. Mr. Chesterton once observed that the style of Jesus was gigantesque—full of camels leaping through needles and mountains being hurled into the sea. The effort to tame such a style and reduce it to the commonplace is plainly futile. The tamer it becomes, the more improbable it is.

But the greatest difficulty with the method was that there seemed to be no historical occasion likely to have called forth the Aramaic Gospel it assumed, especially at so early a date as it claimed—50 or 52 A.D.

This is the core of the problem. How did such a Gospel come to be

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written? The Gospel is Christianity's contribution to literature. It is the most potent type of religious literature ever devised. To credit such a creation to the most barren age of a never very productive tongue like Aramaic would seem the height of improbability.

For in the days of Jesus the Jews of Palestine were not engaged in writing books. It is not too much to say that a Jerusalem or Galilean Jew of the time of Christ would regard writing a book in his native tongue with positive horror. Even a century before, a Jew who wrote a book felt obliged to put it under the name of some ancient worthy like Enoch, the seventh from Adam, or to claim as its author some ancient Jew of what was called the Prophetic Period, which was understood to extend from Moses to Ezra, and from which it was believed all sound books on religion must come.

This aversion to writing books was not merely negative. It was positive. They had plenty of things to say and they said them, but they would not write them. Those were the days when the famous oral amplification of the Jewish Law was being developed by such masters as Hillel and Shammai. But the Jews would not write it; they memorized it. It seemed an act of impiety to write it, for then it might seem to rival the Scripture itself.

Those days also witnessed the translation of the Hebrew Law into the Aramaic vernacular. But this too remained unwritten for generations. Indeed, it is impossible to realize the fantastic unreality of the first-century Jewish attitude toward writing books.

There is a rabbinical story that about 50 A.D. Gamaliel the First, the grandson of Hillel, saw a written copy of an Aramaic translation of Job, and immediately had it destroyed. The story may not be true, but its intention is obvious; if anyone was wicked enough to write down the Targum on Job, it must be destroyed. This was the orthodox Jewish attitude toward writing books in Aramaic, in Jerusalem about the middle of the first century.

If anything could heighten the picture, it is the behavior of Jews of that very period who escaped from these narrowing walls into the great Greek world of the day. Such men wrote books freely, but they wrote them principally in Greek. There is a peculiar irony in this, that gifted Jews should have to turn to Greek as a medium of literary expression. But Philo, Paul, and Josephus tell the story. They wrote, but they wrote in Greek.

Of the Jewish Apocrypha written within a century of the life of Jesus, the great majority were composed in Greek, not Aramaic, and it seems abundantly clear that in the times of Jesus the Jews were not writing books in Aramaic; indeed, they were actually resorting to the strangest devices to avoid doing so.

Even if the Jews had been given to Aramaic composition, and contemporary Aramaic literature had been a garden instead of a desert, the early Christians could hardly have contributed to it. They were constantly overshadowed by the sense of imminent catastrophe. The Messianic Advent overhung them like a huge wave of fate, threatening—or promising—to break at any moment. It was their urgent task to hasten about the ancient world warning men of what was at hand. Clearly it was no time for writing books.

But within a generation of the death of Jesus Christianity had entered the Greek world and begun to establish itself there. In that world it found a wholly different attitude to writing and publication. "If you find a saying of a certain philosopher and have no paper," ran the Greek proverb, "write it upon your garments!" The Greeks took notes, and they wrote books. They were insatiable readers. Novelty did not repel them; it attracted them. The Athenians seemed to Luke to spend all their time telling or listening to something new. Certain it is that from the time Christianity really entered the Greek world it instinctively went about recording itself in writing—first letters, and then books.

These books were copied and recopied with such zest and zeal that there are even now more manuscripts of the Greek Gospels than of any other work of literature in the world. The oldest of these, the recently discovered Chester Beatty papyrus, is from the first half of the third century, and was actually copied only half a century after the first assembling of a New Testament. So near do our Greek documents bring us to the making of the New Testament, and so ample is the existing manuscript evidence for them.

No contrast could be more marked than that between the literary aridity of Palestinian Judaism in Jesus' day and the abundant fruitfulness of the same times in the Greek world outside. Once out in that Greek atmosphere, even the Christians felt the spirit of it and began to write. Paul's letters were written to the Greek churches in Asia Minor, Italy, and Greece. But they were hardly books; they dealt quite definitely with immediate personal situations and were read and laid aside and soon temporarily forgotten.

Not so the Gospels. In them Christianity first clothes itself in literary form. They are its first books, worked out in spite of its background, in spite of its Messianic expectations, under the pressure of the demands of that Greek world in which it now found itself. How, When, Why, and For Whom? To these questions the history of Christianity in Palestine has no answers.

The answer, according to both tradition and criticism, is found in the West, at Rome. Peter was dead. The veteran apostle in his last days had visited Rome and there preached in his native Aramaic to the Greek Christians of that congregation. With what rapt attention must the Roman Christians have listened as the old man told of his walks and talks with Jesus in Galilee a generation before. As he spoke, his words were translated after him into Greek by young men familiar with both languages. Then suddenly he was taken from them and hurried to martyrdom—the most famous of all martyrdoms—about which have gathered such legends as the *Domine, quo vadis?* interview. Peter, it was said, fleeing for his life from Rome, met Jesus coming into the city. "Master, where are you going?" "I am going to be crucified a second time!" Peter turned back and met his death like a hero.

There must have been something tremendous about that martyrdom to create such legends as clustered about it. But the fundamental fact was that the Roman Christians would never again hear the old man's memories

of his companionship with Jesus. With him a priceless treasure of memorabilia of Jesus perished forever from the world.

But not altogether. For among those who had been his interpreters before the Roman congregation was one in whose memory some of his oft-repeated stories had become fixed. Out of such memories arose the Gospel according to Mark. Persecution (probably Nero's) has already left its traces upon the church, and the shadow of the siege and capture of Jerusalem falls more than once across its pages, which cannot have been written before A.D. 70.

Mark's hasty and primitive Gospel was soon expanded, probably at Antioch, into the far more impressive and effective Gospel of Matthew. The terrible fate of the Jewish nation had now had time to sink into the Christian consciousness. Matthew saw in it the nation's punishment for its rejection of its Messiah, and the unmistakable shadow of the great catastrophe is on many a page of his Gospel. Indeed, the Gospel of Matthew cannot be understood without it.

Renan called Matthew the most important book in the world. Certainly it is the climax of gospel writing, for the books that followed it were more than gospels. Moreover, they now began to be written by Greeks. Luke's history of the beginnings of Christianity was organized in two volumes, the first of which covered the life and work of Jesus, not as a separate subject, but as an indispensable part of the whole movement. Its progress was traced from its beginnings in Palestine until Paul found it firmly established in Rome, and the book was evidently written when the movement was such a success that its future seemed assured.

Twenty years later, the necessity of restating Christianity in terms immediately intelligible to the Greek mind led to the Gospel according to John, which is more a dialogue than a gospel, and is full of Greek feeling from beginning to end. To further the influence of this great book, so rich alike in theology and in devotion, there were soon gathered about it the older local Gospels to form the great quartette we know. So understood, the Gospels articulate with what we know of the progress of Christianity in the Greek world.

Some years ago, a young German scholar happened to pick up a pamphlet containing some newly published Greek papyrus documents. Each transcript was signed by the man who had deciphered it, and one of these signaures caught the young scholar's eye, for it was the name of a friend of his. He became sufficiently interested to read the text of the document above the name, and immediately felt the likeness of the language to the Greek of the New Testament. He pursued the idea, read numerous other such pieces and became convinced; the Greek of these letters, deeds, and contracts written in New Testament times by people in Egypt was just like the Greek of the New Testament.

The Greek of the New Testament had always been a good deal of a problem. It was not like classical Greek; it was not like the Greek version of the Old Testament; it was not like the literary Greek of its own day. The older learning was forced to describe it as a Holy Ghost language,

devised by Providence for the purposes of revelation. It remained for the Greek papyri, hidden in the sands of Egypt, to reveal to us its real character. It is simply the informal, colloquial Greek of its day.

Not long after the youthful Deissmann had observed the resemblance of the Greek of the papyri to that of the New Testament, two young Oxford Fellows settled down for a winter of excavation in Upper Egypt, in the camp of Professor Flinders Petrie, the distinguished Egyptologist. They were there to learn the art of excavation and to pick up any Greek papyri that might present themselves. Professor Petrie's interest was in prehistoric Egypt, and, when the site very soon proved to be as late as the Roman period of Egyptian history, he at once turned over the digging to his young friends.

There were fame and fortune for Grenfell and Hunt in those low, drab mounds of Oxyrhynchus. One day, fifteen hundred years before, the Romans had cleared out their record office and sent the old papers out to be burned. But the fire had smouldered and gone out, and the sand had covered the worthless old papers and protected them from damp, so that Grenfell's men carried them to his camp sometimes in the very baskets in which the Romans had sent them out to be burned. It was the greatest discovery of Greek papyri ever made. But what made Oxyrhynchus forever memorable was the finding there of a leaf of Sayings of Jesus.

Three years later at Tebtunis, Grenfell and Hunt again struck it rich. They chanced upon a crocodile cemetery, and had exhumed dozens of crocodile mummies, but no papyri, when one January day a workman in vexation struck one of the mummies with his mattock and broke it open—and behold, it was wrapped in papyrus from head to tail! So were all the Tebtunis crocodiles!

With every such increase in our papyrus resources, Deissmann's brilliant discovery receives abundant confirmation. It used to be the fashion to class some five hundred New Testament words as found only in Biblical or ecclesiastical Greek. Within twenty-five years after the advent of the papyri, this list had shrunk to fifty—about one per cent of the New Testament vocabulary—and it has now practically disappeared.

Many unusual constructions in New Testament Greek used to be explained as Semitisms—that is, as due to imitation of Hebrew or Aramaic idioms. But in the presence of the Greek papyri these too have rapidly dwindled until they have lost any possible literary significance. It has become clear that New Testament Greek is not a kind of ancient Yiddish, as some have supposed. The thousands of Greek papyrus documents from the very years of its origin have definitely established its right to be, and, against the protests of classicists and Semitists, have recovered for it its rightful position, of which it had long been disinherited. The Gospels were written not in muddy Greek or an awkward patois. They were, rather, masterpieces of popular literature, the first books written in popular Greek. Their rapid advance to influence is an unanswerable testimony to their clearness and force.

Their kinship with the vernacular Greek of the papyrus letters and

documents becomes steadily clearer as more and more of these appear in print. It is an amazing fact that we now have definitely dated papyrus documents from every single year of the first century; not late copies, but the actual originals. If we possessed one single Aramaic text from anywhere in that century, or even a copy of one, in the language of Palestine, we should be fortunate. But none has ever been found.

Yet the Jews were in Egypt long before the Greeks, and were numerous and active there in the first century. But, like Philo, they expressed themselves in Greek, not in the Aramaic vernacular of Palestine.

We cannot connect the Gospels with Palestinian Judaism. It definitely refused the Gospel. There is no escaping that. We may wish it otherwise, but the hard fact remains. We cannot at this late date alter it. Jerusalem had neither the will nor the skill to produce the Gospels. No one has ever succeeded in fitting them into its literature or its life. Appeals to Aramaic writings five hundred years earlier, as though their diction could prove something, reveal the desperateness of the endeavor. It is like seeking support for nineteenth-century English in the idiom of Wyclif.

The Greek Gospels are a convincing monument of the conquest of the Graeco-Roman world by Christianity, and also of the conquest of Christianity by the Greek genius. It is no accident that these important and most telling of books arose in Greek circles and on Greek soil. Where else in antiquity could such books have arisen? Taken as a whole, the Gospels are integrated with no one place or period, but reflect clear and definite stages in the spread of the new faith among the Greeks. And the New Testament will be best understood as the literary precipitate deposited by the Christian movement when it impinged upon the Greek world.

THE RETURN TO THE HISTORICAL JESUS

Shirley Jackson Case

THE CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT was the matrix that nourished into life all tradition from the earliest fragment to the most complete biographical narrative. Throughout the entire period of its growth, the gospel tree remained firmly rooted in the soil of the Christian society. The portions of the literature that have survived, whether in canonical or apocryphal books, are quite as truly sources of information for the contemporary status of the new religion as for the history of Jesus' career. Doubtless these books are most frequently read simply for information about him. But it would be entirely appropriate to consult them for data regarding the history of Christianity from the time of Jesus' death until early in the second century. The themes that interested an evangelist, the drift of his argument, his choice of selections from older tradition, his arrangement of materials, his interpretative emphases—all are windows through which a modern reader may look upon different scenes in the evolving history of Christianity during the gospel-making age.

Our earlier survey of the content of the several gospels should have made sufficiently evident the immediate interests of the different evangelists. In producing their respective portraits of Jesus they were seen to be simultaneously, though perhaps unconsciously, recording the history of their own times. They were all immensely concerned to establish the divine authority of the new religion which at the moment was competing with rivals for the allegiance of both Jews and Gentiles throughout the ancient world. This fact could not have been one whit plainer had each author explicitly affirmed that Christianity was now an independent movement, organized for missionary purposes, equipped with the rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper, served by recognized leaders, resisted in its expansion by powerful enemies, and destined in the opinion of its advocates ultimately to triumph over all its foes.

For each evangelist the Christian society was a going concern, from which he drew his immediate enthusiasms and whose interests lay close to his heart. By recasting the story of Jesus' career as it had been transmitted to him through inheritances from the past, he would forge a better instrument for serving the present and the future of the new religion. Differences of individuality, of inheritances, of time, of provenance, and of outlook among the several authors resulted in the production of books that varied widely from one another. Each gospel revealed the distinctive social experience of its

From *Jesus—A New Biography*, Chicago, 1927, pp. 104-15. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The University of Chicago Press.

particular writer and his immediate associates within one or another area of growing Christianity. While formally his work was a biography of Jesus, virtually it was also a treatise dealing with issues and interests of the author's own day.

The primal units into which the present written gospels must ultimately be resolved are no less closely bound up with the life-interests of the earlier Christian society. Everywhere in evidence are indications of exigencies that prompted rehearsals of Jesus' words or deeds. At one time it might be a celebration of the Eucharist that led someone in the assembled company to recall an occasion when Jesus had fed a multitude of people with a few loaves and fishes. The observance of the eucharistic rite was so frequently repeated, and in so many different places, that the accompanying story of the feeding soon took on a number of variations. The author of Mark knew it in at least two forms, one mentioning five thousand participants and another four thousand (6:34-44; 8:1-10). Happily, he included both in his book, even though he had no distinctive setting for the second account but was content to introduce it with the vague phrase "in those days."

Perhaps, on another occasion, free intercourse with Gentiles in the prosecution of missionary work met severe criticism from Jews, or from Christians with strong Jewish leanings. Then it was especially in point to recall controversies between Jesus and his adversaries, and to note that he had virtually eliminated the distinction between clean and unclean meats (Mark 7:1-23). Or, again, wearied by the struggle to save a world that responded none too eagerly to the Christian message, a discouraged congregation revived its drooping spirits by reciting a parable of Jesus likening the Kingdom of God to a diminutive mustard seed growing from small beginnings into a plant with great branches (Mark 4:30-32).

When enemies cast doubt upon the divine character of Christianity by alleging that its expulsion of demons in the name of Jesus was simply Satan-magic, such as might be performed by other exorcists of the time, again appeal was made to an incident in the lifetime of Jesus. His work had been similarly disparaged. Opponents had said that his wonders were accomplished through an alliance with Satan, and not through the power of the Holy Spirit. But with great emphasis he had affirmed that such blasphemy was the one unforgivable sin (Mark 3:22-30). Thus Christians sought to turn the edge of hostile criticism, and the divergent forms in which this incident has been reported suggest the frequent recurrence of the situation in the experience of the disciples (Matt. 9:33 f.; 12:22-32; Luke 11:14-23).

Were it necessary, additional illustrations to demonstrate the vital social connections of a wide range of gospel tradition could easily be adduced. As it now stands, this literature is intimately bound up with the evolution of the new religious movement from the days of its very beginnings in Palestine down to the period of its spread over the Mediterranean world at large. The wealth of local color in the gospels, gratifying though it is to the historian of early Christianity, greatly enhances the difficulty of isolating exactly the figure of the earthly Jesus. On the other hand, a full recognition of the presence in a gospel of interests vital to the contemporary

Christian society is the only sure basis from which to assay the genuineness of its tradition. Negatively at any rate, the significance of such interests is self-evident. That which is peculiarly apposite to a situation realized first in the social experience of the disciples after Jesus' death can hardly be taken to represent a well-established fact of his own career.

Positive results are also available. Jesus, too, lived in a very real social environment. Conditions within Palestine during the first third of the first century, and tendencies which later culminated in the disastrous revolution of the year 66 A.D., are hardly less significant for the life of Jesus than they are for the history of Judaism. Contemporary religious activities among Jews, the attitudes characteristic of various strata in Palestinian society, and the outstanding problems to engage the attention of Jesus and his associates must be made the ready possession of his modern biographer. It is as true of the religious genius, as of the poet, that he may not be understood by one unfamiliar with his native environment.

No return to Jesus will be adequate that is not at the same time a return to the living conditions of his own time, with all that they signified for the determination of his course of life and the shaping of his experience. To visualize in concrete fashion the social setting in which he did his work will carry one a long way toward a genuine understanding of the tasks that confronted him and the line of conduct he chose to adopt. Since he made immediate connections with the life of his age, the issues he faced and the ideals he upheld must have been of vital concern to his contemporaries. Had he talked of things remote from their interests he would hardly have created enemies, much less would he have won disciples. The attitudes taken toward him, whether of friendship or of hostility, were an outcome of circumstances to be understood only when viewed in connection with the life-situation by which he was environed and of which he was a moving part.

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When the framers of gospel tradition have been socially integrated within the early Christian movement, and Jesus has been vitally linked with the Palestinian society of his day, the problem of recovering dependable historical information about him becomes more readily soluble. Gospel traditions that dovetail normally into his experience within a Palestinian environment need not be called in question. On the other hand, when he is made to sponsor interests or opinions whose social appositeness emerges first in the later history of the Christian movement, one will be very hesitant about accepting the historical reliability of such data. A gospel-writer may, to be sure, correctly represent what Jesus would have said or done had he been present on the later occasion. But this possibility must not be confounded with historic fact. To feel justification in assuming that Jesus would have met a future contingency in a particular way is one thing; to affirm that it was a part of his actual experience is quite another. The assumption may represent perfectly good interpretation, but it is not valid history. The particular situation in which Jesus lived is never to be confused with the different situations in which the disciples found themselves during the later years when gospel literature was a-making.

At the outset, however, the social experience of Jesus, and that of the disciples who first perpetuated his memory, largely coincided. Their Palestinian setting was identical with his: they had inherited a similar range of religious interests, and they were enveloped by the same general conditions of life. In recalling incidents from his career, the occasion for interpretative elaboration, while present from the start, operated under significant limitations. The vividness of the disciples' own recollections and literalness of memory on the part of their contemporaries, together with the general sameness of social environment, tended to compel the earliest Christians to paint Jesus in the main true to life. Gospel tradition at its inception was of necessity essentially historical in character. But the new religious movement did not long restrict itself to Palestinian territory. With the widening of the missionary enterprise to include, first, Jews of the Diaspora and then Gentiles as well, it was found necessary to translate the preachers' message into new language and recast even its content, in accordance with the requirements of the new situation. To what extent the quality of genuine history was lost in this transition is ultimately determinable only by the character of the social experience reflected in the later forms of the tradition.

The decisive consideration in dealing with all gospel tradition is the extent to which the narrative reveals the dominance of interests suitable to the distinctive situation of Jesus, in contrast with conditions characteristic of later stages in the growth of the Christian movement. Such norms as canonicity, supposable apostolic authorship, the fixing of the earliest written sources, or the determination of distinctive literary forms, are only preliminary to the more fundamental test of social experience as revealed in the content of the narrative. Every type of tradition, whether an entire gospel or a documentary source or a more primitive fragmentary block, is subject to the same test; and no supposable date of origin is early enough to secure immunity for any portion of the gospel. Not only Mark but the most primitive sections of the Logia have to be subjected to this same test.

Likewise, later portions of the literature, such as material peculiar to Matthew, to Luke or to John, are entitled to a hearing in the same court of appeal. To declare offhand their unreliability, just because of their late emergence in the written records, is an improper procedure. The conditions within the early Christian society do not warrant the assumption that there could have been only one or two original sources, such as the Logia and Mark, whence reliable data were derivable. In the ardor of their devotion to the two-source solution of the synoptic problem, scholars all too readily imagined that true gospel history flowed down in a single channel from one head. When one visualizes the actual conditions under which gospels arose, no such simplicity is imaginable. When the crystallization of tradition first set in, the memories of different persons in various communities were at work on the task; and it is not at all improbable that some rivulets from a perfectly genuine fountain-head may have been much later than others in joining the swelling stream that ultimately constituted the present gospels. Except for the mechanical inconvenience which it causes the modern student,

there would seem to be no reason for supposing that the author of Matthew or of Luke, and even of John or of an apocryphal book, might not have embodied new materials that were quite as reliable as anything in Mark or the hypothetical Logia.

Every statement in the records is to be judged by the degree of its suitableness to the distinctive environment of Jesus, on the one hand, and to that of the framers of gospel tradition at one or another stage in the history of Christianity, on the other. When consistently applied, this test will prove our safest guide in recovering from the present gospel records dependable information regarding the life and teaching of the earthly Jesus.

FORM CRITICISM

Floyd V. Filson

AT FIRST SIGHT form criticism seems to be concerned merely with technical gospel study, and thus appears to be quite remote from the minister's practical daily activity. Once understood, however, it is seen to be most closely related to his work, and fruitful for his study not only of the life of Jesus but also of developments in the primitive Church. Close attention to the form and structure of the gospel material yields not merely an improved understanding of the structure of our Gospels, but also an insight into the transmission and practical use of the tradition by the earliest Christians.

The expression "form criticism" is a rendering of a German word, *Formgeschichte*, which means literally "form-history." It was in Germany that the main lines of the method were developed. . . . .

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FORM CRITICISM

It is not possible to draw up a statement of the aims and method of form criticism which will apply equally well to all the scholars named. What is here attempted is a description of its main characteristics, with some attention to differences among its various representatives.

One important fact about form criticism is that it focuses attention upon the earliest period of the transmission of the gospel material. The first two decades of the Church are the period of special interest. This is a difficult period to study, in view of the fact that (*pace* Torrey) we have no written records from it. But it is the most important period in the life of the gospel tradition. Upon the handling of the tradition in those years depends the trustworthiness of our Gospels, for they were written later and give us the tradition as known at the time of their composition. If the material was as carefully preserved as Burney's book on *The Poetry of Our Lord* suggests, we can trust our Gospels. If, however, it was not subject to any careful control, but was allowed to fade away amid the fanciful creations of minds devoid of any historical sense, our Gospels are inevitably unreliable as records of Jesus' life.

Another feature of form criticism is the way it stresses the stage of *oral* tradition. Of course it uses our written Gospels in its studies. It also recognizes written sources back of our Gospels. But its main concern is not with written sources. It seeks to analyze the gospel records and get back of them and their written sources to the time the tradition of these sayings and deeds was handed on by word of mouth. Whereas Torrey would postulate written records from the very first years of the Church,

From *Origins of the Gospels*, New York, 1938, pp. 85-105. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.

if not during the very lifetime of Jesus, the form critic believes that oral transmission of the tradition was the rule for two decades at least, and that it continued to be one form of transmission for many decades afterward. As Donald W. Riddle points out in *Early Christian Life as Reflected in Its Literature* (1936), Papias in the middle of the second century still has a prejudice against written Gospels. He prefers the "living and abiding voice." Oral tradition, therefore, played its role even as late as his generation.

According to form critics, it was largely through constant repetition during those days of oral use that the tradition received the form which it now possesses. Studies of folklore and popular stories in various languages lead to the conclusion that continued repetition of such material tends to give it a rather fixed form, which is suited to the material and to the setting in which it is used. These results are regarded as good guides for gospel study. Through constant repetition the material was given much of its present form. This idea is not entirely original with the form critics. . . . .

It will be seen that this view minimizes the function of the individual writers of the Gospel. Without denying that each Gospel bears the impress of the man who gave it its final form, the form critic contends that for the most part this man, usually called the "author" of the Gospel, simply records the result of a long process which was mainly one of oral transmission. Moreover, not only is the function of the final editor of the material minimized, but the former tendency, still widely dominant, to bridge the decades between Jesus and the actual writing of the Gospels by some one eyewitness for each Gospel, is seriously discounted. Instead, for example, of seeing Peter as the sufficient guarantor of what Mk. contains, there is a tendency to see in Mk. the deposit of a collection of units of continually repeated oral tradition.

Fundamental to the form critic's method is the idea that the gospel material first circulated in small, independent units. K. L. Schmidt, in the previously mentioned book dealing with the framework of the history of Jesus, led the way in a criticism of the connections between sections in Mk. The average reader gets an impression, due as much to the repeated use of "straightway" as to anything else, that Mk. is a closely knit narrative. Schmidt, and others as well, claim to show by an analysis of the narrative, with special attention to transitional expressions and sentences, that these connections do not reflect actual historical sequence but are merely editorial devices, used to link together short sections which at the outset circulated independently. The material originally was preserved in separate sections or units; there was no complete, full gospel narrative in the earliest days of the Church.

This point is so fundamental that it will be well to translate the concluding sentences of Schmidt's book. He says (p. 317): "The stories about Jesus lie for the most part upon the same plane. Only occasionally are we able upon the basis of considerations concerning the inner character of a story to give it a more exact location in time and place. But on the whole there is no life of Jesus in the sense of an unfolding life story, no chronolog-

ical outline of the story of Jesus, but only single stories, pericopes, which are placed in an (artificial editorial) framework."

A corollary of this view is that in exegesis stress must not be placed on the context in every case. To the extent that these transitions are due to editorial welding of originally separate sections of oral tradition, they reveal the editor's judgment as to connection, but are not to be taken as giving the actual sequence of events in Jesus' life or the successive steps in Jesus' thought. The inference is that we can never recover the sequence of events in the ministry of Jesus.

A further trait of form criticism is its search for the background of the tradition in the life of the primitive Church. It is held that in order to understand the formation of the gospel tradition, the student must seek its *Sitz im Leben,* its setting in life. The social situation in which the material was preserved and used must be envisioned. The group life, not the individual carrier of the tradition, must be the center of attention. In this respect the movement recalls the social-historical method of study found in writings of such men as Shirley Jackson Case and Donald W. Riddle, who stress the importance of the social process and the group life in the development of Christian thought and literature.

This attention to the "setting in life" is an important feature of form criticism. It offers a solution to the question as to why the material in our Gospels was preserved and finally written down. All thoughtful readers of the Gospels have been struck by the fact that only a very small portion of what Jesus said and did has been preserved. Nothing remotely approaching a hundredth part of what occurred has found a place in the Gospels. It was not mere historical or biographical interest that governed the choice of what survived. The choice, according to the form critic, was governed by the usage and needs of the Church. Four aspects of the early Church's need may be mentioned.

The primitive Church recalled and preserved sayings and incidents which would give Christians *guidance* in matters of belief and conduct. What were they to do about Sabbath regulations? What attitude were they to take toward the law? What was their obligation as to forgiveness? To these and other questions they could and did give reply by recalling and repeating what Jesus had said or done that threw light upon their problems. In doing this they might sharpen the form of a saying so as to focus it upon their problem. They might add a generalized utterance drawn from some specific saying uttered in some particular situation.

Inquirers and converts had to have *instruction* as to the meaning of their faith and the character of their Leader. Therefore the deeds and sayings of Jesus were constantly used in this "earliest Christian pedagogy," as Easton calls it. Easton particularly has stressed the teaching activity as vital in the transmission of tradition. References by Paul to the class of teachers (Rom. 12. 7; I Cor. 12. 29) suggest a definite activity of teaching in the primitive Church.

A third situation in which the first Christians must have used the material which later was embodied in the Gospels was the service of *worship* in

which the believers shared. Even in the earliest days of the Palestinian Church, before the break with Judaism proved inevitable, Christians had their own separate gatherings for fellowship and worship (Acts 1. 13 f.; 2. 1, 46; 4. 23; etc.). They needed material with which to express the specifically Christian features of their faith. At such times the memory of the teaching and life of Jesus must have been vivid, and one feature of these meetings was undoubtedly the recounting of such cherished recollections, at first by eyewitnesses but later by others as well. Dibelius finds in preaching the setting for the use of the tradition, and while his conception of preaching is exceedingly broad, including teaching of all kinds, he evidently conceives it as centering in the Christian meetings.

From the outset Christians had to give a reason for the faith that was in them. They faced criticism and opposition. They had to answer objections and slanders. Thus they defended their Leader and their own position in *controversy*. Appeal to what Jesus said and did gave them their best ammunition for debate. Bultmann claims that debates with fellow Christians and with unbelievers led to the creating and shaping of tradition. In this situation, as in the others previously mentioned, there was no set order in which the material was used. What was used depended upon the Church's need at the moment. Each incident or teaching episode in the life of Jesus had a separate existence and was connected with relevant situations as they arose.

Thus the tradition which best served the needs of guidance, instruction, worship, and controversy was preserved. But it was not merely the content of the surviving tradition which was determined by church use and interests. The form also was affected by the practical concern. Just as a modern minister tells a story in order to bring out most effectively the point he has in view, so those who repeated the tradition shaped it to serve the immediate end. If the purpose in telling an incident was to bring out a teaching point of Jesus which would apply to the Church's situation, the incident was shaped so as to lead up to this point as a climax, with perhaps the addition by the teller of a generalizing sentence which would make perfectly clear the application of this point to the church problem. If a miracle was to be told, the seriousness of the malady had to be made clear, the part played by Jesus depicted, and some definite proof of complete cure given, with possibly some expression of amazement by spectators added as a fitting climax.

If a single saying was to be reported, the church situation might operate not only to recall a certain utterance, but also to suggest the most effective phrasing of the idea whose original and exact wording could not be remembered and was not considered important. That saying or incident felt to be typical of Jesus' attitude on a certain question would be chosen. Just as ministers and laymen of our time are known to cite Bible illustrations which prove to be composite, combining features of more than one Gospel section or Bible incident, so these early Christians might have repeated and used a story or teaching unit which in reality was a composite product. As the material was told and retold, it was altered at times to meet the changing

needs of a developing church, always, of course, with the honest intention of making a legitimate application of the original tradition. This eagerness to possess a tradition adequate and timely might even lead the Church or its leaders to "construct" or to borrow fitting material and ascribe it to Jesus. Some form critics, for example, Bultmann, find in this latter process of supplementing the tradition the origin of a large proportion of the contents of our Gospels.

Such is the nature of form criticism. . . . . This position may be most sharply and drastically formulated in the statement that the Gospels are a primary source for the study of the apostolic age, but only secondarily of value for study of the life of Jesus. Even if such an extreme and in my opinion untenable viewpoint is rejected, it may still be held that the Gospels reflect many features of primitive Christian life and thought. . . . .

As may readily be seen, if the Gospels thus reflect the life and thought of the primitive Church, the problem of the reliability of the material for the study of Jesus' life arises. This is frankly recognized by the form critic, and when an element of the tradition shows a developed church interest, or a Hellenistic character, it is rejected from the fund of usable data for the life of Jesus. Since all the material preserved was used by the Church, this skepticism may go so far as practically to deny that we have any dependable data left with which to picture the historical Jesus.

Types of Material in the Gospels

We have been seeking to understand the viewpoint of form criticism. Closer attention needs now to be given to the attempts it makes to classify the gospel material according to the form used. At once it becomes clear that there is no unanimity among those who make the attempt, and that other factors having to do with the content rather than the form of the material influence the classification. . . . .

Dibelius distinguishes the following types: (1) Paradigms, short incidents which climax in a teaching utterance of Jesus; (2) Tales, stories told for their own sakes, usually miracle stories; (3) Legends, stories about saintly people who are objects of interest to the Church; (4) Exhortations; (5) Myths, stories of doings of Jesus regarded as divine; (6) The Passion story, which is the noteworthy exception to the isolated form of most primitive material, and which in nucleus at least was a connected story from the beginning. While the classification is supposedly made upon the basis of form, without prejudice to the question of historicity, the paradigms and exhortations and the basic elements of the Passion story give Dibelius the impression of historicity more than the other material.

Bultmann offers quite a different classification: (1) Apothegms, which essentially coincide with Dibelius's paradigms; (2) Sayings of the Lord, which are subdivided into five groups; logia or wisdom utterances, prophetic and apocalyptic sayings, legal and ecclesiastical pronouncements, sayings using the first person "I" form, and parables; (3) Miracle stories; (4) Historical narratives and legends. One often feels that in this grouping considerations of content weigh more heavily than mere questions of form.

It is also to be noted that in Bultmann's view practically all of this material is the product of the apostolic Church. Jesus himself practically fades from view. . . . .

Probably as simple and satisfactory a classification of material as has been made is that of Vincent Taylor, who gives the following divisions: (1) Passion narratives, placed first on the ground, generally accepted by form critics, that this was the first part of the tradition to take definite and ordered form; (2) Pronouncement stories, equivalent to Dibelius's paradigms; (3) Sayings and parables; (4) Miracle stories; (5) Stories about Jesus. I regard Taylor's book as the sanest and clearest presentation yet published of the viewpoint under discussion.

As Frederick C. Grant and others have pointed out, the gospel material does not yield completely to any of the proposed classifications. The lines between the forms proposed are not clear. "Mixed" forms, with traits recalling more than one form and hard to classify, are not uncommon. This shows that even though it is useful to trace various types under which a part of the gospel tradition can be classified, too much must not be made of any system of classification.

THE MATTHAEAN TRADITION

Karl Kundsin

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW has a strongly expressed and distinct individuality. It possesses a much greater understanding of Judaism than Mark and Luke, and indeed, to some extent, even than the Logia (Q). On the other hand, it draws the line between the old and the new theocracy, Judaism and universal Christianity, no less sharply than do Paul, Mark, and Luke. The Vineyard of the Lord, the Kingdom of Heaven, or however else it may be designated, now belongs, because of the monstrous obduracy of the Jews, to a people who bring forth fruit in its season (Matt. xxi. 41 and 43—much more strongly emphasized than in Luke and Mark), i.e. those who stood outside and were not among those originally called (xxii. 7 ff.). It is the detailed exposition of the idea of the New Theocracy, which had its heralds and forerunners in the prophets but first made its appearance through the Son of God, and was thus both parallel to and contrasted with the Mosaic stage of revelation.

One may question whether or not this is the work of an individual who placed upon the traditional material the stamp of his own personality, rather than that a view which dominated some new collective spiritual development of the common Christian life has here received expression. Nowhere else in the Synoptic Gospels has the formulation and arrangement of material been determined with such rigid consistency as here. On the other hand, the following considerations deserve to be noted. The Gospel of Matthew makes use of extremely distinctive sections of *community* tradition, in which the peculiarities are most clearly recognizable: e.g. vi. 1-18; xiii. 36-52; xvi. 16-19; xvii. 24-27; xviii. 15-35, passages in which much more clearly than in the peculiar matter of Luke the existence of an organized community is presupposed. In this and in similar material, as also in the arrangement of the Gospel as a whole which bears the same peculiar mark, we may observe an undeniable tendency (*a*) from the originally loosely organized common life of a brotherhood of Christian believers to the developed theocratic ecclesiasticism under the "primacy of Peter," with Word and sacrament, a sense of missionary obligation, and a rigid discipline; and (*b*) from the Spirit-filled life to a teaching or doctrine resting upon scribism.

I. THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH

For Matthew far more than for Mark the return of the Son of Man is

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removed to a distance. Jerusalem has already been destroyed (xxii. 7), and yet "the bridegroom" continues to delay (xxv. 5 and 19). In this connection there is a new attitude taken toward the idea of the Kingdom of Heaven. In a sense it has already begun here upon earth. The period of waiting, originally looked upon as destined to be brief, has now become more or less the normal situation. This may be noted especially in the specifically Matthaean parables of the Kingdom of Heaven and their explanation (Matt. xiii). The Kingdom of Heaven is like a field in which the seed grows under various conditions. It is like a field where many tares grow amid the stalks of wheat. It is like a drag net in which not only good but also bad fish have been caught. It is quite clear that the Kingdom of Heaven (in its earthly stage) is nothing more nor less than a new kind of fellowship, the Church. The tares in the field, which may originally have stood for the evil in the world, are now made to mean, in the interpretation offered in this Gospel, the wicked men whose father is the devil and who are, unfortunately, to be found even within the Church. This reflects a great decline in the purity of the common life. However, there is this much consolation: things will not always be this way. At the "end of the world" the evil will be separated from the good and given up to destruction, whereas the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom (xiii. 40 ff., 49 f.; cf. xxv. 31-46).

The extension of the period of waiting into the state of normal continuance undoubtedly took place in the consciousness of the community; cf. xxviii. 20, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Meanwhile, the true characteristic of this present earthly stage of the Kingdom of Heaven is not the enthusiastic response to the guidance of the Spirit, as in Luke, but the realization of the theocracy in the form of the Church. The word *ecclesia* occurs in the Gospels but twice, and then only in Matthew. It occurs in the classical passage Matthew xvi. 17-18, where it clearly bears the meaning of the collective Church as an exclusive institution; and also in Matthew xviii. 17, where the reference is to the organized local church. If for no other reasons, these facts alone suffice to show that the apologetic attempt to find the church-idea in the oldest evangelic material must be abandoned. It is not until we reach the period of the Matthaean tradition that we come upon the attempt to trace back the founding of the Church to Jesus.

The same applies to church organization and discipline, to which the passage, Matthew xviii, is devoted. Matthew applies the word for "little ones" (*mikroi*) to the members of the church, and likewise applies the devastating "woes" to those who cause them to stumble. The sad fact that there were already those who had been led astray is thus indirectly indicated. The question had arisen: What was to be done with those who had fallen under such destructive influences and were beginning to deny their faith? How were they to be restored? The answer is found in the passage already referred to, xviii. 15-20. Corresponding to the Jewish practice, three stages of procedure are recommended: a private admonition, then an admonition in the presence of one or two witnesses, finally, a public

rebuke in the presence of the assembled congregation. With this, however, the limits of gentleness and clemency have been reached: all other means unavailing, nothing remained but expulsion from the fellowship, or, as was said, "Let the guilty be to you as a heathen or a publican." Contrasted with the generous-hearted Lucan attitude, this seems very rigorous, and can scarcely be viewed as anything but a revival of the Jewish practice of excommunication within the new Christian movement. As if the author himself realized the danger that lay in such a process of "judgment," he adds, at the end of the chapter, the Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor—a moving exhortation to unconditional readiness to forgive personal injury (xviii. 23-35).

To the administration of congregational discipline and the imposition of penance belonged the exercise of an authority which possessed the *potestas clavium* or "power of the keys," i.e. the right to impose excommunication in the name of Jesus. In the passage already referred to, xviii. 18, 19, it is still the assembled congregation itself (or, perhaps, the college of the Twelve?) through whom the Spirit speaks and in whose midst the exalted Lord himself responds to the prayer of the disciples, and makes the decision. This is at any rate the earlier situation, and corresponds to a time when no one had as yet thought of a monarchical administration of the community.

However, as time went by the course of development took other directions. Whether in consequence of the developing Jewish synagogue organization in the period following the destruction of Jerusalem, or under the influence of other factors—it is hard to say which—there arose at any rate, about the end of the first century, in Syria and Palestine, a tendency to place at the head of the community a single authoritative person whose powers could be traced back to Christ himself. In this connection it was possible for the idea to arise that Christ himself had committed to one of his disciples the disciplinary (and perhaps the teaching) authority of his *ecclesia.* Corresponding to the significant surname of Simon, *Kephas* (i.e. Rock), which usage undoubtedly goes back to Jesus himself, Simon was designated as the Rock upon which the Lord meant to found his church. Through the use of primitive symbolism he was honored as the possessor of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the authority was ascribed to him to "bind" and to "loose," i.e. not merely to pronounce forbidden or permitted, but to retain sins and to absolve—in other words to pronounce or to dissolve the ban upon sinners. Thus the *ecclesia* received in him its hierarchical head, its first divinely commissioned leader and "Prince of the Church," whom apparently the Syrian Church was the first to honor, and thus gave fixed form to the idea of the monarchical episcopate.

What had now come to pass? The figure of Peter, the model of the disciple restored by grace after his fall, the great missionary, who casts the net of the Kingdom of Heaven for its catch, is on the way to become the foundation of the developing church, and thus to occupy a position of dignity similar to that of Christ, equipped with full authority, not only to safeguard the purity of the community, but also to share in determining the eternal destiny of its members. In the same context belong the other

Petrine sections in the Matthaean tradition, e.g. xiv. 28 ff., where he is the only one of the disciples who at the behest of the Master walks upon the tempestuous waves of the sea, and xvii. 24-27, where in the person of Peter the (Jewish-Christian) community receives the direction to contribute, for the sake of peace, the required temple tax, even though their members were, as children of the Kingdom, free from this obligation—a passage which shows how close and strong were the bonds which still held it to the synagogue! Finally, we must refer again to the Petrine section in Matthew xviii. 21 ff. One may easily recognize the motive for the incipient preference of the Church for the Gospel of Matthew: it is its concern with the organization and inner life of the community, both alike decked with the authority of Jesus and also that of the Rock-disciple, and its appreciation of rigid organization and control. Every group in the developing church that longed for an ecclesiastical "legislation" and a centralized control, in order to achieve inner unity and strength to resist the hostile aggression of the Jewish Synagogue, rallied about this Gospel. Here, and here only, was it clearly stated that Jesus himself had been concerned to secure a stable organization of the Church's life, had not only set forth the fundamental principles of the new ethics but also given rules to apply to the questions of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, instituted not only the Lord's Supper but also the sacrament of Baptism, gave strict command for the Gentile Mission, and thus himself laid the foundation of the Church with its Word and sacraments. Where, however, further directions and ordinances were lacking, he had given to the leaders of the community, in the person of Peter, the authority to provide them.

II. Doctrine

What has just been said leads us a step further, since it shows us how, contemporaneously with the centering of the interest of the community in the idea of the Church, there arose the need for a definitely formulated teaching or doctrine, which came as the product of Christian scribism. In the developed doctrinal teaching of the Gospel of Matthew we can distinguish a number of different elements.

First of all, there is the teaching concerning the "new righteousness" or morality. This is contained in Chapter v, which begins the Sermon on the Mount—in the so-called antitheses. In general this section reflects accurately the principles of the eschatologically-minded, world-renouncing early Christians. Now as before, it is reconciliation, absolute honesty, purity in the relations of the sexes, the victory over evil achieved through love, which are central for ethics. At the same time the development has already led to a certain externalization and casuistic weakening of the great absolute imperative. The "new righteousness" is no longer set over against the Pharisaic ethics, in an absolute contrast, but is preferred as outbidding the latter in the measure of its earnest fulfilment of the Law (v. 19, 20); thus the "legal" point of view is introduced into the ethics of the community. In the warning against the sin of anger (v. 21 f.), a casuistic scheme has been introduced. The principle of the absolute indissolubility of marriage and the

equality of woman loses, through the addition of a clause, its original sublimity and impressiveness (v. 32). Even the substitution, in place of an oath, of the solemn formula of asseveration, the doubled "Yea" or "Nay" (v. 37), scarcely corresponds to the original meaning of the saying (cf. James v. 12). On the other hand, the command to love one's enemy appears in its wholly primitive and unaffected sublimity, though even this has received additions which reflect the Christian awareness of a sharp distinction between themselves and their neighbors and their expectation of a higher reward than that awaiting the heathen and publicans (v. 46 f.).

A further element in the doctrinal teaching is the section dealing with the new forms of piety (vi. 1-18). Corresponding to the traditional Semitic triad—alms, prayer, fasting—the general point of view is the common Christian one of absolute inwardness. Even here, however, the system of rewards begins to make its appearance. A certain externalism is to be noted even in the words introducing the Lord's Prayer: "After this manner therefore pray ye" (vi. 9)—words that really contradict those found in the preceding verse and show that emphasis was already being laid upon the sacredness of the formula itself, though not yet in the absolute legalistic sense which we come upon later in the Didache (Did. viii. 2). Similarly, the command regarding fasting in Matthew vi. 16-18 is some stages removed from the primitive rejection of external ordinances.

With this new teaching of ethics and piety corresponds further the conception of Jesus as the new Lawgiver and Fulfiller of the Law, or, we may even say, the Founder of the new religion. This is worked out in a clear parallelism between Jesus and Moses, the founder of the Old Testament religion. Just as the legislation of Moses, so also is that of Jesus delivered upon a mount (v. 1 ff.). Just as Moses accredited his divine mission by miracles, so likewise did Jesus. Just as Moses chose and sent out twelve heralds, so Jesus sent out his twelve disciples. It was not as one who unsettled the Law but as one who deepened and fulfilled the Law that Jesus appeared. This may be seen in his knowledge of the Law and of scripture, in which he is far superior to the Jewish teachers of the Bible (Matt. xxii). Had anyone before him ever proved so conclusively from the scripture that the Messiah was both Son of God and Son of David (xxii. 41 ff.)? Or like him set forth the quintessence of the Law in a few words (xxii. 34 ff.)? It was all to no effect that the Pharisaic scribes and the Sadducees undertook to silence him—through his superior knowledge of the scripture and keenness of utterance he rather silenced them (xxii. 34, 46).

Likewise, as a teacher of wisdom, he showed his superiority to all others. This is demonstrated with indisputable clarity in the seven parables of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. xiii). An ideal Scribe, he, and the disciples who followed in his footsteps, knew not only how to proclaim what was new, but also how to set the old in a new light and make it useful (xiii. 51 f.).

However, Jesus is not only the Law-giver and teacher of wisdom, but also the Messianic King, the Son of David and Son of God, in whom all the Old Testament promises and predictions received their fulfilment. In

the twenty passages on the life and work of Jesus in which the evangelist sees an explicit fulfilment of Old Testament prediction, this has been clearly pointed out—note the use of the stereotyped formula, "that it might be fulfilled," and similar expressions. There is scarcely a significant passage in the history of Jesus which does not correspond to some Old Testament prediction. His birth of a Virgin and his Davidic ancestry, Bethlehem as the place of his birth, the coming of the heathen wise Men and the presentation of their gifts, Herod's slaughter of the Innocents and the flight into Egypt, the appearance of the Baptist, and the activity of Jesus in a semi-heathen territory, the relieving of the ill from their diseases, the disclosure of the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, the Messianic entry into Jerusalem, the cleansing of the temple, the children singing praises, and a whole series of details in the Passion Narrative—all of these have been provided with Old Testament quotations. Thus the whole history of Jesus, by aid of a Christian scribism, is inwrought with an apologetic body of teaching, further enlarged and buttressed, with the clear purpose of meeting with their own weapons and upon their own territory the strongest opponents of Christianity, the Jewish teachers of the Law. How strong the apologetic tendency became in the development of the tradition is best seen in the reaction to the calumnies and attacks which were launched by the synagogue about this time against certain important Christian teachings. The answer to the charge of Jesus' lowly origin is found in the proof of his descent from Abraham and David (cf. the Genealogy in Matt. i. 1-16); the aspersions cast upon his birth are answered by the story of the angel's message to Joseph, informing him of the miraculous conception (Matt. i. 18-25); the lying reports of the theft of Jesus' body are answered by the account of the sealing of the tomb and the setting of a watch (xxvii. 62 ff.), as also the bribing of the watch by the Jewish authorities (xxviii. 11-15). It is thus perfectly clear that a series of Christological or, rather, Messianological doctrines, including chiefly those of the Virgin Birth, the descent from David and the disguised Kingship, and the bodily resurrection, were already in process of becoming the inalienable possession of the Great Church.

More or less the same change has taken place with regard to the conception of the last things as took place in regard to the moral teaching and Christology. Here also, in place of the unreflective faith and the burning hope of the first witnesses, a somewhat learned view appears, and one that likewise shows the influence of the rabbinic spirit. The view which has already appeared in Mark is now taken for granted, viz. that the end cannot come until the gospel message has been carried to all peoples (xxiv. 14; xxviii. 19); since the world judgment is a judgment of all the nations of the earth (xxiv. 31; xxv. 32), the opportunity must first be given them to declare themselves either for or against Christ. For those who have accepted him and have actually confessed him, paradise awaits; for those who have rejected him, eternal damnation (xxv. 46). This idea of a two-fold destiny in the world to come has grown into one of the most important of ecclesiastical doctrines, while the conception of the endless

penalties of hell, which at first were more or less incidental, picturesque, prophetic details, is now granted its full title to a place in dogmatics.

These are only a few examples to show how remote the Matthaean special tradition is from the free and unreflective, non-legal Christianity of the Spirit and of prayer which was to be found in the first decades. It must indeed be admitted that it had come to terms with the widespread universalistic view which was maintained by the victorious Hellenistic tendency, e.g. the prospect of the evangelizing of all nations, the absolute futility of Jewish nationalism, the absurdity of external lustrations, the Sabbath ordinances, and other traits; moreover, the account of the Virgin Birth shows close contact with Hellenism, or rather with Syncretism. In line with this is its sharp criticism of orthodox Palestinian Judaism. And yet, for all this, nowhere in the Synoptic tradition has the true Jewish spirit more obviously effected an entrance into Christianity than it has here—with its characteristic high regard for scribism and knowledge of the Law, its keen distinction between "little" and "great," its juristic formulation of the doctrine of reward and punishment, its separation between the chosen of God and the "Gentiles and publicans."

FORM CRITICISM AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Frederick C. Grant

WHAT WILL Form Criticism do to the Christian faith? . . . . Is not the end-result of all modern criticism, if Form Criticism may be taken as its final phase, a total disintegration of the historical data—which, for an out and out historical religion like Christianity, is about as disastrous as anything could be? . . . .

Now I must confess I do not share this feeling of uncertainty, or believe that criticism is doomed to end up in historical skepticism. Give me even twenty pages of Dibelius' *Botschaft*, and I can still go on saying the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds: though of course I was reared a Christian. . . . . What we have in the Gospel-tradition, for the most part, is just the kind of material, as far as form goes, that was natural in the religious milieu of first-century Palestine. And it is a tradition which circulated almost exclusively within the Christian group, the Church, not outside and by popular hearsay. It is a Church-tradition, from the very outset. What lies behind it, enfolds it, and carries it on, is a vital spiritual movement which sprung from the fellowship of men with Jesus and, still more important, from their fellowship with him and with each other after his resurrection: the Christian *Koinônia* was fellowship with a risen, glorified, triumphant and all-powerful Lord who was at the same time standing at the right hand of God and present in the assembly of his followers. The Gospels, and their underlying units of tradition, are simply inexplicable as purely literary products; they are the fragmentary records of Jesus' life and teaching as treasured within the companies of his followers, believers, and worshippers. True, they contain miracle-stories of a more or less "Hellenistic," non-Jewish pattern; and the later, apparently, the more non-Jewish. But they contain sayings, parables, incidents, a Passion Narrative, and at least one Resurrection Narrative, which betray no later "Hellenistic" or non-Palestinian influence, and are as authentic as any traditions to be found anywhere in human history. They are not stenographic or phonographic records, of course, nor did Jesus or his immediate disciples write journals, memorabilia, or letters. But they are precisely the kind of record Jewish teaching received in that age, and are much earlier in date than the records of other Jewish teachers and leaders—Hillel, for example, or Gamaliel, or Akiba. And their value, for religious life and faith today, is precisely as great as it has ever been. We can no longer, of course, trace the journeys of Jesus, or date his utterances ("in the spring of the year 29," e.g.), or locate the incidents of his life (the Mount of Transfiguration, the Mountain

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of the Sermon, and so on; though the Synagogue at Capernaum, the site of ancient Nazareth, Cana, Bethany, Calvary, and some others, are fairly definite); nor can we say, On such and such a day Jesus fed the multitudes, On such and such a night he walked on the water. Nor are we sure of the historical order of the events in his ministry, nor the length of its duration. But we are in no worse case than were Christians at the end of the first century—or even, probably, most Christians by the year 50 A.D. And if, on beyond these more or less superficial and external data, and as a much more serious matter, we are not sure that he identified himself with the ideal coming King of Israel, portrayed by the Messianists; or, if so, in what sense he thus identified himself, we are no whit less able to repeat with conviction the great affirmations of the Christian creeds: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men"; "God . . . . for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was made man"; "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory"; "In no other name under heaven can we obtain salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This truth can be briefly stated: the Church, which treasured these traditions, and in time produced the Gospels, is still the fellowship of Jesus' followers and worshippers. And the life within this fellowship, the life of obedient response to his spirit, of prayer and communion, of active practice of the Gospel "way" of life, comes first, must come first, before one can evaluate his teachings or the records of his career. This is true, even though at the same time it is often the figure of Jesus in the Gospels which first awakens the soul to awareness of his divine authority, to the endless appeal of his character and teaching. "Spiritual things are spiritually discerned." "He that does the will of God shall know of the doctrine," whether it be true or not. And certainly it is not the evidence of the miracles, which are now more of a problem than a support to faith, in these days, but the irresistible appeal of his spirit, which takes captive the imagination and the will of men.

This has always been so, to a far greater degree than we usually recognize. What was it that won St. Paul's obedience to the faith? Was it the record of Jesus' miracles? Was it a complete and satisfying biography of the Man Jesus? . . . . It was not the Man of Galilee, of our romantic modern quest for satisfying biography, nor a purely theological figure, robed in texts and armed with miracles, that won St. Paul and captured the hearts of multitudes in the great cities of the Mediterranean world in the first century, and thus launched Christianity upon its course in history; it was the Spiritual Christ, the Lord of the Church's faith, manifesting himself as a Presence and Power among his own, reflected in the old traditions from Galilee and Jerusalem but by no means completely enshrined or reported in them, or fully accounted for by them: a historical figure, a winsome, inspiring human character, now victorious and exalted—this was the Christ who conquered the hearts of men in that ancient world, and is still the Lord of his Church.

How shall we find him today? In precisely the same way as of old, through obedience unto faith, through following his guidance, through

absorption of his spirit, through living his life. That, I believe, is the essential Gospel, as Evangelical Christianity has always understood it; and that is the Gospel, as the New Testament understands it. And, as far as I can see, it is the best—if not the only—way out of the impasse created by modern historical criticism of the life and teaching of Jesus. Of course it involves a new philosophical outlook—or rather the revival of an older one—for which the term "spiritual" shall no longer be an adjective connoting what is transitory, evanescent, impressionistic, one-sided, or emotional, but rather a substantive denoting what is most real, imperishable, unchanging, and eternal. For, as St. Paul put it, "The things which are seen are temporal"; eternal things are unseen. The Spiritual Christ, the Christ of Faith, is the Eternal Christ.

From the point of view which I have been trying to set forth, it would appear that our problem results largely from the overlybookish, much too literary point of view which characterizes our religious inheritance as Protestants. We need to correct and supplement it with a more "social," more organic conception of religion; and right here Form Criticism may come to our aid practically, by helping us to see that Christianity, i.e., the Christian faith and way of life, is something more than, and prior to, the documents in which it is reflected, recorded, and handed on. It was so in the first century—for the spiritual movement that eventuated in the Christian Church existed before any documents were produced; existed before any of the early communities or their teachers thought of compiling the traditions into orderly presentations; and the same order is important today. The earliest Christians were born Jews, or else were devout proselytes or religious-minded pagans. The Christian Revelation came to them as the fulfilment of the best they knew, believed, and hoped of God. Judaism, the Law, Greek philosophy, the mysteries—all were "paedagogues" leading them to Christ. What they were provided with, in Christianity, was not a book, but a life—and that not just one supreme Life, but the whole way of life of a group, his followers, who were inspired by his teaching and example, treasured his utterances and certain anecdotes from his career, and expected him to return any day to bring the present age to an end and inaugurate the Reign of God; meanwhile, he was present with them, as was certain from manifold signs—the outpouring of the Spirit, the "powers of the age to come" already realized in the present, the cures of the sick, the speaking with tongues, the inspiration of prophets, the demonstrations of joy and gladness which accompanied their worship and their common meals, and in many other ways. . . . .

But I am aware that the considerations advanced thus far are more or less general and preliminary. What of the fundamental question: Does criticism leave Christ divine, or not? Upon the basis of purely critical research, what was the essential thing in primitive Christianity?

Our answer depends in large measure upon the view we take of primitive Christianity as a whole. Was it an out-and-out Messianic movement, at least in origin, like other such movements in the first century? Or was it a charismatic movement, the "spiritual" or ecstatic experiences of believers begin-

ning not at some later, "Hellenistic" stage, but traceable back to the very "first days of the Gospel," the period of the appearances of the risen Christ and the "outpouring" of the Spirit at Pentecost and on other occasions? I do not think we can confine either of these types of religious thought and experience within "stages" of development, and arrange them in chronological sequence. Messianism was a constant throughout the first century, I believe, and even later; and its recrudescence at later periods only shows how deeply it is rooted in the Christian tradition and outlook. Nor can the charismatic or pneumatic experience be limited to the Gentile church, and treated as if it had been read back into the early chapters of the Book of Acts by its Gentile author. There are traces of it in "Q"—which is certainly Palestinian, certainly early, and though affected here and there by Hellenistic influence is not Hellenistic as a whole.

Now I cannot undertake a survey of primitive Christianity upon this occasion; nor even a survey of the evidence for my views. I must beg you to let me stage my views as clearly as I can, and then go on to discuss the question before us. I believe the Messianic setting of primitive Christianity, and of the life of Jesus, and likewise the Messianic interpretation of Jesus' message and mission and the rise of Christianity, has been vastly overrated. (1) After all, Messianism was only one strain in first century Judaism; an elemental strain, but not its dominant characteristic. It was exaggerated, and the tragic consequences of the exaggeration were apparent to all reflecting minds in the two revolts of 66 and 132 A.D. And if ordinary first century Messianism, which always managed to keep its feet on the soil of this earth and looked for a revival of the kingdom of David, was an exaggeration of only one element in Judaism, how much less significant for Judaism as a whole was apocalyptic Messianism, the kind represented by I Enoch, IV Ezra, II Baruch, and similar writings! I believe the doctrines of these books were far from common property; and that in fact many of the most striking passages are later interpolations, and not part of the original text. This is certainly so in IV Ezra; and I think also in I Enoch, i.e. to a wider extent than most editors have hitherto suspected. (2) Moreover, I believe it is not a unified "Son of Man dogmatic" (as Bousset quite properly called it) that we see in these books, but a mélange of several parallel and sometimes competing ideas: Gressmann was right, I think, in distinguishing at least three, viz. the Messiah of the prophetic expectations in the O. T., the returning David, or Son of David; the Servant of the Lord in II Isaiah, whom, like Köhler, he views Messianically; and the "Son of Man" of the Apocalypses just named, and of certain parts of the N. T. To these three figures we may add a fourth, from the N. T., the "Man from Heaven" of Paul's system—an idea whose cognates and antecedents have been studied by such writers as Carl Kraeling and Eduard Meyer. The conception is similar to, but not identical with, the "Son of Man" in the Parables of Enoch. (3) I believe, moreover, that the primitive Christian tradition was submitted to a strong influence of "Son of Man" dogmatic, at a very early date—so early, in fact, that it is found in both "Q" and Mark; i.e., it probably swept over the tradition while it was still in the oral stage.

That points to Palestine, and I think to the north: there is evidence that I Enoch, at least the Parables, come from this neighborhood, viz. somewhere near "the waters of Dan." And if so, this would in turn support the hypothesis of Lohmeyer and Lightfoot that Christianity did originate in Galilee, and had a strong center there in the first generation or two, and was not centered exclusive in Jerusalem. At any rate, certainly the *Marcan* tradition (which is surely Palestinian in origin) has undergone a bath of "Menschensohndogmatik"; the "Son of Man" sayings can almost all be separated from the pericopes in which they are now lodged. And this means that the Marcan tradition has not only been influenced by what Johannes Weiss called Mark's "Pragmatism," and been edited from the standpoint of Mark's view of the "Messianic secret"—as Wrede held—and of the obduracy of the Jews and their hardness of heart (shared also by the disciples!) and the inability of Jesus' closest followers to understand his real nature and mission until after the Resurrection: not only that, but it also means that the tradition itself, prior to Mark, has been handed down in a circle (or in circles) where the prevailing conception was Messianic, in the "Son of Man" sense and with the special "Son of Man" presuppositions, including a particular theodicy, and so on. This strong influence I believe was exerted, as I say, at a very early stage in the transmission of the oral tradition; whether it goes back to Jesus himself I cannot say, or if so, to what degree. But I doubt if it goes back to Jesus; if this were so, the pericopes of the tradition would not bear "Son of Man" sayings embedded in their narrative, or attached to them at the end, but as their very heart: i.e., not, like the saying, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath," but like the allegory of the Last Judgment in Matt., where "the Son of Man" is integral to the whole conception. Yet it is precisely the later, not the earlier, sections that show this relationship. And, as everyone knows, the process of substituting "Son of Man" for the first person singular is characteristic of Matthew. No doubt the process can be traced back into the oral tradition: it scarcely began with Matthew's new and enlarged edition of Mark.

Hence—and I beg your indulgence for my brevity, and failure to bring forward full evidence for these views—I believe the whole modern Apocalyptic-Messianic, "thoroughgoing" eschatological interpretation of the life of Jesus (inaugurated by Schweitzer and in part by Johannes Weiss) is one-sided and impossible. Jesus' prophetic ministry was *interpreted* Messianically, at a very early stage; but I doubt if he ever identified himself categorically with "the Son of Man" in the Enochic, "thoroughgoing," transcendental sense. As a consequence, primitive Christianity was not centered exclusively in Messianism, certainly not wherever it still clung to the recollections of the earthly Jesus. Nor was it Messianic for long, on any showing—i.e. in the transcendental apocalyptic sense: for it was not a great while before the Church crossed the borders of Palestine and moved out into the Graeco-Roman world. Even in Syria, which was still in the main Semitic soil, Jesus was not "Messiah," but "Lord"—*Maran.* The title *Mashikha* was left behind, save as "Christos" interpreted it—and even that

term soon became a proper noun, even on Paul's lips; the new title, with its whole new set of connotations, was *Kyrios;* and this has been in use ever since, for almost the whole of Christian history.

I believe the N. T. not only marks this great transition, from East to West, from Judaism to Hellenism, from the Semitic world to the Graeco-Roman, from the ancient Orient to the modern Occident—but the N. T. also makes it clear that the basic conception even in the Messianic "Christology" (at that early stage) is really spiritual and transcendent; i.e. Jesus is a risen, glorified Lord, present with his worshippers, and inspiring them through his Spirit, *from the very outset.* Even though his first title is Messianic (understood of course in the "Son of Man" sense), the meaning which that title is intended to convey is really better conveyed by "Lord," "Kyrios," "Son of God," and other Hellenistic divine titles. This is the justification for later Catholic Christology, in its historical evolution. In the very earliest Christian tradition, Jesus rises from the dead (not necessarily from "the grave"), as *Messiah.* He was proved to be Messiah, by his Resurrection. He became Messiah at his Resurrection: "Thus it behoved the Messiah to suffer, and to enter into his glory"; "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him." These surely are the primitive attempts at explanation. The Christology of the New Testament is itself a process of development, i.e. a development already under way. And it goes back to the appearances of the risen Lord in Jerusalem, shortly after his crucifixion.

I am sorry I can touch only the outstanding points. If this view is correct, then Professor Dodd's and the late Rudolf Otto's view, viz. that Jesus announced the Kingdom as already present, is something more than exegesis of a Greek verb: *Eggiken gar hē basilica tou Theou* gives us the whole outlook of early Christianity summed up in a phrase. The Kingdom of God is at hand; and not only at hand, but already here; and yet not here in its full realization, but only in its initial stage. It is like the dawn of a new day —the sun has not yet fully emerged above the horizon, but it is on its way, and nothing can hold it back. That is the mood of assurance which characterizes early Christianity, and this surely goes back to Jesus—not to the resurrection appearances, but to his teaching and his ministry: for without this view already established, how could the appearances, and the charismatic phenomena of the early community, ever have come to be interpreted Messianically? . . . .

So, I insist, apocalyptic Messianism is secondary. What is primary is the teaching of Jesus; his attitude; his confidence in God and in the Salvation which God is bringing to pass; his ethics; and above all the impress of his personal character upon those who tried, in one way and another, to interpret him to others—and to themselves. In doing this, they turned naturally to the Messianic category, including the "Son of Man" category which—at least in its Danielic sense, if not the full Enochic sense—he himself had already used, though not necessarily identifying himself with this "Son of Man." If they thought of him, now, not as the Teacher in Galilee but as the exalted Lord, or as the "Son of Man" of the coming judgment, it is perfectly certain that they did not forget the tradition of

his life in Galilee. Though modified in some respects by the new viewpoint, it was at basis still the recollection of their teacher in Galilee which gave to the primitive Christology, and indeed the whole primitive Christian world-view, its distinctive quality. It was the *humility* of the Messiah that impressed Paul—and led to his theory of the *humiliation* of the preexistent Christ: though, as in Phil. ii, the two features (personal character and divine act) flow into one. It is the "glory of God" that is seen reflected in the face of Jesus Christ: reflected not in a program of Incarnation, Atoning Death, Resurrection and Exaltation, but in his personal character. That marks the vast qualitative difference between the preexistent Messiah of one school of Jewish speculation, and the actual person Jesus who appeared in history, was loved and followed, who "went about doing good," who "took the form of a servant," who "became obedient to death, even the death of the cross," and who triumphed over death and the grave, since "death could not hold him." One comes to know this Lord partly through the traditions of his earthly life—but only partly: "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet so know we him now no longer." Partly, he is known through the testimony of the Church, especially in worship; partly, through direct personal contact with him in spiritual experience. . . . .

To sum up. Primitive Christianity is much more than a modified type of Jewish apocalyptic Messianism, and was from the start a movement of spiritual and moral idealism, or, better, of deep religious faith. As this faith survived the downfall of the apocalyptic hopes of the first generations of Jewish Christians, so its acknowledgment of the quality of life manifested in Jesus survived the Messianic terminology in which it was originally interpreted. That "quality of life," that character, that "spirit" which men recognized in Jesus is still the completest expression of what we instinctively call divine; and the more perfectly men respond to it the more depth and reality and permanence they find in it—"In his light we see light." It is no aberration of passing enthusiasm that has led countless millions of our fellows to identify Jesus in one way or another with the eternal God—though, as I would insist, both the grounds of our recognition of his deity, and the real basis of his union with the Father, are in the realm of "character" rather than in that of miraculous power, or of an assumed self-identification, on his part, with some supernatural Messianic figure, let alone any hypothetical substratum of personality derived from the categories of later Greek metaphysics. All these were due to the efforts men made to explain him—human efforts, more or less successful at the time, none of them permanent, none of them exhaustive. And I believe that in our teaching of the Life and Message of Jesus, today, the approach should be by way of recognition of this character, this quality of life, this "spirit" that was in him, rather than theologically—though a theology is indispensable, sooner or later, since "men must think," as the French proverb says. And this approach brings us much closer to the real significance of Jesus than any attempt to make him responsible for the apocalyptic doctrines of his followers, or for the Messianic category in

which he is now described in the Gospels—chiefly in Matthew, but also in all the rest, and in their sources as well.

Was Jesus then only a prophet? It may be a hard saying, but after all "prophet" is only one more historical category—and Jesus was unique. In fact, on Jewish lips "prophet" was the highest possible category, next to God himself, just as it was later among the Moslems. It was so in ancient Hebraism; it was so in the days of Maimonides. But it was a far more natural, more human and more religiously significant category than the purely imaginary one of Messiah, let alone that of "Son of Man" or "Man from Heaven" in the esoteric circles of the Apocalyptists. And when we come down to the present, once more, is it not even now a more significant title than any derived from Messianism, whether apocalyptic, political, or cosmological? For my own part, if you will let me close with a personal testimony, I simply cannot believe that Jesus was ever the deluded, fanatical, eventually disappointed and heart-broken Messianist that Schweitzer makes him out to be; or the monstrous, self-assured, self-deceived dogmatist that the mechanical role of Son of Man "Messiah" would require of him. A wholly different person speaks from the Gospel traditions which have come down to us, influenced though they were, at some time or other, and probably very early, by that idea. My own feeling is more nearly that of the now oft-derided nineteenth-century Liberalism, or even that of the liberal Evangelicalism of the 1840's and 50's; and it seems to me far more probable, even on theological grounds, as well as on historical, that the Incarnation should have taken place through a "prophet" rather than through one who was only another deluded first-century false Messiah! Put the other way about, Jesus the prophet, the Teacher sent from God, seems to me not only to fit far better the actual historical situation reflected in the Gospels, but also to provide a far more probable mode of the Incarnation than any category drawn from apocalyptic Messianism. Thus historical and literary criticism (even including Form Criticism), at least as far as I am able to make out, not only does not endanger the Christian faith, but rather anchors it even more deeply and securely in the firm foundation of actual, concrete, ascertainable history—our human, but divinely guided, past, so far as it can be recovered at the present day.

THE LIMITATIONS OF HISTORICAL METHOD

James Moffatt

THE MORE THE historical method knows its place, and keeps its place, the more likely it is to commend itself. Let me suggest . . . . some of the directions in which the claims of the historical method have to be qualified, and its range delimited.

I

Take, for example, the primary aim of the historical approach to the New Testament, the reconstruction of the historical setting in which Christianity arose. The aim and end of the historical imagination is to put ourselves, as far as possible, in the position of those to whom the words were at first spoken. We must create their world afresh for ourselves, with its far-off colour and shape, its environment and its atmosphere. William Morris opens the prologue to his *Earthly Paradise* by making this demand upon his readers:

> "Forget six counties overhung with smoke,
> Forget the snorting steam and piston-stroke,
> Forget the spreading of the hideous town;
> Think rather of the pack-horse on the down,
> And dream of London, small and white and clean,
> The clear Thames bordered by its gardens green;
> Think, that below bridge the green lapping waves
> Smite some few keels that bear Levantine staves
> And cloth of Bruges, and hogsheads of Guienne;
> While nigh the thronged wharf Geoffrey Chaucer's pen
> Moves over bills of lading."

That is, he asks and helps the reader to go back to the latter half of the fourteenth century, in order to understand his poem. So with the historical method; it invites us to forget the intervening centuries, and to imagine, with the aid of research, the far-off conditions of life in which first-century Christianity arose, as these are represented or implied in the New Testament. . . . .

We are so reluctant to go beyond our own circle and range of interests. Yet to put ourselves into the place of other people, to realize how they live, to appreciate their difficulties, to penetrate below differences of class and education to our common need and nature—this is one of the clues to

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mutual service and humal welfare. Discord rises generally from misunderstanding, and suspicion is invariably due to ignorance. Now it is much the same qualities that are required and developed by the historical method. It ought not to be more difficult, and it is certainly not less essential, to think ourselves into the position of our fellows to-day than to think ourselves back into the first century. . . . . It might be some help if we employed our imagination even on a remote past like the New Testament period; the effort might render us more alive to the need of a similar effort to understand the present.

This by the way, however. I want to admit candidly that such an effort of the historical imagination cannot yield us all we might expect. We have not, at least we have not yet, the materials for reconstructing the outer or the inner world of the New Testament with any completeness. Unfilled spaces remain in any synthesis we draw up. Economic life in Palestine, for example, is still uncertain for the most part, owing to our lack of contemporary evidence. So is our knowledge of the primitive missions in Palestine. So is our knowledge of the varieties which must have prevailed in the Jewish idea of the messiah and the kingdom–a subject of such importance for our knowledge of the rise of Paulinism. On these and a number of other topics, which are vital to a satisfactory estimate of primitive Christianity, we must admit frankly that nothing can be gained except a more or less reasonable probability. Several crucial phases in New Testament Christianity, as for example the prominence of the Eucharist, the relation of Paul's thought to earlier and contemporary Christianity, and the rise of the term "lord" as applied to Jesus, are by no means so obvious and plain as some textbooks suggest.

II

Furthermore, the last word about New Testament problems like the consciousness of Jesus or any of the so-called "supernatural" phenomena, does not lie with the historical method. We scrutinize and sift, for example, the evidence for traditions like the virgin-birth, the so-called "miraculous stories," and the resurrection of Jesus. Literary and historical criticism analyses the data by the ordinary methods of research. Yet the conclusion seems to be that in the end these can neither be proved nor disproved by historical investigation; the ultimate decision lies with faith or, if you like, with dogma, at any rate with some factor which is introduced into the discussion. The historical method may determine the relative amount of probability in any case, and throw some light upon the origin of the belief from analogous phenomena. But the temptation to overrate its own capacities must be resisted.

The truth is, the historical method is in much the same position with regard to the New Testament religion as the scientific method is with regard to the universe; it can answer the How? but not the Why? One of the healthiest signs in the practice of the historical method is the increasing sense of its own limitations. The genesis and structure of a belief are its task, not the validity of the belief. It has now vindicated its right to live

and work, and claimed the sphere within which it can operate. But the more it is conscious of its domain, the more it is beginning to realize what lies beyond its particular categories. The task to which it addresses itself is that of viewing the Christian religion in its casual setting; it has a distinct contribution to make, and neither simple faith in tradition nor mystical speculation can deny its right to co-operate in the estimate of the Christian origins, provided, as I have already hinted, that it does not go beyond its commission by committing itself to decisions upon matters like revelation, decisions which depend upon the unconscious or surreptitious introduction of some philosophical idea.

This does not imply that the historical student is reduced to the rank of the annalist or chronicler, whose chief function is to register and record events, not to explain and interpret them. It means simply that in certain cases, as he deals with traditions in the New Testament, the historical inquirer who is scrupulous and competent must admit that his methods and data do not furnish a criterion for choosing finally between two or more possible explanations; his task ends by leaving the question open. No historical method, for example, can define the essence of Christianity without furtively employing metaphysical and philosophical principles.

III

The limitations of the historical method become still more obvious in the region of that ethical application which the New Testament is rightly as well as wrongly assumed to furnish.

It is something gained when the Christianity of the New Testament is realized to be a truth which needs to be practised as well as proved. The practical use of the New Testament is an indispensable clue to its inner meaning. To be sensible of this, to expect guidance and authoritative counsel from its pages, is to approach it for the original ends for which it was composed. For the New Testament is not a little collection of remote documents, whose stories are doubtful in the light of history, and whose ethical message is antiquated. Neither is it an Oriental anthology which may be left to exercise the ingenuity of scholars. It is in the world to do more than provide an interesting occupation for people who edit texts and practise the craft of criticism. It was not written for scribes, and it ought not to be left to scribes. Its pages contain religious realities which have been a spiritual treasure for men, and which are likely to remain so. One of the ends of historical research is to bring out the living and actual messages which this book carries for our world, and one of the growing convictions of thoughtful people in our own day is that, so far from requiring to be discarded as an obsolete production, the New Testament contains something which is ahead of our age, something which is essential to our well-being, something which may be translated into modern practice as the permanent basis of right relations between man and man.

But this process requires thought and care. There are the two extremes, that of those who regard the New Testament as out of date, because they refuse to interpret its contents except in a literal, unhistorical

temper, which does no manner of justice to the permanent value of much that is conveyed in some provisional Oriental setting, and that of those who, with equal disregard of historical perception, take it over literally and prosaically as a model for present-day practice. The latter method has been responsible in large measure for the tendency to discredit the New Testament which characterizes the former party. What the historical approach means, is that a truer estimate of the writings is put forward than could be reached so long as they were regarded as equally and verbally inspired.

The position now is, that the New Testament is not a code any more than a deposit or a germ; it presents not even materials for a code which can be applied to ecclesiastical and social life, but a spiritual impulse which creates a moral consciousness of unrivalled range. The spirit or creative power pours from the life of Jesus Christ and from those whom he inspired; it is a life, the method of life. It expresses itself in his words and deeds primarily, then in the thoughts and actions of his followers as communities. These expressions in the New Testament are always related to specific historical situations; they are not abstract statements thrown into the air, but struck out from the clash of the Christian spirit with definite occasions. The first way to distinguish what is fundamental in any expression, and to appreciate the temporary elements, is to realize as exactly as possible the historical conditions under which the particular statement was made. And, while this consideration applies to the theology in particular, it bears with equal weight upon the ethical inferences and implications. These are particularly difficult to understand. It is more easy to enter into the meaning of what the New Testament has to say about forgiveness and prayer, for example, than to form a true notion of what is meant for us by the sayings of Jesus to his contemporaries about questions like divorce, trade, property and politics. The reason is that the passage of the centuries alters the social setting more than the religious. Our position to-day, economically and politically, is not that of the Palestinian peasants and tradesmen to whom Jesus spoke, nor of the citizens in towns of Asia Minor and Greece to whom Paul wrote. The New Testament provides many striking and searching words about duties and responsibilities. But if we are to touch their spirit instead of being content with their letter, if the New Testament is to be more to us than the Koran would be to adherents of Islam if they lacked the Traditions, it is impossible to apply these sayings profitably in every case to ourselves unless account is taken of their original object, and therefore of their limited and special range. . . . .

The function of the historical method is restricted.

At the outset, it often suggests a *caveat*. The New Testament, interpreted by its canons, refuses to yield all the justification which progressives sometimes profess to find in its page for their methods and ends. For example, well-meaning enthusiasts are occasionally fond of describing vital Christianity as revolutionary. True Christians, they say, are men who "turn the world upside down." But this phrase is a libel upon Christianity. It is the language of the malignant Jews at Saloniki, who, unable to

thwart Paul and Silas in their mission, accused them of treason and sedition. *These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also* —so the Jews and their tools, *lewd fellows of the baser sort*, alleged to the authorities. The apostles, they urged, *are all violating the decrees of Caesar by declaring some one else called Jesus is king*. In one sense, the accusation was true, unconsciously true. Christianity implies a radical change in many conventional practices and opinions; it does upset the world of easy-going, selfish men. But the primitive Christians did not dream of overturning the political and social order of the Empire. . . . .

Jesus certainly did not identify his kingdom with any economic revolution, and Paul, when he reached Corinth, did not attack the social problems there. This, I repeat, was (i) partly owing to the strong eschatological feeling in the Church. But (ii) partly also it sprang from the profound sense that the religious aims of Jesus Christ were absorbing, and could be attained, whatever were the local circumstances. Many of our most pressing modern problems were not on the horizon of the first century, and the New Testament therefore cannot offer us materials for legislating with regard to them. What it does contribute is the spirit in which they are to be met, the vital principles that must dominate the relation of man to God and man to man. . . . .

We have the perplexing paradox that over and again the driving force for social reform has come from men who were indifferent to religious ends, while the religious members of society either held aloof from the movement or joined it later. The other-worldly temper, which is not always identical with the eschatological temper although it often produces similar results, induces some natures to condone or to ignore external handicaps, while those who see the one sphere of happiness in this world and in a more or less material well-being, are naturally whetted to a humanitarian zeal.

The task of meeting such issues of the hour with intelligence as well as with sympathy, plainly involves a wider range of Christian perception than the historical study of the New Testament can furnish. The later experience of the Church, the accumulated sense of tradition, and the living spirit of the Christian religion are all required in order to determine the practical line of duty for Christians, individually or corporately, at any modern crisis which raises problems of this order. The historical approach to the New Testament has only the subordinate, though essential, task of ascertaining the central interests of Jesus amid the varying points of view in the New Testament, and of emphasizing his primary religious outlook as the dominating consideration. . . . .

IV

Finally, the limitations of the historical method have to be recognized in relation to the devotional use of the New Testament.

In approaching the New Testament along the lines of historical research, we certainly gain a new sense of reality which is indispensable to devotion, unless the latter is to be fantastic and sentimental. Also, the method does produce a new sympathy with the religion of the primitive Church; if

truly followed, it emancipates the mind from anything like a patronizing or superior attitude to Jesus and his first disciples. In one sense we may say that the devotional attitude is the criterion of the historical as well as of the doctrinal interest in the New Testament, and that the historical method is an aid here as elsewhere by putting us into touch with a Lord who is real, not a projection of our private fancies, and with living truth, which after all is the source of devotion as it is of moral courage—for the religious mind has a vital interest in truth. Yet more than all this is required in order to possess the faculty of appreciating the inward meaning and message of the New Testament. It is an insight which is aided but not produced by the historical method. . . . .

The historical method need not block the way to this devotional enjoyment and understanding of the New Testament. To concentrate upon the original meaning, to reconstruct the bearings of a New Testament passage upon its immediate circle in the first century, is to do much, but not to do all. It would be pedantic and unhistorical in the extreme to imagine that the words of the New Testament cannot suggest to our minds more than they did to those who first heard or read them. The New Testament, like all great literature, becomes charged with associations and fuller meanings, as it lives on for those who use it. It is the property of a classic to contain more than is at first intelligible, to gain or rather to reveal a reach of which possibly even its original author was not fully conscious. "Thoughts were given" to them "beyond their thought." Even when we withhold from the New Testament any special predicate of inspiration, we are bound to allow it what we allow to writers like Homer, Virgil, Dante, or Shakespeare. Its words carry far beyond their original circle, and their message is inexhaustible. A man may come by experience to life to find that passages from Homer and Horace appeal to him "as if he had never before known them," and then he begins

> to understand how it is that lines, the birth of some chance morning or evening at an Ionian festival, or among the Sabine hills, have lasted generation after generation, for thousands of years, with a power over the mind, and a charm, which the current literature of his own day, with all its obvious advantages, is utterly unable to rival.[1]

So with the New Testament writings. Their authors do not always realize the truth and range of what they see and recount. Fuller experience is required to draw this out, and the same applies to the effect of their words. . . . .

The truth is, that in its moments of anguish or of ardour, perplexed by the sheer misery of the world or haunted by the sense of an indifferent order of nature, struggling with the demands of God and the duties of human life, or facing the tragic facts of sin and guilt and death, the soul understands the New Testament as it was meant to be understood and as it always has been understood by some on earth; here it meets the revelation of a living God with pardon and peace, enjoying direct intercourse with a Lord

[1] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, p. 78.

who liberates and renews and understands. Those who belong to any of the various Christian communities which have somehow adjusted themselves to the New Testament by means of doctrines about tradition and inspiration, are specially open to this devotional influence. The collective experience of the Christian past creates an atmosphere in which the New Testament vibrates for the present and acquires sacramental efficacy. The constant use of it in religious discipline and direction charges its language with inspiration and impulse for the devout soul, till it ceases to be a mere world of echoes and reminiscences. But the historical method is not necessarily at variance with this use of the New Testament, unless we persist in regarding that method as dry and detached—which is as uncritical as to imagine that the knowledge of sciences like botany and geology impairs an eager appreciation of nature. Historical and literary criticism of the New Testament may indeed, at some stages, preoccupy the mind with considerations which do not make for any devotional use; the process of research may induce uneasiness by appearing to leave us amid the débris of an historical framework, or it may add to our insight without necessarily awakening our emotions; the mind again may become conceited and unduly self-conscious as it works upon the records, until their intrinsic force and meaning cease to be felt. Yet these are either incidental defects, for which the historical method itself is not responsible, or temporary pains of growth. Here, as in other departments of inquiry into literary classics, the ultimate end is enjoyment and appreciation. This is what justifies any critical training. It does not indeed imply, nor does it invariably accompany, broad and sound knowledge. Anyone knows how in studying a classic like Homer or Dante we may allow the technique of the critical method to prevent us from getting through to the force and fire of the original, which the untrained will often feel through the mere medium of a translation. It is a pity and a loss, ten times so in the study of the New Testament. Let this then be my last word about the historical method which would set our feet upon the road to the New Testament: in moving towards this great literature we are not fully enlightened if we fail to be moved by it as we approach it.

Part II

THE PORTRAIT OF JESUS IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND SOME RECENT CRITICISM

Vincent Taylor

THERE IS REASON to think that the next task to be undertaken in the discussion of the Fourth Gospel is a kind of *stocktaking*. Are there any positions which seem definitely won, and which therefore may serve as footholds for further advance?

I

The *date* of the Gospel is perhaps the question on which the largest amount of agreement has been reached. The days are gone for ever when Baur could plead for the year 170 as the date of composition, and this is just as true of the year 150 on which some of his followers fixed, and of the year 140 which Schmiedel, influenced by the supposed allusion in John v. 43 to Bar Cochba's rebellion, suggested. Step by step, in a progress largely secured by the labours of Lightfoot, Westcott, Zahn and Sanday, the date has been forced back to the end of the first century, or the opening years of the second. Professor Bacon may be said to sum up the discussion when he declares that the "formative period" of the Fourth Gospel "has already been determined as closely as the data available, or likely to become available, admit."

Equally decisive is the question of the *provenance* of the Gospel. It is true that the late Canon Burney has pleaded for Antioch as the region where the Fourth Gospel first appeared, but the evidence offered is not convincing, and cannot really be compared with that which converges on Proconsular Asia, and on Ephesus its metropolis, as the place of origin. Bacon, indeed, can urge with justice that the modern form of the Johannine question is but slightly, if at all, a question of date and provenance. Lightfoot's battle-ground has become a well-established base of departure.

Again, we are at liberty to assume, with a high degree of confidence, that the author was *a Jew*. The exceptions to the almost unanimous agreement of modern scholars on this point are Professor Grill, of Tübingen, and M. Loisy. Alike by his knowledge of the Hebrew Bible, his acquaintance with current Messianic expectations, his generally correct but un-Greek style, his familiarity with Jewish feasts, parties and customs, the evangelist plainly reveals his nationality. The objection that he speaks of the high-priesthood as if it were an annual office is amply met by the reply that in describing Caiaphas as high priest "that year" the evangelist means "that fateful year," "that year of all years," while his use of the term "the Jews"

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in reference to his own people is explained by the probability of his long separation from his native land, and by the part which his fellow-countrymen had played in the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus. On this question Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter justly remarks: "However hard it is to explain the language imputed to Jesus about his own people, by almost universal consent the evangelist was himself a Jew." Whether the evangelist was *a Palestinian Jew* is more open to question. He certainly has an accurate and detailed knowledge of Palestinian topography, and of the Temple and its environs in particular. Few geographical difficulties meet us in the Gospel, the most notable being the description of the Sea of Galilee as the Sea of Tiberias, and it is reasonable to suppose that with fuller knowledge these would be explained. At least a "pilgrim's knowledge" of Palestine is commonly granted to the evangelist, and how far this is a minimum is best discussed in connection with the question as to whether he was an eyewitness of the ministry of Jesus.

The fact that the evangelist was strongly affected by the complex influences of his Hellenistic environment is beyond dispute. It is here, in the study of the Gospel in relation to its environment, that modern research has won its greatest triumphs, and among many who have contributed to this advance may be mentioned Wendland, Wellhausen, Harnack, Bousset, Bultmann, Loisy, Bacon, and in this country Stanton, Moffatt, Gardner, and Carpenter. If the evangelist was a Jew by birth, he was by reason of his training and sympathies *a Greek.* The extent to which he was influenced by Stoicism, the Alexandrian philosophy, the mystery religions, Gnosticism, and the like, are matters upon which warm disputes will long be waged; but of the effect of such influences upon the evangelist's presentation of his story and of his version of the sayings and discourses of Jesus there can be no question. There is something very refreshing in Canon Streeter's confession that to him it has always been a matter of no little surprise that defenders of orthodoxy, of all people, should be anxious to find the ancestry of the evangelist's Logos doctrine not in a conception of Philo, but "in a Rabbinic paraphrase which is at best a rather childish attempt to dodge the necessity of thought." . . . .

Yet another point which research has removed from the realms of conjecture is the *evangelist's use of Mark* as a source. It is true that for centuries the traditional view was that the evangelist was familiar with all the Synoptics, and that he wrote with the idea of supplementing them. But in modern times this assumption, like so many more, has been challenged and subjected to criticism by Bacon, Buckley, Stanton, Streeter, Carpenter, and others. The result of these inquiries may be summarised as follows: Opinion is practically unanimous that the evangelist used Mark; it is divided as to the use of Luke; and, on the whole, unfavourable to the writer's use of Matthew. The importance of this question is greater than at first sight it appears to be, as may be indicated by a quotation from Streeter: "The dependence of the Fourth Gospel upon two earlier lives of Christ, neither of which purports to be the work of eye-witnesses, would make it hard to accept the tradition which ascribes it to an apostle, even if that ascrip-

tion involved no other difficulties." There is, of course, another consideration to be borne in mind along with this, and that is the "extraordinary independence" with which the evangelist writes, the "masterful way" in which he deals with the narratives of his predecessors. With much reason Streeter contends that this fact, coupled with the evangelist's evident familiarity with Palestinian topography and Rabbinic usage, "is much easier to explain on the hypothesis that he was a personage who possessed, and was recognised as possessing, a claim to write with independent authority."

The remaining question to be considered in the present section is more important than any which has yet been noticed: it is the agreement of recent critics, almost without exception, in denying *the direct Apostolic authorship* of the Gospel. Twenty-one years ago, when Dr. E. F. Scott published his stimulating book, *The Fourth Gospel, Its Purpose and Theology*, he was taken to task for quietly assuming this position; but, if recent scholarship is any guide, no one could justly be criticised for taking this course to-day. Indeed, to anyone who reads in succession the works of contemporary British scholars on the Fourth Gospel, the agreement in rejecting the Apostolic authority is positively astonishing; only a rare voice or two is heard on the other side. The collapse of the traditional position has all the decisiveness of a landslide. "And the ruin of that house was great" is the only language apposite to the situation. I mention British scholarship in particular because, while we can never forget the monumental work of Zahn, it is in this country that the Apostolic authorship has been defended with so much ability and tenacity of purpose. The works of Westcott, Lightfoot, Drummond, and Sanday belong to the classical literature of the subject, distinguished alike for their ripe scholarship and patient industry. All the more striking becomes the change which definitely set in about 1920. In that year there appeared Stanton's judicial treatise on the Fourth Gospel and Charles' epoch-making commentary on the Apocalypse, and subsequently and in rapid succession we have had more or less detailed discussions of the Johannine problem by Garvie, Burney, Streeter, Strachan, Muirhead, Charnwood, Nolloth, and Carpenter. These discussions have been marked by keen penetration and an earnest desire to arrive at truth, and the significant feature is that, with a single exception, all these writers unite in rejecting the direct authorship of the Gospel by John, the son of Zebedee. The exception is C. F. Nolloth, who remains with Bishop Gore a convinced supporter of the traditional position. To the list of scholars mentioned above must also be added the name of Dr. A. E. Brooke, who, writing in Peake's *Commentary*, thinks that, while the Apostle John visited Ephesus, there has been confusion in early tradition between him and another John, perhaps his disciple, who lived till Trajan's reign. We must also add the names of those who previous to 1920 departed from traditional views, including Abbott, Moffatt, Gardner, Jackson, Burkitt, and Inge. Moreover, as is well known, Sanday himself towards the end of his long life underwent a change of mind; his final admission that he was "probably wrong" in his earlier views is an intriguing statement, which, alas! can never be fully explained. Among the names cited above none is so significant as that of

Stanton. . . . . It is not possible to state his argument in a few lines, but if a single extract can indicate the considerations which weighed most with him, the following may be selected:

> Nor is the mental growth which must be assumed to have taken place in the evangelist, if he was one of the Twelve, through having been brought under new influences, and called to meet new intellectual and spiritual needs, perhaps an *inconceivable* one. But is it *probable;* more particularly is it probable if John, the son of Zebedee, was the disciple in question? I do not think it can be held to be so by anyone who will duly consider the course of his life so far as we know it (*The Gospels as Historical Documents*, Part III, p. 280).

It would be difficult to cite a passage more important in the discussion of the Johannine problem in recent times than this, if we have regard to the point of view which Stanton expressed and the massive character of his scholarship. His investigation has convinced Lord Charnwood, and many others, that the Fourth Gospel was "actually written by a follower and pupil of the Apostle." . . . .

II

On the borderline between positions which seem assured and those still under dispute stands the question of the identity of "*the disciple whom Jesus loved.*" Indeed, we might transfer this question to the previous section but for the uncertainty which besets the authorship of the Johannine *Appendix.* In the case of John xxi. there can be no doubt at all that the Beloved Disciple is the apostle John. Most scholars would hold that the same identification is true of John xiii. 23, xix. 26, xx. 2, but a more definite conclusion regarding the authorship of the *Appendix* seems necessary to supply ground for full confidence. Professor Bacon's explanation of the disciple as an ideal figure wins few converts, although his treatment of the question has probably done much to develop the view that, if the Beloved Disciple is indeed the apostle, he is the son of Zebedee idealised.

The authorship of the *Appendix* is a question which to some extent can be isolated and treated in itself. Unfortunately, on this issue agreement has not been reached; and yet, in view of recent research, the difficulties ought not to prove insuperable. So long as the author of the Gospel was found in the apostle, it was difficult, if not impossible, to attribute John xxi. to his pen, for the situation most naturally presupposed in the chapter is that of the recent death of the Beloved Disciple. All the difficulties by no means vanish when the evangelist is distinguished from the apostle, but they are materially lessened. . . . . In any case, it is in the highest degree unlikely that John xxi. 24 ("This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true") was written by the evangelist. On this point there is very wide agreement, though the scholars who regard the *Appendix* as the addition of a later writer generally take John xxi. 1-24 as a single whole.

This is perhaps the place where we can discuss to the best advantage *the tradition of the Ephesine residence of the apostle*. It cannot be doubted that this question has suffered from being bound up with that of the apostolic authorship of the Gospel; and it is much to be desired, now that the latter position is so widely abandoned, that the former should be debated afresh. It is true that in the two cases the traditional evidence is much the same. None the less, "false in one false in both" is in this matter a very misleading assumption. The two things do not stand on the same plane. The residence of the apostle in Ephesus, if it is a fact, would, as Stanton contends, be "matter of common knowledge, about which it would have been exceedingly difficult for an error to arise and to hold its ground"; while, on the other hand, "the writing of the Gospel would be a work performed in private, of which few could have direct knowledge, while from the first there would be a general disposition to magnify the apostle's connection with the book if he had, or could be supposed to have had, any at all" (*The Gospels as Historical Documents*, Part III, pp. 279 f). To this excellent argument we may add the probability, supported by the few (and debated) quotations in Ignatius and Justin Martyr, that the Gospel only slowly won its assured place in early Christian favour. Early confusion on the question of authorship by no means carries with it the necessity of denying the apostle's sojourn in Ephesus. Indeed, it is likely enough that the fact of the confusion requires the rest of the tradition.

No doubt we must be careful lest we be guilty of trying to save at all costs the remnants of a discredited tradition. It is of no use to "dig in" at Cambrai if the only sound halting place is the line of the Marne. But an objection of this kind may well be superficial, for there is good reason to think that in retaining the tradition of the Ephesine residence we really do stand on the banks of the Marne. Four considerations point in this direction: (1) In the first place, the tradition itself is strong. It is vouched for by Clement of Alexandria, Polycrates of Ephesus, the author of the *Muratorian Canon*, Irenaeus, and Justin Martyr; and not only are these witnesses independent, and as far removed from each other as Egypt, Asia Minor, Rome and Gaul, but they also presuppose a tradition which had long been current and which had established itself in every part of the Christian world. (2) Again, the *Appendix*, whatever its authorship, points in the same direction. (3) The fact also that no less than five New Testament books, written in Ephesus or its neighbourhood, have been attributed to the apostle's pen is most naturally accounted for if St. John had some association with that city. (4) Further, the very independence of the Gospel, and the fact that on several important points its witness is superior to that of the Synoptists, are matters harmonious with the tradition. To these arguments we must add the fact that impugners of the Gospel, like the Alogi, never attempted to contest the tradition that St. John had lived in Ephesus, although it would have served their interests to do so, and also the fact that the Asian Quartodecimans expressly defended their practice and beliefs regarding the time for ob-

serving Easter by pleading the example of the apostle who had lived amongst them. These points need to be considered afresh by critics who have satisfied themselves that the inquiry ought now to be limited to the study of the Gospel itself, or who treat the external evidence as if it were mainly a study in the stupidities of Irenaeus.

Thus far I have left out of account *the alleged Papias tradition as to the martyrdom of the apostle*, and this omission must now be repaired. The evidence consists of the statements of two later writers, Georgius Harmartolus (ninth century) and Philip of Sidé (fifth century), supported by a Syriac Martyrology of the fifth century and probably also by the sixth century Calendar of Carthage, by the silence of certain early writers who do not mention St. John among the surviving apostles, and by Mark x. 39 (the saying about the Cup and Baptism) which is supposed to imply the death of both James and John. This evidence has been accepted as conclusive by many Continental scholars, and by Moffatt, Burkitt, Charles, Strachan, and others, in Great Britain; but it has been adversely criticised by Zahn, Harnack, Stanton, and more recently by Nolloth, whose discussion of the evidence is particularly thorough and trenchant. It is perhaps the reproach of modern scholarship that it should be so divided on this issue. In particular, the opinion of Canon Charles, who thinks the evidence sufficient to remove the Papias tradition "from the sphere of hypothesis into that of reasonably established facts of history," is surprising; for the opinion may be hazarded that counsel of average abilities would have no difficulty in tearing the case to shreds. As against the tradition that St. John suffered martyrdom the following points may be summarised: (1) the fact that the very MS. of the *Chronicle of Georgius*, which supplies the alleged quotation itself contains the ordinary tradition of the longevity of St. John; (2) the doubt that Georgius and Philip are independent witnesses; (3) the fact that Philip of Sidé is a proved bungler among early ecclesiastical historians; (4) the very doubtful evidence supplied by the Calendars, the Syriac Calendar in particular; (5) the dubious character of the interpretation assigned to Mark x. 39; (6) the improbability that the Church in Asia Minor would have denied to its greatest saint the crown of martyrdom; (7) the silence of Irenaeus and Eusebius, who doubtless had read the five books of Papias. . . . . It is noteworthy that in the latest discussion of the Johannine literature Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter, while admitting that "the view of the relatively early death of the apostle in Palestine has gained a large amount of assent," takes up a cautious attitude towards the question, and remarks that "the student who examines the passages collected by Dr. Charles may not feel his confidence that the Papias tradition is 'removed from the sphere of hypothesis into that of reasonably established facts of history'" (*The Johannine Writings*, p. 42).

We must next examine the indications within the Gospel which point to the use of *a tradition separate and distinct from that embodied in the Synoptic Gospels*. This question ought clearly to be distinguished from that of the historical character of the Fourth Gospel in general, a ques-

tion, it is needless to say, on which the widest differences of opinion are prevalent. The immediate question concerns the sources of information to which the evangelist had access. Streeter has recently presented a strong argument in favour of the hypothesis that the evangelist has made use of Jerusalem traditions. That the evangelist should have treated a source like Mark, about a quarter of a century after its composition, with so much freedom is indeed a remarkable phenomenon, especially if we have regard to the very different procedure of our first and third evangelists. The presumption is that he knew of other traditions, and of this we have indications in the numerous parallels between matter found in the Fourth Gospel and material peculiar to the Gospel of Luke, and still more in some of the outstanding differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics in general. Among these differences we may note the following: (1) the possibility that some of the disciples had been followers of the Baptist, and had already enjoyed some association with Jesus previous to the call in Galilee related in Mark i. 16-20; (2) the probability that Jesus visited Jerusalem on more occasions than one, and carried on a ministry there; (3) the possibility that the evangelist is right in antedating the Cleansing of the Temple; (4) the still greater historical superiority shown in his date for the Supper and the Crucifixion; (5) the special knowledge displayed in certain details in the Passion narrative, such as the references to Annas and the disciple who was "known unto the high priest." The correct induction to be drawn is a matter of no small difficulty. It is certain, I think, that Streeter voices a growing conviction when he says that "at any rate the hypothesis that the author of the Gospel had a personal acquaintance with Jerusalem tradition would considerably ease the critical difficulties arising from a documentary comparison of this Gospel with the Synoptics" (*The Four Gospels*, p. 418).

Was the evangelist himself an eye-witness? It will be remembered that this question was the third link in the chain of argument by which Westcott, and many since, sought to demonstrate the Apostolic authorship of the Gospel. As such the link is broken: the clear signs of the possession of a good historical tradition on the part of the writer do not really compel us to suppose that he was an eye-witness in the sense that Peter, James and John were eye-witnesses. And, indeed, with the Synoptic Gospels before us, the contrary suggestion can hardly be resisted, for lifelike as these Gospels are, even they are not the work of eye-witnesses. And yet we have to reckon with the words of John i. 14 ("We beheld his glory"), and still more with the words of I John i. 1-4 ("That which . . . . we have seen with our eyes . . . . and our hands handled . . . ."), passages which are not adequately interpreted by the suggestion of spiritual sight and hearing, if we deal justly with the terms used and the contexts in which they appear. The solution recently suggested by Stanton and other writers does greater justice to the dual situation than the views of either conservative or radical critics. Referring to the passages cited, Stanton claims that, reasonably to justify their use, we must "at least suppose that the writer, if not old enough to have been an actual

follower of Jesus in the days of His ministry, could yet regard himself and a few compeers as belonging to the generation then fast disappearing in which the great revelation had been made" (*The Gospels as Historical Documents*, Part III, p. 142). Later in the same work he writes: "One can, however, understand that the claim in question might be made by a youth or boy, younger by some years than the Apostle John . . . . but who could remember having sometimes himself seen and heard Jesus, and who had derived a sense of a knowledge, which was at least almost immediate, of the Divine revelation made in the Lord, by intimate association with His personal disciples very soon after His departure" (*op. cit.*, 281). In line with this interpretation is the suggestion of a number of writers, and recently of Strachan and G. W. Wade, that in the reference to the "disciple known to the high priest" (John xviii. 15) the evangelist "actually and directly refers to himself." "By mentioning that he had brought St. Peter into the high priest's court," Wade writes, "he has introduced his own figure into a corner of one of the scenes which he described (just as the Second Evangelist has done in Mark xiv. 51, 52" (*New Testament History*, pp. 228 f). This is a conception of the evangelist as an eye-witness very different from that of Wescott, but it seems to rest on better foundations.

HISTORICITY OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Wilbert Francis Howard

"THE FOURTH GOSPEL is not a faithful historical account of the life and teaching of Jesus." Such is the blunt verdict of M. Jean Réville at the close of his critical analysis.[1] Dr. P. W. Schmiedel dismisses the matter with a mere wave of the hand. "A book which begins by declaring Jesus to be the *logos* of God and ends by representing a cohort of Roman soldiers as falling to the ground at the majesty of His appearance (xviii. 6), and by representing 100 pounds of ointment as having been used at His embalming (xix. 39), ought by these facts alone to be spared such a misunderstanding of its true character as would be implied in supposing that it meant to be an historical work." [2]

A far more discriminating judgment is given by Professor C. H. Dodd. "We may now say with confidence that for strictly historical material, with the minimum of subjective interpretation, we must not go to the Fourth Gospel. Its religious value stands beyond challenge, and it is the more fully appreciated when its contribution to our knowledge of the bare facts of the life of Jesus becomes a secondary interest. This is not to say that it makes no such contribution. But it is to the Synoptic Gospels that we must go if we wish to recover the oldest and purest tradition of the facts." [3]

Any attempt to estimate the historical value of the Johannine record must therefore start with a comparison between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics. For the present we shall limit ourselves to narrative, leaving over the question of the Johannine presentation of the teaching of Jesus for a later chapter. This comparison furnishes data under four headings. (*a*) Episodes common to John and the Synoptics; (*b*) episodes peculiar to John; (*c*) Synoptic episodes omitted by John; (*d*) Synoptic episodes not recorded by John, which have yet left a trace in the Johannine narrative.

(*a*) Under the first head are to be placed the ministry of the Baptist and his testimony to Jesus, the call of the first disciples, the healing of the officer's son at Capernaum, the feeding of the five thousand, the walking on the sea, the triumphal entry, the cleansing of the Temple, the anointing at Bethany, the last supper, the warning of the betrayal, the

[1] *Le Quatrième Évangile*, p. 297.
[2] *Encyc. Bib.*, ii. 2542.
[3] *The Authority of the Bible*, p. 228.

From *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation*, London, 1931. pp. 142-57. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Epworth Press.

warning of the denial, the betrayal and arrest, the resistance of Peter, the trial before the high priest, the trial before Pilate, the people's choice of Barabbas, the crucifixion and burial, the empty grave. In addition to these, we should, perhaps, identify the story of the miraculous draught of fish given in John xxi. 1-13 with the similar story placed earlier in the ministry of Jesus in Luke v. 1-11. It is also worthy of remark that in the Fourth Gospel, as in the Synoptic Gospels, Peter's confession of faith follows the crisis in the Galilean ministry, being placed after the feeding of the multitude, the walking on the sea, the demand for a sign, and the close of the period of popularity.

(*b*) Of the episodes peculiar to this Gospel, the most remarkable are four miracles: turning water into wine at Cana, healing the impotent man at Bethesda, giving sight to the man born blind (at Siloam), and the raising of Lazarus. Amongst the others are the interviews with Nicodemus and with the woman of Samaria, the advice given to Jesus by His brothers to go up to Jerusalem to win disciples at the feast, and then, in the course of the narrative of the Passion, the visit of the Greeks, the feet-washing, the judicial appearance before Annas, with certain episodes in the post-resurrection story, more especially the visit of Peter and the other disciple to the sepulchre, and the conviction of Thomas.

(*c*) Synoptic episodes not represented in the Fourth Gospel are too numerous to be recorded in detail. The most significant omissions are the actual baptism of Jesus, the temptation in the wilderness, the cure of demoniacs and lepers, the association of Jesus with outcasts and sinners, the transfiguration, the institution of the Eucharist, the agony in Gethsemane, the cry of dereliction on the cross.

(*d*) Synoptic episodes which, while not related by John, have yet left a trace in the Fourth Gospel include the choosing of the Twelve (cf. John vi. 70), the imprisonment of the Baptist (iii. 24), the agony (John xii. 27, xviii. 11), and possibly the Eucharist (John vi. 53, 54).

Before we can settle the question, How and why does John modify the Synoptic material? there is the preliminary question to answer, Did John know and use any or all of the Synoptic Gospels? By general consent he made use of Mark. In addition to the verbal resemblances given in an earlier chapter, it is enough to refer to the parallel narratives of the feeding of the multitude (John vi. 1-15; cf. Mark vi. 32-44, viii. 1-10). There is less complete agreement regarding John's use of Luke. Stanton denies it, while Streeter gives reasons for the opposite view. Some considerations in favour of the theory that the Fourth Evangelist knew Luke's Gospel are that in these Gospels alone Annas (Luke iii. 2; John xviii. 12, 24) and Martha and Mary (Luke x. 38; John xi. 1 f., xii. 2 f.) are named. In both, the Jews ask if the Baptist is the Messiah, and are told by him that he is not (Luke iii. 15; John i. 19-20). In Luke vii. 38 the woman who was a sinner wiped the feet of Jesus with her hair after bedewing them with tears. This was a simple and natural action. But when we read in John xii. 3 that Mary acted thus after pouring precious ointment on the Master's feet, we are as much surprised at the unsuit-

ability of the instrument as at the unbound tresses of the lady of the house. The only possible explanation is that the Evangelist, by association of ideas, has worked into his otherwise authentic account of the incident at Bethany a reminiscence of the familiar but distinct story told by Luke. In the Passion narrative the treachery of Judas is attributed by both to Satan's entrance into him (Luke xxiii. 3; John xiii. 27). The Mount of Olives is mentioned as a favourite resort of Jesus and His disciples (Luke xxii. 39; John xviii. 2). Peter's denial is foretold after, not during, supper (Luke xxii. 31-4; John xiii. 36-8). It was the right ear of the high priest's servant which Peter cut off (Luke xxii. 50; John xviii. 10). Pilate thrice declared Jesus to be innocent (Luke xxiii. 4, 14, 22; John xviii. 38, xix. 4, 6). The sepulchre in which Jesus was laid had never yet been used (Luke xxiii. 52; John xix. 41). Two angels appeared to the women at the empty tomb. To these Goguel adds three striking points of agreement: the thought that the assumption of Jesus is regarded by both Evangelists as the end of the ministry of Jesus (Luke ix. 51; John xiii. 1), that Luke speaks (xxiv. 49) of the gift of the Spirit as of the promise of the Father in a way that recalls the Johannine doctrine of the Paraclete, and that the frequent escapes of Jesus from the hands of His enemies, in the Fourth Gospel (John viii. 59, x. 39, xii. 36), are analogous to the story in Luke iv. 29. The first would be more impressive if the Lucan term ἀνάλημψις had recurred in John, who employs the figure of μετάβασις.

Reasons have often been suggested for the Evangelist's choice, or rejection, of the material at his disposal. Thus of the many signs which Jesus wrought he selected, amongst others, four which serve to enhance the superhuman power of Jesus: the nature miracle at Cana in Galilee, the healing of a man who had been a cripple for thirty-eight years and of another man who had been blind from birth, and, above all, the raising of a man who had been four days in the tomb. On the other hand, it is easy to find plausible grounds for some of the omissions. Thus the divine dignity of our Lord might seem to be compromised by the story of the temptation, the agony in the garden, and the cry of abandonment on the cross. Polemical or apologetic aims may have led to silence regarding the submission of Jesus to baptism by John, and the institution of the Eucharist; and, if Gnostic errors were as keenly present to the mind of the writer of the Gospel as when the First Epistle was written, we may, perhaps, bring the strange avoidance of any reference to demoniacs under the same head. Theological propriety may have led the Evangelist to suppress the story of the transfiguration, since he regarded the whole incarnate life of Jesus as a revelation of His glory (John i. 14, ii. 11, xi. 4, 40) which would be perfectly manifested only after His death (John vii. 39, xiii. 32, xvii. 1, 4, 5). It is not so easy to think that the Johannine Christ is deliberately brought into the deferential company of a Nicodemus as an offset to the humble companionship of publicans and sinners described in the Synoptics. The "higher social *milieu*" of which Windisch speaks can be found in the earlier Gospels as well.

At the same time there are many touches in some of these narratives

which suggest either that this Evangelist is dependent upon sources other than the Synoptics, or that he is taking them from an earlier source which he and the Synoptists are using in common. Thus the note appended to the witness of John to Jesus, "These things took place in Bethany beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing" (John i. 28), has no theological value, and can hardly have been added to give topographical realism to a narrative, since it introduces perplexity into the story, for the only Bethany which is known is the village near Jerusalem. The same may be said of the note in John i. 44 that Bethsaida was the home of Andrew, Peter, and Philip. In the account of the cleansing of the Temple, whatever may be our judgment of the chronological position which this episode occupies in John, the discussion with the Jews (John ii. 18-20) is independent of the Synoptic record, but is most appropriate and gives a clue to the origin of the false witness brought against Jesus at His trial (Mark xiv. 58). In the story of the healing of the officer's son, the term used, *βασιλικός*, is more correct; for Galilee was at that time under the rule of Herod Antipas, not of the Roman procurator, and an officer in Herod's little military establishment suits the context far better than a subordinate officer in the Roman army. Either this Evangelist is correcting the story in its Matthew-Luke form, or else he is going back to an older tradition which has been inexactly modified in Q. Goguel has acutely observed that in two episodes recorded in John vii. 1-3 and x. 40-2 there is a picture of Jesus waiting upon opportune circumstances which stands in sharp contradiction to the Evangelist's fundamental conception of the absolute opposition which clashed with the work of Jesus. There is therefore internal evidence that these two passages depend upon early tradition. In this, as in other cases of the use of non-Synoptic information, we may think of written sources, or of an eyewitness whose memoirs have been taken down by the Evangelist.

It is when we come to the Passion narrative that we are most keenly alive to the presence of some other authority besides the Synoptic tradition behind the Fourth Evangelist. This subject has received very full attention in a monograph by Maurice Goguel, who detects signs of an early tradition in the threefold indication that the Last Supper took place on the day before the Passover (John xiii. 1, xviii. 28, xix. 14), in the first announcement of Judas's treason (John xiii. 18-20), in the topographical detail in the description of the garden (xviii. 1), in the intervention of the cohort and the chiliarch in the arrest (xviii. 12), and of Nicodemus in the story of the burial (xix. 39). There is another story which might well be added to these episodes. M. Goguel treats the account of the feet-washing as an elaboration of the saying in Luke xxii. 27, "For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." On the contrary it seems likely that the story preserved in the Johannine narrative of the Last Supper has left this one trace in the Third Gospel, and that there is an echo of that incident in the words used in 1 Pet. v. 5, "Yea, all of you gird yourselves [*ἐγκομβώσασθε*] with humility [as with a slave's apron], to serve one another."

The introduction of a Roman officer and a band of Roman soldiers into the story of the arrest is at first sight an improbable embellishment. On closer examination, however, it is not unlikely that, if the Sanhedrin, or its most active spirits, had resolved no delivering Jesus up to the Roman authority as a dangerous stirrer up of sedition, they would take the precaution of seeking some help from the officer whose special duty at the feast it was to prevent dangerous disorder from arising in the Temple court. Years after, another chiliarch, Claudius Lysias, took counsel with the Sanhedrin when the peace of the city seemed to be imperilled by another Jew, a follower of the same Jesus. According to the Johannine account the Temple police went forward to arrest the man whom they wanted, and it was only when Peter's rash flourish with the sword threatened armed resistance that the soldiers took the lead. The picturesque exaggeration of xviii. 6 does not destroy the historical value of the tradition as a whole.

The relationship of the Fourth Gospel to the Synoptics is the subject of an exhaustive discussion by Professor Windisch, who considers three possibilities, according to which the Johannine Gospel is supplementary to, independent of, or interpretative of, the Synoptics, and rejects all these in favour of a fourth attitude–namely, that it replaces them. This rigid differentiation of aims seems too artificial, and we see more reason to say that John often supplements and interprets the Gospels already in general favour, and that he sometimes even corrects them, than that he intends to supersede them. . . . .

There are several indications in the Johannine account of the last week that the Fourth Evangelist is in possession of authoritative information enabling him to correct the Synoptic chronology of that week in certain important details. The story of the anointing at Bethany is introduced (xii. 1) with a precise indication of time which so obviously contradicts the Marcan (and Matthaean) tradition that it is impossible to put it down to an artificial appearance of accuracy on the part of an imaginative writer. The scene at Bethany is dated "six days before the Passover," and precedes the triumphal entry, whereas from Mark xiv. 1 (followed in Matt. xxvi. 1) we learn that it was "two days" before the Passover, and some time after the triumphal entry. Still more striking is the clear evidence that the Fourth Evangelist dated the Last Supper on the night before the Passover, and the crucifixion of Jesus on the day of the Passover (John xiii. 1, 29, xviii. 28, xix. 14, 36). The Synoptists (Mark xiv. 16; Matt. xxvi. 19; Luke xxii. 13) all say that the disciples who were sent in advance "made ready the Passover." Yet Mark and Luke both have allusions which raise doubts about the correctness of their identification of the Supper with the Passover (Mark xiv. 2, 43, 47, 53, xv. 46; Luke xxii. 38, xxiii. 56). Moreover, the phraseology of Luke xxii. 15, 16, although rather ambiguous, probably implies that Jesus knew that He would not live to eat the Passover with his disciples.

In considering the date of the Supper and of the Crucifixion, as also in determining whether the cleansing of the Temple is correctly placed in

the last week by the Synoptists or earlier in the ministry by John, the first need is to rid ourselves of the assumption that there is a threefold witness against the Fourth Gospel. As regards narrative Matthew is little more than a mere repetition of Mark. Those who accept the Proto-Luke theory, advanced with such cogent arguments by Canon Streeter, discriminate between those portions of Luke which belong to the earlier strata and those which bear the sign of later introduction from Mark. Let the reader examine the text of this pre-Marcan form of the Gospel, and ask himself whether Luke regarded the Last Supper as the Passover meal. Let him also see what place is occupied by the cleansing of the Temple. The experiment may be tried by reading Dr. Vincent Taylor's *The First Draft of St. Luke's Gospel*, which was drawn up on the basis of his book, *Behind the Third Gospel*, and of Canon Streeter's *The Four Gospels*, without any reference to critical questions raised by the Fourth Gospel. The story of the cleansing of the Temple, which only occupies two short verses in Luke, is treated as a Marcan insertion. In both these important questions we have to choose between the Second and the Fourth Gospels. It is therefore a matter which must be decided by internal evidence. This has led many modern scholars to favour the Johannine departure from the Marcan date of the Supper and of the Crucifixion. Certainly the great authority of Gustaf Dalman can be cited for the Synoptic as against the Johannine presentation. His explanation is that the Fourth Evangelist knew that the words recorded by the Synoptists in connexion with the distribution of the bread and of the wine were actually spoken, but that he suppressed them in his account of the events of the last evening, transferring them to the discourse in Capernaum. He did this for a double reason. He wished to emphasize "that it is the *Person* of our Lord (whose Flesh and Blood are the organs of His Spirit) that is of the greatest value to humanity (perhaps in opposition to a nascent tendency to over-emphasize the importance of the sign as such)." He also feared that, as the disciples could not distinguish between spirit and flesh (John vi. 60–3), the words if recorded in their original form would give rise to more serious misunderstandings, which would put the teaching and behaviour of Christians in an unfavorable light. Having, then, transferred words which were originally spoken at the Last Supper as a Passover meal to another place, to show that what our Lord said to His disciples on that last night had nothing to do with this Jewish rite, he was compelled "to push back this last evening for one day, so that the Passover meal would have taken place after the death of Jesus. To the author, to whom the spiritual possession of God's grace and truth in Jesus was central, this method did not seem wrong." Dalman naturally observes with reference to the influence of motive upon narrative, "If this be the case, it is a serious warning to us not to put too much weight upon the Johannine presentation of the outward order of events of the earthly life of our Lord." [4]

We shall consider later on the significance of the narrative in John vi.

[4] *Jesus-Jeschua*, pp. 84, 85.

and the discourse on the Bread of Life. At the moment, our concern is with the correctness or incorrectness of the Johannine date of the Supper and the Crucifixion. We have seen that within the Synoptic Gospels there are marks of confusion on this point, and Dalman's treatment of these marks is not convincing. But there is another witness whose evidence turns the scale in favour of the Fourth Gospel in this matter. Paul's metaphor of Christ as "our Passover," and his allusion to the Resurrection "on the third day, according to the Scriptures," points clearly to a very early tradition that the Crucifixion took place on the day appointed for the slaying of the paschal lamb, and the first appearance of the risen Lord took place on the morning when the sheaf of the first-fruits was lifted up and waved by the priest in the Temple. "Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. v. 7 f.). "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep" (I Cor. xv. 20). The language is metaphorical, but its symbolism depends for its appropriateness upon the historical tradition. In support of this contention we must also refer to Canon Box's powerful arguments which show that the ritual of the Supper is to be identified with that of the Kiddush of Passover rather than the paschal meal itself. The weight of the evidence seems, therefore, to show that in this matter the Fourth Evangelist is following information which he has good reason for preferring to the definite statement of the Synoptists.

Critical opinion is not so generally favourable to the Johannine dating of the cleansing of the Temple. This question is bound up with another—that is, the difficult problem of the raising of Lazarus. The Synoptic Gospels are silent upon this tremendous miracle and for them it was the cleansing of the Temple that provoked the bitter hostility of the high-priestly group. With John, the raising of Lazarus focuses the enmity of the authorities at Jerusalem. It cannot be denied that *Formgeschichte* has shaken somewhat the older confidence that the Marcan narrative provides a reliable chronological framework for the ministry of Jesus. Inasmuch as Mark records only one visit to Jerusalem, if that tradition describing the cleansing of the Temple had no time-context, the Evangelist had no option, but would inevitably place it during the final week. We have seen that the story was not in Proto-Luke, but was inserted with other Marcan matter in a sentence of two. If the raising of Lazarus is dismissed as unhistorical there is less doubt that Mark is right in bringing in the cleansing of the Temple as a decisive factor leading to the death of Christ during that last Passover visit. But if, however the story be accounted for, persistent rumours of some stupendous work of healing won for Jesus a royal welcome into the city, we have a sufficient cause for the determination to take swift and effective measures for silencing Him for ever. Some scholars still maintain the possibility that the dramatic act was repeated. But, whilst the older writers did so for harmonistic reasons, Dr. Vacher Burch finds

a reason for the different time and position given to the expulsion of the vendors in this and the other Gospels in the repetition of the contrasts of Christ's revelation, as the successive Passover presented the same features. . . . . We are thrown back upon the choice between placing this incident at the beginning or at the end of the ministry. Accidental displacement seems out of the question. We have then to decide whether the Evangelist placed it at the beginning for doctrinal or dramatic reasons, or because he had good ground to trust the tradition on which he relied for the order of narrative material. In view of the sound tradition of which he avails himself in other places, and seeing that Synoptic evidence means here no more than Mark, who has only the final week in which to place any incidents belonging to Jerusalem, we feel strongly drawn to accepting the Johannine date. Our chief misgiving arises from the close connection with the Nicodemus episode, which might have fitted more naturally into a later stage of the Jewish hostility to Jesus. Archbishop Bernard definitely prefers the Marcan dating of the cleansing of the Temple, and attributes the Johannine position to "some mistake which cannot now be explained."

JOHN AND THE SYNOPTISTS

Benjamin W. Bacon

THE TESTIMONY of antiquity to the relation of Jn and the Synoptic Gospels finds expression in two passages of Eusebius. The first of these reads as follows:

> They say that John, who had employed all his time in preaching the gospel orally, finally proceeded to write for the following reason. The three Gospels already mentioned (Mt, Mk, Lk) having come into the hands of all, and into his own too, they say that he accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness; but that there was lacking in them an account of the deeds done by Christ at the beginning of his ministry.[1]

As the context shows, this passage is a part of a summary of the arguments advanced by Proclus against Gaius of Rome in their dispute over the admission of the fourth Gospel into the Canon. In this dispute, which occurred in the latter half of the second century and was reflected by the *Muratorianum* and Irenaeus, Gaius maintained that to admit Jn to canonical standing would set "the Gospels at variance with one another." The chief cause of difficulty was Jn 1-4. To the objection raised on this score, Proclus answered along the line of Eusebius' statement: Jn was written not to impugn the truthfulness of the Synoptists, but to supplement their reliable record.

Eusebius' second passage is a quotation from the *Hypotyposes* of Clement of Alexandria. Cited by the latter as the "tradition of the earliest elders," it shows a much deeper insight into the real difference between Jn and the Synoptists. The passage reads:

> Last of all John also, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the Gospel, being urged by his friends (an inference from Jn 21:24) and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel.[2]

Here again Jn is regarded as a document intended to supplement the Synoptic Gospels. But according to Clement, Jn endeavored not so much to introduce new facts and discoveries into the authorized tradition, as to add height and depth to the whole record. As Macgregor says in his recent commentary: "Clement means that it is the distinction of this Gospel to present the soul of Christ's life-story rather than its body, and to interpret the inward and eternal significance of the Christian revelation."

But even in this form the theory of supplementation does not do justice

[1] *His. Eccl.*, III, 24, 7.
[2] *Op. cit.*, VI, 14, 7.

From *The Gospel of the Hellenists*, New York, 1933, pp. 111-19. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Henry Holt & Company.

to the facts. Jn is more than a Midrashic commentary on accepted tradition. He "sets out to interpret the Christian story and Christian experience to the new world of Hellenism by translating the gospel into a form intelligible to Greek modes of thought." And "the gospel" interpreted is not merely the Synoptic tradition. It is a masterful selection of material chosen from a wide variety of sources with special reference to the purpose in mind.

The last century has witnessed the gradual downfall of the supplementation theory as criticism has undermined, one after the other, the bulwarks of the harmonists. No competent scholar will today contend that the fourth Gospel was composed merely as a supplement to the other three. On the contrary, it expresses the aim common to all our Evangelists, namely, to supply the whole need of a regional church in the line of gospel teaching. In its *composition*, Jn belongs to the period when each church had but a single writing which it designated "the Gospel." The Appendix, it is true, knows another type of evangelic tradition, a type in which Peter stands as chief witness; but even the Appendix places Peter in a relatively unimportant position. Its apostolic "witness" is "the disciple whom Jesus loved." No other, not even Peter, is competent to deliver the complete saving "truth," no matter how great the mass of "books" telling of the "other things that Jesus did," might become. If the writer of the Appendix, though familiar with another accredited tradition, none the less claims supreme authority for Jn, shall we say that its author at a far earlier date doubted the sufficiency of his own composition? This is certainly contrary to his own statement in Jn 20:30 f. where he indicates that he regards his work as a sufficient means of creating in its readers the faith which leads to the supreme goal, "life."

Of course, ancient harmonists did not attempt to deny that the fourth Evangelist was acquainted with the work of his predecessors. This was as readily apparent to them as to moderns. Moreover, in spite of their great desire to give the Gospel an early date (*Muratorianum*) and above all to insist on its apostolicity, they refused to account for the undeniable parallels between the first three Gospels and the fourth by assigning priority to Jn. That Jn had been composed after the other Gospels was apparently a known fact and was never really doubted. If, then, we reject the theory of the harmonists, how can we account for the peculiar combination of disregard and dependence which the fourth Gospel manifests in its relation to its predecessors? This question, discussed by many critics, has received no more thorough and exhaustive treatment than that of H. Windisch in his volume *Johannes und die Synoptiker*. His conclusion is that Jn was written not to supplement but to *displace* the Synoptic Gospels.

So far as the extent and character of Jn's dependence on Mk, Lk and Mt are concerned there will be little dissent from the conclusions of Windisch, supported as they are by detailed comparison of texts, and adopted rather as admissions to opposing views than in support of his own. He considers Jn's use of Mk certain, his use of Lk highly probable,

and his use of Mt not improbable. Mt, indeed, is least congenial to Jn both in tone and standpoint, and the only real instance of verbal agreement between them is that of Jn 12:8 and Mt 26:11. But Jn 12:8 is lacking in the Sinaitic Syriac, our oldest witness to the text, and is probably a gloss.

Nevertheless, acquaintance with all three Synoptists must be regarded highly probable. It is all the more difficult under these circumstances to account for the high-handed manner in which Jn sets aside Synoptic tradition, giving preference to elements taken from the mass of legendary material referred to in 20:30. The process by which groups of anecdotes were combined to produce a hieratic drama began, it is true, as early as Mk. Here each of the two major phases of Jesus' ministry, the Galilean and the Judean, is introduced by an epiphany, the first in Mk 1:1-13, the second in Mk 9:2-13. But for Jn this is not enough. Everything in his Gospel must be conformed to the idea of the incarnation of the messenger from heaven. Petrine tradition told how Jesus of Nazareth, after he was anointed with the Holy Ghost, went about doing good, healing all those that were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38). But Peter's simple reminiscences seem to have impressed Jn as quite unsuitable in character for liturgical reading in the churches. His epiphany (Jn 2:1-11), his "signs" of the Son of God, and his message of the kingdom as given in the five great festal discourses are all quite different from the Synoptic counterparts. Only the general division of Jesus' career into a Galilean ministry, extending from the baptism to the feeding of the multitude, and a Judean ministry, ending with the Passion and Resurrection, remains as a reminiscence of the outline of Mk, while the five festal discourses correspond in number, though not in time, location or subject, to the five discourses of Mt. The few "signs" which Jn thinks it worth while to take from Synoptic story are completely rewritten and point a different moral. The teaching material is even more completely recast. It is possible to recognize only a few standard themes and an occasional logion.

We are carried even further toward acceptance of Windisch's paradoxical view when we endeavor to answer the question, What is the attitude of the fourth Evangelist toward the authorities recognized in his time as the sponsors of Synoptic tradition? Peter, who is the leader and spokesman of the Twelve in the Synoptic Gospels, has a somewhat similar role in Jn. Yet he appears almost invariably in an unfavorable light, or at least in a position inferior to that of some other disciple. Thus in the calling of the first disciples (1:35-42) it is Andrew, not Peter, who first acknowledges the Lord and makes the great confession. Peter is silent. Where the confession of Caesarea Philippi should appear (6:68-71) Peter is indeed relieved (at Iscariot's expense) of the odium of comparison with Satan (cf. Mk 8:33), but he loses also all claim to an individual act of faith, voicing rather the opinion of the Twelve. Peter's only other appearance in Jn is in the Passion story. Here he is rebuked both for word and act (13:6-10, 36-38; 18:10 f.), denies his Lord (18:25-27), and is not (save in the Appendix) rehabilitated. Following the Lord "afar off" after Gethsemane (18:15 f.), at the empty tomb (20:1-10), and even at the Sea of

Galilee (21:1-7), Peter loses his claim to be first. Even in attaining the resurrection faith he is second to another, unknown, disciple. If we compare the way in which Mt or even Lk handles Mk's story of Peter with its treatment at the hands of Jn, the difference in attitude will be entirely apparent.

James, who as one of the *desposynoi* was the other outstanding sponsor of evangelic tradition in the days of Jn, is not mentioned at all in the fourth Gospel, save as one of the group of "his brethren" who in 7:5 are said to have refused belief in Jesus. There is, moreover, no suggestion that he subsequently changed his views.

Of the other "relatives" only Jesus' mother is mentioned, and then merely to receive a rebuke at Jesus' hand (2:4) and to be committed to the care of the "disciple whom he loved" (19:25-27). The rest of the Johannine *dramatis personae* are equally out of rapport with Galilean tradition. The Baptist's call to repentance, Jesus' preaching of the kingdom, the publicans and sinners, the demoniacs and those who importunately plead to be healed have all disappeared. Other individuals and places appear in the foreground. Cana takes the place of Capernaum as the opening scene of the Galilean ministry, and Nathanael, who according to the Appendix lived at Cana, becomes one of the leading disciples. Apart from Peter the only members of the Twelve who are of any consequence for Jn are those with Greek names and surnames, that is Andrew and Philip, who come from the Greek city of Bethsaida, and Thomas Didymus. Save where infrequently he depends upon Synoptic tradition, the real sponsor of the events narrated by the Elder is the mysterious "disciple whom Jesus loved."

All this is clearly contrary to the supposition of any line of tradition leading back either to Peter or to a Jerusalemic body of "witnesses." It is taken by defenders of the traditional authorship to be favorable to their contention that John son of Zebedee was the ultimate authority, if not the author of the Gospel. To some extent this is really true. Unquestionably the writer of the Appendix means the reader to take this view, and the boldness with which Petrine and Jacobean tradition is swept aside favors his suggestion. The complete silence of the Gospel concerning either of the two sons of Zebedee, particularly in the story of the calling of the first disciples, where we expect James and John to follow Andrew and Peter (1:35-42), would also favor this view were there not reason to believe, because of the lack of a proper subject for the verbs of v. 43, that the omission is redactional.

The fatal objections to the "defenders" theory are two in number. First, the John, Son of Zebedee, who thus would sweep away the Petrine tradition, would be the very antithesis of the John known to Synoptic story and to Paul. Second, the subject matter which this John presents is not, as we would naturally expect, more historical, but immeasurably more legendary and more highly colored by religious myth. Of this the "beginning of miracles" at Cana, as compared with Mk 1:21-39, is sufficient as an example.

We are, then, in reality dealing with an evangelist of a relatively late date. He wrote late enough to know the Synoptic Gospels, but sufficiently early to prevent him from being overawed by their prestige. By the middle of the second century and even earlier such cavalier treatment of the first three Gospels would no longer have been possible. By this time writings that hoped for acceptance by the Church must either repeat and harmonize material taken from approved sources, as did the *Gospel of Peter* and Tatian's *Diatessaron*, or must content themselves with filling the lacunae that existed in Synoptic story before and after the familiar public ministry. The Infancy Gospels, the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, and the *Acts of Pilate* are cases in point. Jn has scarcely any traces of this tendency. For his own purposes the writer introduces a pre-Galilean ministry, assigning it to the period before "John was shut up in prison" (3:24), but on the other hand he does not hesitate to cancel the infancy chapters of Lk and Mt. His freedom from traditional control in this respect is almost boundless. The author of the Appendix knows of "books" capable of competing, though on an inferior plane, with that which he commends. But the Elder goes his own way, selecting from the huge mass of current material, oral and written, such "signs" and discourses as suit his purpose. The closest parallel is that of Valentinus who, according to Irenaeus, had the temerity to publish a gospel of his own and call it the *Gospel of Truth*.

The fourth Gospel with its bold eclecticism must therefore be assigned to the period when individual Gospels still supplied the whole need of entire territories, and were written for this purpose. The date c. 100 A.D. which Windisch suggests for its composition conforms to this requirement.

But admitting all that has been said, we must still demur to Windisch's psychological explanation of the Evangelist's undertaking. There is truth in the French proverb, *Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien.* Such "hostility" may be implied in the work of Lk and Mt, who undoubtedly regard their own writings as preferable to that of Mk. Probably the Elder also aims to displace the works of his predecessors with a single complete and fully adequate Gospel, giving the real and ultimate significance of Jesus' life and message. His book is thus intended to make the reader wise unto salvation without resort to others. But toward the "things which are not written in this" book but can be learned elsewhere, he has no hostility. His attitude is that of Papias to the "expositions" of other writers. The reader might be "profited by them," but not so much as by the "living and abiding voice" of apostolic tradition which Papias himself records. The Elder claims a like superiority for his composition, but not merely, as Windisch maintains, upon the basis of the greater effectiveness of the tradition employed, the new rendition of the Church's confession of Jesus as Savior, and the inspired testimony of the author himself. Not even if we add a factor which Windisch has overlooked, its genuine adaptation to liturgical use, does the picture become complete. Yet the realization that the fourth Gospel owes its position as a classic of devotional literature to no mere chance leads readily to an understanding of the ultimate basis of its autonomy and its superiority. Writings intended to be used for liturgical

purposes must conform to the religious feeling and conviction of the community they wish to serve, or be condemned *ipso facto* to hopeless oblivion. That the Ephesian Gospel expresses the sentiment of its environment is an observation made by Canon Stanton in the words:

> It is no less true that strong protests would have been called forth if the teaching in the Fourth Gospel had differed essentially from the faith held by the Christian believers among whom the work was promulgated. That substantially the belief concerning Jesus Christ set forth in it was that which had been embraced in the Church at least of a particular region is clearly shown by the First Epistle of St. John.[3]

The territory in which and for which Jn was written is that of the western provinces of Asia Minor. Christianity, particularly in Asia, had, as we have seen, a history which reaches back to the very beginning of the Christian movement and was utterly independent of the Petrine tradition and only secondarily influenced by the Pauline theology. It owed its origin and its peculiar character to the movement begun by the Hellenists of Jerusalem. If, then, the Elder boldly presented in his Gospel a Jesus who is independent of and radically different from the Synoptic figure, it is because he regarded himself as a member of a long succession of believers with views like his own, and because he aimed fundamentally to write *their* gospel, the Gospel of the Hellenists. Had this aim not been recognized and approved, the work could not have survived.

[3] *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, Vol. III, p. 284.

A HISTORY OF THE SON OF GOD

Robert H. Lightfoot

THE FOUR GOSPELS must not be regarded as simply an attempt, by the second and third generation of Christians, to record and preserve what had survived or could be traced of traditional words and acts of Jesus. This motive will no doubt have had some influence, and we may rightly hope and believe that in reading or hearing the gospels we are constantly in immediate or almost immediate contact with the fountain-head of our religion; but even so the preservation of an incident or saying will usually have been due, in the last resort, to what was believed to be its significance or value to the society which preserved it; nor did those who recorded the stories or the words regard themselves as precluded from emphasizing those aspects of the tradition which appealed to them and disregarding others which did not. Above all, the portrait which we have in our gospels is always of Jesus regarded as the Christ. There does not seem ever to have been a desire to bequeath to the church what we should call a purely historical picture of Jesus. . . . .

It is not always easy for the student of the gospels to remember that the motive power which more than any other factor caused the light of the gospel to shine throughout the world was the conversion and the preaching of the blessed apostle St. Paul, and further that in the gospel proclaimed by St. Paul it was not necessary, any more than it is in the creeds, to know of any single event between the birth and the passion of our Lord. St. Paul does, indeed, know of a tradition of the Lord's sayings, and he is able to employ it, on the very few occasions when he needs to do so; and he can use such expressions as "the meekness and gentleness of Christ." No doubt also he could have learned very much more, had he wished, of the sayings of Jesus and of the events of his life. But they were not necessary for him; they did not touch the essence of his gospel, which had a different basis, and a different kind of history. This history concerned a divine being, the pre-existent Son of God; and in St. Paul's view it was more important to know that this divine being had lived a human life, than to know the manner and details of its course, especially as these had now been left behind for ever.

None the less, it will be found to have a bearing on our understanding of the gospels, if we pause for a moment and inquire a little more closely into the precise nature of what is often called St. Paul's Christology. This finds its fullest expression for our present purpose in an incidental but very important passage in the second chapter of the epistle to the Philip-

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pians. We there read, according to the usual interpretation of the passage, that Messiah Jesus, although he was originally in the form of God, did not think his equality with God a treasure to be grasped or retained at all costs. He therefore emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and "became" in the likeness of men. Owing to this condescension and self-humbling, and the obedience which accompanied it and proved absolute, free from any reservations whatsoever, God exalted him once more to the position which was his by right, and had been his before.

According to this understanding of the passage, the earthly life of Jesus was only a temporary episode in an otherwise infinite celestial existence; it was a passing incident, however important, between pre-existence in the form of God and the high exaltation which succeeded it. His work on earth accomplished, our Lord resumed his rightful place. This may seem, and indeed is in some ways, very like the doctrine of St. John. In his gospel our Lord alludes very simply to the beginning and the ending of his earthly life. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father." But it would be equally true to say that in St. John's gospel Jesus never really leaves the Father's side. Even when his hour is come, he is not alone, because the Father is with him. In this gospel there is no self-emptying or veiling; no laying aside by Jesus of his glory, because he has assumed humanity. The divine radiance shines forth continually through the veil of flesh and is revealed, or unveiled, in what he is and does on earth.

But St. Paul in Philippians, according to the interpretation which will be given in a moment, had not reached thus far. His Christ has not yet quite attained unchanging, absolute divinity. For St. Paul there is a difference between the pre-existence in the form of God, and absolute equality with God. In St. Paul's view, in the passage in Philippians, our Lord only gained this latter in consequence of his becoming man, and of the obedience which he showed. St. Paul did not think of Jesus as possessing equality with God before the earthly life. Equality with God was, as it were, a final stage, which could not have been given to Jesus in its fullness, had it not been for what he was and did on earth.

It is possible that we have been misled, in our understanding of Philippians 2, by a very rare and difficult Greek word, ἁρπαγμόν. According to the view here taken, it does not mean in this passage a treasure which its owner would wish to retain in his keeping at all costs, but something which comes or may come to us without effort on our part; as we might say, a windfall, an unexpected piece of luck, a godsend.

According to this interpretation, our Lord, although he existed always in the form of God, had one more step to take before he could be on an equality with God. Equality with God could only be his as a result of *effort* on his part; he could not regard it as a godsend; it lay, indeed, before him, but it must be earned; and the price was absolute self-sacrifice.

This price, in St. Paul's view, Jesus paid; and *therefore*, St. Paul goes on, God ὑπερύψωσεν αὐτόν, God super-exalted him; through the earthly life and

the way he lived it, and especially its end, he reached a higher place than had been his before; and he is now glorified with God.

I do not think we need be greatly distressed by the apparent divergence between St. Paul's doctrine in Philippians just referred to, and its final expression in the gospel of St. John. St. Paul himself does not seem to have been permanently contented with it; it is probable that in a still later epistle, that to the Colossians, he has himself advanced considerably in the direction of the gospel according to St. John. But if the interpretation just given of the verses in Philippians be admitted as a possibility, the passage becomes a valuable aid to our understanding of the synoptists, especially St. Mark and St. Matthew, and even of some features in the gospel of St. John.

For an essential feature in the presentation of the central figure of the gospels is that of one who ministers or serves. This thought is never long absent from the minds of the evangelists. Even in the mighty deeds of power, when the greatness and majesty of Jesus are most manifest, he is seen working and acting for the benefit of men. And the end or climax of this ministry or service is to be suffering and death. This also is a note which is constantly heard, long before the passion narrative itself. The life of humility in service and the death in extreme humiliation are, however, believed to be in accordance with the will and purpose of God, and are therefore accounted for, partly by reference to the Old Testament scriptures, but even more by the deep and at first almost passionate belief in the imminent reversal of that humiliation. He who had come in the form of a servant would very shortly come, no longer as a servant, but as lord. And the one state was the necessary pathway to the other. The earthly life and death were the preliminary to the exalted, heavenly glory; and the greater the humiliation, the more exceeding the glory. And this thought, that an essential condition of the exalted state was the previous state of service and obedience, with all that these words imply of effort and longsuffering, is still discernible within the gospel narratives.

A strong tendency, indeed, already exists—and it is growing—to regard Jesus, the Son of God, as raised already, even in the days of his flesh, quite above the limitations of humanity; to take a single example, he is described in St. Matthew as healing *all* that were sick, and casting out the spirits with a word; but just because the future hope is still so dominant, it is possible to admit and even sometimes to emphasize the intensely humble and difficult conditions of that earthly state which have now made possible the coming, future state; indeed, since they were faithfully fulfilled, they have become its pledge and guarantee.

The only note in the Philippians passage which seem to be wanting in the synoptic gospels is that of pre-existence. Thanks to it, St. Paul is able to emphasize, even more than the synoptists, the voluntary nature of the earthly life and death. St. John also lays great stress upon the willingness; but in his gospel, as we have seen, the thought of the cost, and especially of the cost of the passion, has almost disappeared.

There is no one unchanging explanation of the person of Jesus in the

books of the New Testament. Even in the same writer or in the same book conflicting explanations may stand side by side, without any sense, as it seems, on the part of the writer, of difficulty or inconsistency; nor were any of the synoptic writers, strictly speaking, theologians.

All through the first century, and indeed much later, the church was feeling its way towards a permanent and satisfactory doctrine of the person of Christ. . . . .

How, then, at the present time, in the light of the new knowledge, can we best seek to explain to ourselves the books of the New Testament, and especially the gospels?

It is gradually becoming apparent that during the first two or perhaps the first three generations of its life the church, in addition to and partly because of its practical work, which rightly had the first claim upon its energies and time, found itself faced on the intellectual side with a great and necessary task of singular complexity. This task consisted in trying to understand and explain, in the best and truest and most satisfying way, an event which, although it was believed to be indissolubly connected with the course of history, was also believed to be itself unparalleled. The same God, who in varying degrees and ways had spoken of old time to the fathers in the prophets, had finally and quite lately spoken in a new way, in a Son; and the gospels are the most valuable and important attempts which have survived, on the part of the society which found itself entrusted with this truth, to set forth its meaning and significance.

With the exception of St. John's gospel, all four attempts must be regarded as provisional and tentative. The writers are feeling their way, very cautiously and haltingly at first, but with increasing confidence and boldness, in the progressive interpretation of an historic figure. Broadly speaking, and subject probably to one partial but notable exception, to be considered in a moment, the process of interpretation was steadily from less to more. One after another, during the first century, the categories first of the Jewish and then of the Greek religious world were applied to Jesus, and were all found to be of value; they achieved a permanent place in the interpretation of his person in the records; nor did the church leave any of them precisely where they were before; they were all baptized, as it were, in him, and impregnated with new meaning; but equally they were all found to be partial and inadequate; the church was unable to rest finally and completely in any one of them.

Above all, it seems, no attempt at interpretation could win more than a very partial success, if it were not in accord with the fundamental principles and outlook of the Jewish faith. The transcendence and holiness of God, and the permanent separateness from the world, necessary to religion, are postulates of almost all our gospels. In one of them, indeed, the gospel according to St. Luke, we seem to discern an attempt which, while seeking to remain true to the general tradition, at the same time sets itself, by a kind of deliberate vagueness, to accommodate the gospel to the world, and to remove all barriers.

In this gospel what chiefly finds expression is not so much a message of

divine salvation in response to human need, as a message of universal goodwill, both human and divine. The portrait of our Lord as given in the gospel according to St. Luke has some points of close resemblance to those of certain religious heroes of the ancient world. And the fact that this book has found a place within the fourfold gospel of the church may be taken as evidence that the attempt was rightly made, and that its counterparts in all ages have a necessary and justifiable place in the presentation of the truth as it is in Jesus. But it is interesting to notice the attitude of the fourth evangelist in this connexion. To this great writer it was given to sum up the work of those who went before him, and to lay down certain doctrines which he believed to be essential both for the complete expression and for the preservation of the church's gospel. And for all his debt, as it seems, in certain respects to the gospel of St. Luke, he turns his back, rigorously and unequivocally, upon the latter's doctrinal vagueness and his generous universalism. There is no book in the New Testament in which the unrelieved Jewish contrast of good and evil, light and darkness, is shown more vividly and sharply than in the gospel of St. John. And this contrast is thrown back, in his interpretation, within the earthly ministry itself. It would not be very far from the truth, to say that in St. John's gospel the life of Jesus Christ is on one side itself the day of judgment. . . . .

It is probable that both history and doctrine are present, although in varying degrees, in all our four gospels, in the earliest and in the latest alike. There are certain respects in which St. Mark is nearer than either St. Matthew or St. Luke to the doctrinal position of St. John. None of the gospel writers was able to reconcile completely his belief in the person and significance of Jesus with a purely historical presentation of his life. St. Mark seeks to overcome the difficulty by his theory of the messianic secret; the true nature of Jesus is explained to the *reader* at the outset, at the very first appearance of Jesus in the gospel, and it is known throughout to the demonic powers; but it remains hidden, and must remain hidden, for the first part of the ministry from all men, and is only revealed to chosen disciples, and then under strict commands to secrecy, towards the close. Only very rarely, and for a very brief space, and usually although not always in the presence of a chosen few, as at the transfiguration, or in the greater acts of power, is the Prince divested, as it were, of his beggar's garment of humanity, and seen for a moment, if indeed he is seen, for what he truly is. St. Mark thus frames and interprets the other side of the tradition, according to which Jesus had been known to his contemporaries, who had not received enlightenment, as a teacher or a Rabbi or a prophet.

This method of interpretation was no longer open to St. John; it leads indeed to considerable difficulties already in St. Mark, and it is seen rapidly breaking down in the gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke. In these two gospels Jesus more often than not is shown by word and deed, and sometimes to persons quite other than disciples, in the light of his true being. Great multitudes follow him; he speaks with superhuman author-

ity; he has received all things from the Father, and himself chooses the recipients of his own knowledge of the Father; above all, perhaps, he is the Son of man, not only to be revealed hereafter, but already in his office and activities on earth. The tension between the obscurity and lowliness of the original tradition and the surpassing significance which was coming more and more to be assigned to the person and to the events with which it dealt, was likely to produce a dangerous situation. Above all did it become a problem how one who had come more or less openly—not secretly, as in St. Mark—before his contemporaries and nation as a unique messenger of God, the fulfilment of their hopes and aspirations, and had shown himself by word and deed to be so, how could he have failed so utterly of recognition? How came it that his revelation, attested as it was by signs and wonders and absolute authority, had been so terribly rejected? This latter difficulty is met by St. John by an even more drastic solution than St. Mark's; one which could only have become possible after it became clear that the Jewish nation had finally rejected the Messiahship of Jesus. In St. John's gospel the true nature of Jesus is no secret; it is or can be known by friend and foe alike from the beginning; but "the Jews," who in this gospel are the enemy, are completely darkened. In their blindness and infatuation they cannot see or understand him whom God has sent in the fullness of divine authority. Hence they cannot but reject him, and thereby seal their doom.

In the matter of the tension common to all the evangelists between the history and the understanding of it, St. John is in an easier position than his predecessors. Since there is now no secret as to the person of Jesus, St. John is able to give free rein in the words and deeds of Jesus himself to the expression of its significance and meaning, although here too it is still only given to a chosen few to receive and understand the meaning and the fullness of the revelation. We have now, not so much as in the synoptists, an interpretation of the words and deeds of Jesus, regarded as the Christ; but we have what we may call a history of the Son of God; in this gospel he who speaks and acts on earth is still always also at his Father's side. It is no longer necessary or indeed possible to distinguish between the framework, or the interpretation generally, and the content of the earlier historical tradition; here they are indissolubly fused. In St. John's gospel there speaks not only an exalted, heavenly being, as is often the case already in the earlier gospels, but an incarnate Lord; and it is the belief and witness of the church that this is the truest interpretation which has been given or can be given of the historic figure.

And yet even the final interpretation which St. John has given us was not achieved without great loss. We may feel that in this gospel we are seldom if ever walking on firm ground; a kind of luminous haze, which is most difficult to penetrate, surrounds not only the figure of Jesus, but all the speakers and actors in the story, and the gospel narrative itself becomes almost, although happily not quite a kind of mystery play, setting forth the eternal counsels of God, and his laws and love for the world.

Probably there will always be those to whom the simpler and homelier features of the earlier tradition will appeal more strongly.

It seems, then, that the form of the earthly no less than of the heavenly Christ is for the most part hidden from us. For all the inestimable value of the gospels, they yield us little more than a whisper of his voice; we trace in them but the outskirts of his ways. Only when we see him hereafter in his fullness shall we know him also as he was on earth. And perhaps the more we ponder the matter, the more clearly we shall understand the reason for it, and therefore shall not wish it otherwise. For probably we are at present as little prepared for the one as for the other.

HISTORY OR DIDACTIC DRAMA?

George H. C. Macgregor

WHEN ESTIMATING THE value of the Fourth Gospel we have been too ready to criticize it for not conveying information which it never professes to convey. Admittedly the Evangelist's chief motive is not historical. If he is a biographer at all, then he is a biographer whose aim is not to convey facts, but to impart spiritual truth; a mere selection of incident has been made, and the selection has been dictated by the desire not to communicate information, but to bestow upon the reader "life" through faith: "These signs are recorded so that you may believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing may have life through his name" (20:31). This, one admits, is partially true also of the Synoptists. They too portary Jesus not merely as seen by the outward eye, but as interpreted by the Spirit and appropriated by faith. And indeed all true history must involve a subjective as well as an objective element. But in the Fourth Gospel "the reflective element is less unconsciously and more creatively and artistically present." [1] Even today there is much biography whose main end is not informative but didactic. In the introduction to a volume of biographical essays the author,[2] after quoting John Howe's summing-up of his own purpose in a funeral sermon, "the little that I shall say of my subject shall be, not by way of history, but of character," continues as follows: "This admirably expresses my own motif in these lectures. . . . . In the present case it does not at all come within my province to tell the external story of any of my worthies. I assume that the life itself is in each case less or more familiar to my readers. . . . . My main design is from selected characteristics of their Life and Lifework to incite and quicken to higher and nobler service of the Master in our day and generation. This being so, I am perfectly at ease . . . . in anticipation of being charged with 'improving' Howe and Baxter, Rutherford and Henry, as the old divines called their reading of lessons from special events and circumstances. To draw such lessons and to drive them home into the heart and conscience *is* my purpose and endeavour. . . . . If anyone choose to fling stones at me as 'didactic,' 'hortatory,' 'moralizing,' and so on, so be it!" Truly the Fourth Evangelist might retort in exactly similar terms to some of his modern critics! He does not profess to give us an exhaustive survey of Jesus' life, but selects those incidents which have the richest didactic value. . . . .

The Gospel may be well described as a didactic meditation on the *drama*

[1] R. H. Strachan, *The Fourth Evangelist*, p. 23.
[2] A. B. Grosart, *Representative Nonconformists.*

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of Christ's life. Indeed the author is essentially dramatist rather than historian. "The earthly life of Jesus in this Gospel appears as a dramatic interlude in the life of the Eternal Logos." [3] The Gospel is a drama in which the protagonists are Jesus, the Word of God, and the evil powers of darkness and unbelief. The Prologue is the Prelude; the dramatic climax is reached at the Passion, the moment when Jesus' "hour" has come. Hence the material is chosen primarily for its dramatic effectiveness, and many of the vivid details, which have often been claimed as marks of an eyewitness, may well be regarded rather as the creation of a vivid dramatic imagination. The Gospel abounds in dramatic moments—the declaration of Messiahship to the Samaritan woman, the withdrawal of Judas into the outer darkness, the meeting of Mary Magdalene with the Risen Master—while "dramatic irony" is apparent in Peter's boast that he will lay down his life for Christ, in Caiaphas' unconscious prophecy that Jesus should "die for the nation, and not for the nation only," in the Pharisees' plaint that "the whole world is gone after him."

Such a dramatic interpretation must provoke with new urgency the question of the Gospel's actual historical value. . . . . On any estimation the religious value of the Gospel must always be greater than the historical. If it is history at all it is history written *sub specie aeternitatis* and under the impulse of a living religious experience. Hence to compare the Evangelist's work with a dramatist's is not to impugn its *religious* value, for in this case the drama expresses not merely the imaginary emotions and opinions of the figures which move across the pages, but the writer's own deepest convictions. "Every scene he depicts . . . . is the distilled essence of something that has been pondered upon and lived out in actual life until it has become of the very texture of his soul." [4] And herein lies the chief value of the Gospel; it is a transcript of the individual religious experience of a great Christian soul who is convinced that he also has known the Lord as truly and intimately as the first Apostles. "This indeed is the abiding value of the Gospel, that it brings Jesus before us at once as a historical Person, and as the invisible Lord who is ever present with his people." [5]

We revert to the *discourses* and ask whether we may seek in them authentic sayings of Jesus. Undoubtedly in reporting Jesus' teaching John reflects not the Jewish tradition, which sought to preserve, as nearly as possible in their original form, the epigrammatic dicta of "wise men," but rather the Greek method, which loved to put into the mouth of the speaker not the *ipsissima verba* spoken on a given occasion, but the sentiments which seemed to the writer to be proper to that occasion. John's practice indeed is not unlike that of Thucydides, who in a famous passage (I, 22) frankly admits that this is his method. But we have a better parallel still in Plato who, admitting that he owed his inspiration to the teaching of Socrates, never claims to reproduce the *ipsissima verba* of his Master,

[3] Strachan, *op. cit.*, pp. 14, 15, 31.

[4] Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, p. 383.

[5] Ernest F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 359.

but rather puts into the mouth of Socrates philosophical theories which, though in germ Socratic, are in their full development those of Plato himself. As in the Platonic Dialogues the speeches of Socrates owe not only style and language but also most of their matter to Plato himself, so in the case of the Fourth Gospel. In Jesus' discourses we have John's attempt to give his contemporaries a systematic summary of Christian teaching as he himself, under the inspiration of the Spirit of Jesus, conceived it, and his first readers, familiar with current Greek practice, would never suppose that Jesus' speeches were to be accepted as a verbatim report. Indeed so little careful is the author to distinguish between his own thoughts and those that he puts into the mouths of his characters, that it is sometimes impossible to tell where the speech which he is reporting ends and his own comment upon it begins. Note especially chapters 1 and 3. "He seems nearly as careless to dissever what he himself says (in full persuasion that he expresses the mind of Christ) from what Christ actually said as the old prophets were in distinguishing 'the word of the Lord' . . . . and the testimony which they themselves thereupon proceeded to bear." [6]. . . .

No understanding of the Gospel is possible without an appreciation of the part played by symbolism. What then for John is the *relation of fact to symol?* Let it be remembered initially that the symbolic or allegorical use of an incident does not necessarily imply that it is not "true." And if we ask with Pilate, What is "truth?" we are reminded that the "true" and the historically accurate are not necessarily the same thing. Truth is sometimes better served, even by the historian, by the interpretation of the spirit of great events and the principles which inspired them, than by a meticulously accurate narrative of facts. Thus Baron F. Von Hügel writes in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: "The Fourth Gospel is the noblest instance of this kind of literature, of which the truth depends, not on the factual accuracy of the symbolizing experiences, but on the truth of the ideas and experiences thus symbolized." Yet the truth of this dictum may be admitted without denying that there may be in the Gospel a basis of actual history. The probability is that John did not, at least consciously and deliberately, invent stories for the sake of their allegorical meaning, though he may well have modified and elaborated them, particularly in minor details (e.g. numbers, dates, names, etc.) with a symbolical purpose in view. That is, he selects out of a mass of traditional material such stories as when thus elaborated will best serve his purpose. Generally speaking, it is likely that he believed in his facts and recorded little that he did not suppose to be historical, even though his belief may not always have been justified. Yet it is not merely the bodily aspect of Jesus' story with which he presents us but its soul. To John facts and their symbolical meaning are related as flesh to spirit; the former may be a necessary vehicle, but it is the latter which really counts: "What gives life is the Spirit; flesh is of no avail at all" (6:63). . . . .

The books of the New Testament all had their origin in the practical

[6] Charnwood, *According to St. John*, p. 55.

needs of the early Church, and owe their vitality to the fact that they sprang directly out of the life of that Church at various periods and in given circumstances. Our Gospel can be understood properly only as the Evangelist's attempt to *interpret* the Christian faith to the Church of his own day—a largely Gentile Church, with its headquarters at Ephesus, probably early in the first decade of the second century.

John seeks to interpret the Gospel of Jesus in the light of history during three-quarters of a century. By the time he wrote the last representatives of the Apostolic Age had passed or were passing away, the bonds with Judaism had been definitely broken, and a Church now largely Gentile had become the custodian of a religion which, severed from its historical origins, was unfolding itself into a far wider significance. If the Christian message was to live for a new age, it must be re-interpreted in new terms. To understand Christ it was necessary not only to know the actual facts of his life and teaching but also to take into account the great religious movement to which those facts had given the impulse. Hence almost unconsciously John alters the perspective of the earlier Gospels, and looking at Jesus' life across the intervening years reads into words and incidents the point of view of his own later age. A good example is 4:35-38. John "presents the facts of the divine life, not as men saw them at the time, but as they appeared long afterwards in the retrospect of an enlightened faith." [7]

Again John interprets the Gospel in the light of personal religious experience. He seeks so to portray the Jesus of history as to emphasize the abiding power of the Christ of faith. As Ernest Scott well remarks, once Christianity was separated from its historical beginnings it was in danger "either of evaporating as a philosophy or petrifying as a mechanical tradition," and it is John's supreme service that by insisting that the inward fellowship of the Spirit was even closer than the outward one with the earthly Jesus, while at the same time giving the historical fact of Christ's incarnation its full value, "he ensured for all time that the Christ of inward experience should be no ideal abstraction, but the living Master who had once been manifest in the flesh." [8]

Yet again John interprets the life of Jesus in the light of Paul's teaching. It is disputed whether John has to any great extent been directly influenced by Paul, or whether his theology should not rather be regarded as an independent and collateral development. Probably those are nearer the truth who hold that John owes a deep debt to his predecessor. It is true that the language of the Fourth Gospel differs from that of Paul, and that some of the Apostle's greatest conceptions appear to be insufficiently realized by the Evangelist. . . . . Yet, apart from special doctrines, John's whole outlook upon the Christian revelation is determined by Paul, for it was the latter, not John, who first conceived the glorified Christ of experience, rather than the human Jesus of history, to be the real object of faith. In minor details of doctrine also John and Paul touch at innumerable points—

[7] Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

[8] *Idem*, pp. 8-9.

in the matter of the relation of faith to works (6:29), in the function assigned to Christ in creation (1:3; cf. Col. 1:16 f.), in the claim that believers are spiritually free (8:31 ff.; cf. Gal. 4:21 ff., etc.), in the recognition that in Christ Jew and Gentile are one (4:21-24; Eph. 2:11 ff.). It was inevitable that the religious outlook of the Church at Ephesus, which had been a chief centre of Paul's activity, should be strongly coloured by Pauline doctrine. It was John's part to prevent that doctrine being "sublimated into a philosophy" by relating it to the historical facts of Jesus' life. "The glory which Paul ascribes to the exalted Christ is thrown back by John on the actual life on earth. . . . . The Lord who revealed himself to Paul in the experience of faith is to the evangelist one with Jesus Christ, who had lived and taught and suffered. Even then, while he still dwelt among us, 'we beheld his glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.' " [9] So important a motive has this interpretation of the Pauline message been thought, that the "Beloved Disciple" is frequently regarded as an idealized Paul, while several critics have accepted the ingenious conjecture that under the figure of Nathaniel Paul is actually introduced into the Gospel.

Finally our Gospel sets out to interpret the Christian story and Christian experience to the new world of Hellenism by translating the Gospel into a form intelligible to Greek modes of thought. This must be discussed below in connexion with the doctrine of the Logos. Meanwhile suffice it to say that, whether or no the actual key to the understanding of the Gospel is to be found in "a transmutation of Jewish and Christian ideas into their Greek equivalents," [10] John's great achievement was to transplant the Gospel of Jesus into a new soil before its roots had time to wither.

There can be little doubt that certain definitely *polemical* aims can be traced in the Gospel. The controversial tone of Jesus' discourses as reported by John is intelligible only if they are related to the contemporary situation of the Church in John's own day, and treated as the Evangelist's attempt to repel attacks, to which Christianity was subject, in the early years of the second century, though on account of the narrative form in which John's work is cast this controversial interest is on the surface less obvious than in Paul's letters.

In the Gospel we see carried back into Jesus' only lifetime the Church's defence against contemporary Judaism which had set itself to combat Christianity by maligning the story of Jesus and ridiculing his claims. Hence John's eagerness to defend the career of Jesus from misrepresentation. So far from being an obscure missioner, Jesus taught at the headquarters of the national religion (7:4; 18:20); though Judas' treachery might seem to hint that the Master could hold the loyalty not even of his closest intimates, the truth is that Jesus foreknew and for his own ends permitted the betrayal (6:64; 13:11); so far from Jesus dying as a malefactor, Pilate could find no fault in him (19:4); while the supreme "offence of the Cross" is overcome by John's characteristic teaching that it was self-determined and a step

[9] Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

[10] Manson, *The Incarnate Glory*, p. 37.

necessary to Christ's achievement of "glory." In a word just as "the Jews," irrespective of their different sects in Jesus' own day, appear in the Gospel as a kind of official opposition to Christ, so do the objections brought by them against Christ—"He makes himself equal to God"; "Art thou greater than our Father Abraham?"; "Can this man give us his flesh to eat?"—suggest the disputes between Jew and Christian of a later age, when Christian theology had been definitely formulated and Christianity and Judaism faced each other as rivals. In particular the Eucharistic discussion (6:32-59), which would be quite impossible in Jesus' own day before the sacrament was even instituted, becomes intelligible when related to a later Jewish attack upon Christian sacramental teaching.

It is possible that John has coloured his picture of the Baptist in the interest of his polemic against the Jews. Baldensperger indeed held that the Gospel was primarily intended as a polemic against a Jewish sect of Baptist disciples who exalted their Master above Christ. In support of this theory Acts 18:25; 19:3-4 are quoted as proving the existence of such a sect at Ephesus. Reference is also made in the Clementine Recognitions (1:54), which date perhaps from the early third century, to the fact that, "Some even of the disciples of John, who seemed to be great ones, have separated themselves and proclaimed their own Master as Christ." It is certainly significant that, on every mention of the Baptist, John pointedly emphasizes his subordination to Jesus, and it may well be that he wishes to counteract a contemporary Jewish movement which sought to buttress its opposition to the spread of Christianity by exalting the Baptist at the expense of Christ. Possibly the infection had spread even into the Church itself. But any such Baptist controversy cannot be more than a quite subordinate motive in John's mind, and may have to be eliminated altogether if, as appears to be the case, there is evidence that some at least of the Baptist passages are due to the hand of a Redactor.

There is little evidence that our Evangelist was influenced to any great extent by the contemporary Hellenistic "Mystery Religions." Of these any lengthy discussion would here be out of place. It will be enough to allude to two conceptions conspicuous in them which may be thought to have influenced John among other New Testament writers. First there is the conception of "regeneration" or "new-birth," whereby the initiate became partaker of a divine essence and was thereby "reborn into eternity." Each cult had its myth of the God who died and rose again, whether it be Osiris, Attis, or Dionysus—a myth which was dramatically enacted before the eyes of the assembled multitudes, and through a mystic sympathy with which the initiate himself was thought to obtain the guarantee of undying life. Secondly must be noted the sacramentalist tendencies of the Mystery Cults, which may be summarized thus: so far as the symbol was concerned, its virtue was thought to lie, not only in the spiritual reality it symbolized, but in the symbol itself as such; so far as the worshipper was concerned the validity of the sacrament depended, not purely on spiritual receptiveness, but on the *ex opere operato* efficacy of the rite itself; so far as the gift communicated was concerned, it was thought of, not as a purely

spiritual bestowal, but as an impersonal semi-physical influence, for the communication of which, not grace and faith, but the symbol itself was the indispensable channel. Now it must be remembered that not even the use of much of the actual terminology of the Mysteries, as in the case of both Paul and John, necessarily involves the adoption of the ideas which it expresses. The Christian community at Ephesus, following upon the influx of heathen converts, must have been flooded with quasi-magical conceptions of religion drawn from the atmosphere of the Mysteries. Nor is it surprising to find our Evangelist using the language of the Mysteries, in chapter 3, when he speaks of the "birth from above," in chapter 6 as he develops his profound sacramental teaching. Like Paul, in his eagerness to find a common standing ground with those whom he would win for Christ, he sometimes uses categories which are theirs rather than his own, if indeed he does more than use imagery which is the common property of all mystics. And while adopting Mystery conceptions he infuses them with new meaning and new life. He speaks of "regeneration," but gives it a new ethical connotation, borrowed not from the Mysteries but from Paul; the Spirit blows where it will and is confined to no material channel. It is only of Spirit that Spirit is born, and only by the power of the Spirit that regeneration is achieved. He accepts without question the "real" efficacy of the Sacraments. Yet he clearly desires to counteract the prevalent tendency towards a materialistic view of them, and all the emphasis is on their spiritual aspect: "What gives life is the Spirit: flesh is of no avail at all" (6:63).

There remains for consideration the Evangelist's attitude towards certain internal controversies of the Church and in particular towards "Gnosticism," the battle of which with the orthodox faith had already begun at the time of writing. The Gnostic heretics of the second century were men who attempted to interpret the figure and message of Christ in such a way that they would fit into a preconceived Hellenistic theology, every Gnostic system being "an attempt to blend Christianity with the theosophical speculations of the age." [11] Fundamental is the idea of a dualism running through the whole universe. God is by nature good and pure: the material creation evil and tainted. Therefore by no possibility can a world essentially evil be the creation of the supreme deity, nor can there be any direct contact between God and the material world. Hence the conception of subordinate divine beings, intermediate agencies, aeons, emanations of the Deity, which bridge the gap between God and the world. These were thought of as the "archons" or rulers of a huge system of concentric spheres over-arching the earth, and were originally identified with the heavenly bodies themselves, whose movements were supposed to sway human destinies, and provided the astrologer with his stock-in-trade. A similar dualism was thought to exist in the nature of man, whose soul and body are alien one to the other as are God and the world. The soul is a spark emanating from God Himself, while the body is but part of the

[11] Foakes-Jackson, *Hist. of the Christian Church*, p. 122.

impure matter of which all created things consist. From such a prison there is no escape for the soul save in a "gnosis" or knowledge of its divine nature. That is, man's salvation is to be wrought out, not by moral effort, but by the communication of a certain esoteric "knowledge" which will enable the possessor to propitiate the intermediate powers, often malignant, and so open the way to God. Thus, as Dobschutz has well put it, "Gnosticism is, in the first place, intellectualism; one-sided over-valuation of knowledge at the expense of moral activity." Finally, holding this dualistic conception of the universe, Gnostic thinkers within the Church naturally scouted the idea that the Logos, the highest emanation of the Father, could in any true sense take upon himself a material body. Hence the denial of the reality of the Incarnation, and the refusal to admit the true humanity and real suffering of Jesus; in a word what is known as "Docetism."

We have within the New Testament clear indications of the spread of such more or less developed Gnostic tendencies. In particular may be noted the heresy which Paul attacks in his letter to the Colossians. As regards the Fourth Gospel's relation to Gnosticism two extreme positions have been taken up. It has by some been definitely claimed as a product of Gnostic Christianity, and was indeed referred, in antiquity, to the Gnostic Cerinthus as its author; by others it has been as definitely regarded as a polemic against the rising heresy. The truth is midway between the extremes. Tinged with Gnostic influences John certainly is. He shares with the Gnostics a certain dualism in his conception of both man and the world, and a certain intellectualism in his conception of faith and in his insistence upon the necessity of "knowing" God. There is a dualism which envisages a deep division set between light and darkness (1:5), the children of God (1:13) and those of the devil (8:44), spirit and flesh (3:6), the Church and the world (17:16). On the other hand this dualism is balanced by a glorious universalism (3:16, etc.) which enabled Johannine Christianity to win the world as Gnosticism, with its Gospel for the privileged few, could never have won it. Again there are certain terms and expressions (e.g. "gnosis," "pistis," "sophia") which John significantly avoids except in verbal form, apparently because of their Gnostic colouring. The hierarchy of spiritual intermediates entirely disappears. There is no trace in the Gospel of the Gnostic's contempt of the Old Testament, whose God, they held, was but a lower divinity and creator of the evil material universe. Above all John combats Gnostic "Docetism" by insisting emphatically on the reality of the Incarnation, true humanity, sufferings and death of Christ (1:14; 4:6; 6:20; 19:28, 34).

We conclude then that, though in some degree sympathetic towards Gnostic philosophy, John with studied insistence repudiates its more glaring errors. Possibly he may at one time have been a more advanced Gnostic, and in the Gospel we see him moving away from Gnosticism while still feeling its attraction. Or alternately we may suppose that, without ever being in the true sense a Gnostic, John may have reached by his own individual thinking views which seem akin to Gnosticism, but were in truth simply part of

the common culture of his day, and were only later specially identified with one prominent school. In any case "He did a great service to his age by showing that one could be a thinker, appreciate knowledge, stand in the midst of a stream of thoroughly intellectual movements, and yet remain a faithful son of the Church."[12]

[12] Schmiedel, *The Johannine Writings*, p. 236.

LIGHT AND LIFE

Ernest F. Scott

WHAT, THEN, WAS that work of Christ which he finished in his earthly life and which was set free from every limitation by his death? The Gospel offers a twofold account of its nature and purpose. (1) In the first place, through Christ we have the full and ultimate revelation of God. It belongs to the Hellenic cast of the evangelist's thinking that a peculiar value is attached to the idea of revelation. To the Greek mind the highest good was identified with perfect knowledge; and for more than five centuries the great philosophers had been striving after knowledge. It was assumed that the "wise man"—the man who rightly apprehended the nature of God—would raise himself above earthly circumstance, and become, in some measure, like God. The evangelist, imbued with this Greek idea, declares that God has now granted to men the absolute revelation of Himself. From the beginning He has been found of those who sought Him. In sages, prophets, law-givers, His Word has been dimly reflected, and men have been led by them to some partial knowledge of Himself. But now at last the revealing Word has appeared in very Person. The Light which in broken rays had been present to men from the beginning, had come into the world. It was the supreme service of the fourth evangelist to Christian thought that he discerned the true revelation of God in the living Person of Christ. The objection has often been urged against the Gospel that it contains little of definite teaching. Its elaborate discourses are almost wholly occupied with sayings about the speaker himself. With all their claim to convey a fuller revelation, they have far less to tell us of the Heavenly Father, in His love and providence and will towards men, than the simple Synoptic parables. But it may be answered that by concentrating his thought upon the Person, almost to the exclusion of all else, the evangelist has truly apprehended, and expressed with a matchless clearness and power, the truth that underlies even the Synoptic teaching. Jesus himself was the revelation. He made the Father known to us, not so much by the words he spoke as by his life, by his whole personality, "full of grace and truth." Our knowledge of God is dependent henceforth on an ever-growing vision of Jesus Christ. It may be granted that in his presentation of this great truth the evangelist is largely influenced by philosophical ideas that obscure much of its meaning. He appears to suggest that Jesus revealed the Father because He was Himself of the same essence, and made palpable to us the absolute divine life. A one-sided emphasis is laid on "knowledge," as if God were to be apprehended through Christ by some intellectual process. Yet beneath these wrappings of metaphysic, in-

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separable from the Logos theory, we can discover the simple religious idea that Jesus revealed God by the divine character of his human life. The knowledge by which we lay hold of him is something more than intellectual knowledge. It is bound up with obedience to his will, and inward fellowship with him.

(2) The work of Christ, however, did not consist wholly in revelation. As he was the Light, he was also the Life,—imparting to men not only the knowledge of God, but the divine nature. In this conception of Christ as the Life-giver we find the central motive of the Gospel. It was written, as the evangelist himself tells us, that believing in Jesus as the Son of God we might have life.

"Life" is the comprehensive word employed in the Old Testament to denote the sovereign good. Joy, prosperity, peace, wisdom, righteousness, are all summed up in the idea of life, and God Himself is pre-eminently the "Living One." In later Jewish thought, life was associated in a special manner with the coming age, when all things were to reach their consummation. The blessings which God would bestow upon His people in the great future were all included in the one possession of "eternal life." It is in this sense that the word meets us frequently in the Synoptic Gospels. The message of Jesus is concerned with the coming age, or kingdom of God; but the kingdom itself is identified with its chief blessing. Jesus can speak, almost in the same sentence, of "entering into the kingdom" and of "inheriting eternal life." The fourth evangelist takes advantage of this equivalence of the two terms, and discards the idea of the kingdom altogether. It was related to hopes and beliefs that were specifically Jewish, and he replaces it by the more general conception of life. At the same time he introduces an all-important change into this conception. Life in the Synoptic teaching belonged to the inheritance of the kingdom of God, and was regarded as still in the future. It was described as "eternal life," since it was part of that divine, eternal order which was presently to be inaugurated. But the epithet "eternal," as used in the fourth Gospel, applies simply to the quality of the life. The natural life is something defective and unreal, little better than a state of death; and over against it there is the true life, offered to us by Christ. It is not a blessing of the remote future, but an actual and present possession. "He that believeth in the Son *hath* life." "He that believeth in me is passed" (already by that very act) "from death into life."

The evangelist nowhere declares in so many words, what he understands by life. His apparent definition has reference rather to the indispensable means whereby the true life is to be attained. In the light of various passages, however, his underlying thought becomes evident. Life is primarily the absolute divine life. God is Spirit, and possesses an eternal, self-originated life, of a different nature from that of men. This higher life is not conceived, at least in the first instance, under ethical categories. God is the Living One, not in virtue of His love and righteousness and holiness, but because there resides in Him a purer essence, analogous to the life principle in man, yet different in kind. The Logos, as one with God, participates in that divine

attribute of life. "As the Father hath life in himself so he hath given the Son to have life in himself."

The purpose of Christ's coming, then, was to communicate to men that life which, as the eternal Word, he shared with the Father. Man was by nature a creature of flesh, excluded, by the very conditions of his being, from the higher life. But through the incarnation of His Son, God had now allied Himself with the human race. What was formerly an impassible gulf, not to be crossed by any effort of man, had been bridged over. The higher nature had taken possession of the lower, and all who would had access to it and could make it their own. This, according to the fourth evangelist, was the meaning and end of the Lord's sojourn in the flesh. "In him was life," and we also can have life through his name.

Two things need to be observed and emphasised in connection with this primary Johannine doctrine. (1) The life, as we have seen, is not conceived in a purely ethical or religious sense. It is regarded from a metaphysical point of view as the absolute life which constitutes the being of God; and as such it is opposed to the mere earthly life which we inherit as men. The work of Christ consists, therefore, not so much in the renewal of our sinful will as in the actual transformation of our nature. He communicates the divine life as a kind of higher essense, by the reception of which man's being is wrought into affinity with God's. This mysterious change is symbolized by the miracle at Cana,—the "beginning of miracles," which was typical of all the others. As Jesus changed water into wine, so he came to transmute our earthly nature into something richer and better. It is indicated, likewise, in the so-called parable of the Vine. In more than a figurative sense Jesus describes himself as the true Vine,—the living stem whereby life is transmitted to all the branches. A conception of life which can only be defined as semi-physical is involved in the whole Johannine doctrine; and in so far it falls short of the highest religious value. A magical element is introduced into Christianity which we cannot but recognize as alien to the real spirit of our Lord's teaching. None the less, we must here again distinguish between the truth itself and the form in which it is embodied. The evangelist is conscious that in Jesus Christ a new, transforming power has entered into the world. He has seen a change effected in the lives of men so profound and mysterious that it seems nothing less than a change of nature; and he has himself experienced this inward renewal. To the moral miracle accomplished by Jesus he applies the categories suggested to him by his philosophical doctrine. Jesus was the Word, in whom the being of God became incarnate. The possessor of the divine life has imparted it to his people, changing their mortal nature into the substance of his own.

(2) Life is inseparable from a living person; and we can only receive the gift of Christ by union with himself. The life is in *him*; not in his teaching, or in any work performed by him, but in his very self. He can say, "I am the Life." The idea thus conveyed brings us directly to the heart of the Johannine message. Our Lord's purpose, as conceived by this evangelist, was nothing less than to impart his own personal life to his disciples. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." "The bread that I will give

is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Here, also, the thought is no doubt obscured by conceptions that to our minds may appear crude and half-material. The life is viewed as an ethereal essence, resident in the incarnate Word; and is only to be received by some mystical absorption into ourselves of Christ's actual body. Yet the truth suggested is the vital truth of Christianity, and the fourth Gospel, more than any other writing, has established its place in the Christian thought of all time. Our Lord's great gift to humanity was himself, and to receive the gift he offers we must apprehend *him* in his living Person. We must fill ourselves with his mind and will, and become incorporate with him in the whole spirit of our lives.

The higher life is imparted as an immediate gift of God through Christ; but certain conditions are required of men before they can receive the gift. To set before us these conditions is the practical religious aim of the fourth Gospel. It might appear, at first sight, as if the evangelist simply took up the message of Paul. As Paul insists on faith as the one thing needful, so the later teacher makes the whole process of salvation centre on the act of believing on Christ. We find, however, on comparing the two ideas more carefully, that the "belief" so persistently demanded in the fourth Gospel is something different from the Pauline "faith,"—something much narrower and more definite. Its nature is indicated by the conjunction with "knowledge" in which it is so often placed. Where Paul contemplated an energy of the whole man, an entire surrender of heart and will, the evangelist thinks, in the first instance, of an act of intellectual assent. To "believe" is to accept the given doctrines of Christianity, especially the fundamental doctrine that Jesus is the Son of God.

But while belief in itself has thus a restricted meaning, it is combined with other elements which give it something of the larger significance of Faith. We are reminded, on the one hand, that the intellectual act is morally conditioned. Before we can know Christ and recognise him in this true character as Son of God, we require to enter into full sympathy with him; and this sympathy is wrought in us by a life of obedience and loyal discipleship. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." The prominence thus given to the ethical demand of Christianity is a marked feature in the Gospel,—all the more striking because of its pervading speculative character. Warned, perhaps, by the current errors of Gnosticism, the evangelist feels the danger of resolving the message of Christ into a mere theology. He holds that the true knowledge runs back in the end to practical obedience.

On the other hand, while belief is represented as nothing in its outward form but an act of bare confession, an emphasis is laid on the mystery involved in it. Through belief a man is brought into life-giving fellowship with the Son of God, and an act so momentous in its consequences must be the outcome of some profound and divine impulse. "No man can come to me unless the Father draw him." The will of God himself must coöperate with the human will, before there can be true belief in Christ. This idea of a divine activity revealing itself in the Christian confession, is presented most fully and impressively in the doctrine of the New Birth. The doctrine is

peculiar to the fourth Gospel, and combines in itself various elements derived from Pauline theology and from early speculations on the mystical import of the baptismal rite. But it is ultimately derived from the familiar sayings in which our Lord declares that men must become like little children before they can enter the Kingdom of God. The evangelist heightens the original image, and in so doing throws a new suggestion into it. He speaks not merely of a return to childhood, but of a renewal of birth. The acceptance of Christianity is nothing less than another beginning of life; and this second beginning, like the first, is mysterious, and not dependent on our own will. We are born into our faith in Christ by the agency of God's spirit, which moves invisibly like the wind. Whence it comes, or how it works in us, we cannot tell; yet its influence, so real though so inscrutable, is the beginning of the new life.

By the act of belief, therefore,—which itself is preceded by a whole religious process,—we enter into such a relation to Christ that his gift becomes possible. But the belief is only the starting-point of another process, by which the work of Christ attains to its final outcome in eternal life. To understand this part of the evangelist's teaching we need to bear in mind his ruling conception, that the life bestowed by Christ is identical with Christ himself. How can we so apprehend him that he may communicate to us his own personal life? This is the crucial question of the Gospel, and an answer is sought to it along various lines of thought. (1) A peculiar importance is attached, in the first place, to the "words" of Christ, which are "spirit and life" to those who truly receive them. The words are regarded not merely as the vehicle of a certain message but as a living and personal influence. To the ancient mode of thinking, a man's word was part of himself. The word of God, more especially, is conceived in the Old Testament as the outflow of the divine Personality, carrying with it a quickening and creative power. So the words uttered by Jesus were a sort of effluence from himself. Through them he makes his abode in the hearts of his people and communicates his own life. (2) Again, a place is given in the Gospel to the mystical ideas which had already begun to grow up around the Lord's Supper, under the influence of Greek and Oriental theosophy. In the long discourse of Jesus after the feeding of the five thousand we have a whole series of sayings which can only be explained in the light of eucharistic doctrine. The evangelist's attitude to this doctrine seems to be a twofold one. He combats the superstitious belief that the Supper was valid in itself, apart from the discernment of its spiritual meaning. It can avail us nothing unless we can grasp the reality through the symbols and yield ourselves to Christ in the fellowship of faith. But at the same time a more than symbolical value is attributed to the sacred elements. If they are received with the true spirit they represent, in some real sense, the Person of Christ. Only as we partake of his flesh and blood can we receive into ourselves the divine life; and by the institution of the Supper the great miracle is accomplished. Christ gives himself to us as the bread of life. In this sacramental train of thought, more distinctly than elsewhere, we can detect the semi-physical idea that is interwoven with the purely spiritual teaching of the Gospel. Life is a divine essence, inherent in the Word made flesh; and as

such it must be imparted magically, by a special miracle. (3) Once more,—and here we touch the centre of the Johannine message,—life becomes ours through an inward abiding union with Christ, the Life-giver. Paul had already spoken of a fellowship with Christ so entire and intimate that the believer became one with his Lord. "I live, yet not I, but Christ who liveth in me." The evangelist takes up this Pauline conception, and develops it, on the ground of his own spiritual experience, to yet fuller and deeper issues. Life as it manifests itself in the disciples is the life of Christ, apart from whom they can do nothing. He makes his abode with them and unites them to himself, as the branches have their life in the vine. The question of how this union is effected is left in the end unanswered; or rather it is answered, as alone it can be, by a simple judgment of faith. Those who have known Christ are conscious of his presence, beside them and within them. They are made one with himself, and with the Father through him.

THE FAITH OF THE GREEK TRADITION

Paul Elmer More

HOWEVER WE INTERPRET the personal claims attributed to Jesus, and whatever construction we put on the story of the Resurrection, one indisputable fact remains, that Christianity began with the belief in a superhuman founder. To a band of apostles and disciples gathered together in Jerusalem after the crucifixion, this Jesus whom they had accompanied in his mission through the lake towns and among the hills of Galilee, a friend quick to respond to all the compassions of humanity yet unyielding in principle and capable at times of scorching indignation, a teacher who arrogated to himself a sublime authority and whose words, marvellously simple and direct, seemed yet to elude them with mysterious hints of a new faith,—to these Christians, as they were soon to be named, their Master appeared in memory to have been a man like to themselves and at the same time something more than man. Now at least, after his humiliation, he had been raised up to stand at the right hand of God as judge and Lord of the world; and in recollection they saw the light of that deification upon his face while he walked with them on the earth. He was the Jesus whom they had known, one person, whether in the flesh or in glory; but his nature presented itself to them in a double aspect, human and divine. This was not a metaphysical theorem, not a doctrine which they had reasoned out, but a conviction born of experience.

At first his divine nature took for them, as Jews, the eschatological form with which they were familiar. Their Lord was the Messiah, the Christ, who should return after no long delay with the hosts of heaven to establish the kingdom of God. And this idea was not the product of their own imagination, but had been held by Jesus of himself and imparted to them in the last days of his life. This eschatological conception was retained by Paul, even in some respects hardened by him, though we are apt to overlook the fact when we read his epistles today. Certainly Paul did not create Christianity or any fundamental belief of Christianity. Something he added, no doubt, from the treasure of his brooding mind. He enlarged what may be called the cosmic aspect of religion, by his profounder sense of the eternal design of Providence and by his corresponding emphasis on the notion of a pre-existent Christ. Whether his own or not, the words in Ephesians spring from his inspiration:

> The fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

From *The Christ of the New Testament*, Princeton, 1924, pp. 281-94. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Princeton University Press.

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

With this expansion of religion went a deepening of the individual note; the soul of man, with its hopes and fears, its sense of sin and longing for salvation, was caught up into a celestial drama, and its fate grew to vast significance. The intensity of the personal faith of Paul became a permanent possession of the Church to the great enrichment of devotion. Yet even here one must make reservations; for much of the bigotry, the emotional mysticism and spasmodic hysteria that have troubled the Church from the beginning can be traced to Paul's insistence on his own miraculous conversion. And upon the foundation of his faith Paul raised a structure of rabbinical theology the harmful effects of which can scarcely be overestimated. His doctrine of predestination and grace, faith and law, went under for a season, and never again won a firm hold upon the Greek community; but in the Occident it reappeared with Tertullian and Augustine, struggled with opposing ideas through the scholastic debates of the Middle Ages, and then burst out with devastating malignity in the theology of Luther and Calvin. The legalistic elements in Paul were naturally sympathetic to the Latin temper, and to them we owe what I must regard as the unfortunate trend taken by Christianity in the Western world.

The unchecked triumph of the Pauline system would have riveted on religion a Jewish Messiah. The current in that direction was diverted by a spiritual force which, apparently entering the Church through the Hellenistic communities of Asia Minor, reached its climax in the Gospel composed at Ephesus and attributed to St. John. Here indeed the cosmic scope of salvation, which had loomed so large in the imagination of Paul, is continued, but assumes a different colour. Jesus, still the pre-existent Son of God, appears no longer as the Hebrew Christ, but as the personified Logos of Greek philosophy grafted upon the Wisdom of the late Jewish thinkers, themselves already half Hellenized; while the kingdom of Jehovah dissolves into the ubiquitous presence of the other-world. For the rabbinic theology which Paul so to speak had turned against itself, we now have a refined and spiritualized gnosticism. In this scheme the Incarnation becomes not so much a moment in the eschatological drama as the focussing point of God's continuous manifestation of Himself to the human soul; and the attention is centred less upon the death than upon the life of the Saviour: "he alone was able to bring light to the souls of men, so that with our own eyes we might discern the way of eternal salvation." [1]

The change was not complete. The ethics of John retain the tone of the Synoptics and of Paul; and the gnosticism of John demands as the central act of faith a conversion of the whole man rather than a mere enlightenment of the intellect. Religion has by no means been swallowed up in metaphysics, nor has the inspiration of prophecy faded into the thin air of speculation. And even so the alteration needed in some respects

[1] *Clem. Hom.*, i, 19.

to be modified or revoked. Thus, for instance, the peculiar doctrine of the Logos which prevailed for some time in the East, proved to contain certain dangerous implications, and during the course of the third century fell into the background of theology. But in the main Christianity passed with the fourth Gospel into the wide stream of Greek thought, while bringing to that Tradition its own vital contribution; henceforth we have to study the mutual assimilation of the faith of Jesus with the Idealism of Plato.

Was this diversion of Christianity a betrayal of Christ? In answering this question we may first of all eliminate the objections of those who would strip religion of its supernatural philosophy altogether, and would reduce it to mere morality tinctured with trust in the fatherhood of a tenderly indulgent God. The Jesus of the humanitarians is a pure fiction, with no warrant in history. Here there would be no choice between Paul and John; both are equally repugnant to the views of modern liberalism. But what of Paul's special theology? Certainly, in so far as John threw over the burden of inverted rabbinic legalism, there was no betrayal; Jesus himself in his attitude towards the Law stood rather with John than with Paul. The question grows acute only when we consider John's substitution of the Greek revealer of God for the Jewish Messiah, for here undoubtedly Paul, however he may have developed the idea, was faithful to the more literal conception of Christ's mission held by the primitive Church.

Now we must admit, as in fact I have admitted, that Christianity, as a religion of compelling power, could have taken its origin only in Palestine, and only through the preaching of the imminent Messianic kingdom. Greece, with all her wisdom, could never have given this impulse to the world, and the efforts of Greek philosophy to satisfy the craving for salvation had failed. But it is also true that the Messianic kingdom, valuable as it was and always may be symbolically, in the larger light of history fades to a temporary expedient; and the hard fact soon forced itself upon attention that the Messiah did not appear, at least in any such realistic fashion as he had prophesied. Christianity to become a world religion had to be translated into the universal and more spiritual terms of Greek intuition. And this, call it the work of Providence or what you will, is what actually happened. As I see the matter, such a change involved no disloyalty to the author of Christianity, but was a legitimate development of that which lay in the background of his teaching. So far as Jesus' consciousness of his divine nature transcended the limits of Messianism it was already implicitly Greek and not Hebrew. It remained for John, or whomever we call the source of the Logia in the fourth Gospel, under the influence of Hellenistic philosophy to lay hold of those sayings of Jesus which expressed his relation to the Father in general language, and so to fulfill the hidden purpose of the Master, hidden partly perhaps even to himself. Thus only could the accomplishment of prophecy become the universal revelation of God to Man. Shall we deem this a betrayal?

Danger there was, as there must be in all reaching after spiritual truth. At an early date the thought of Christ's divinity so enthralled the Greek mind that it threatened to overshadow completely his humanity; and

the first great heresy to trouble the Church—and never to be driven out—was the docetism, so-called, which held that Jesus was in no true sense a man at all, but only seemed to be such. Hence the writer of the first epistle of John opens with an earnest insistence on "that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life." In its concern with the revelation of God *to* man the Orient too often forgot the revelation of God *in* man. But withal Greek theology, in its central course and during the period of our study, remained faithful to its origin. For three centuries and a half it wrestled with a succession of heresies which, on one side or the other, sought to rationalize, and in rationalizing virtually to explain away, the mystery of the Incarnation. As a result of that conflict it laid down the one essential dogma of the universal Church, western and eastern, protestant and catholic, the Faith as it was proclaimed at Nicea and at Chalcedon was defined in a series of clauses clear, hard, unargued, unreasoned, impregnable against every possible perversion. That was the virtue of the Greek intelligence, to perceive that beside this dogma all other questions are of secondary importance. And thus it happens today that a churchman may deal with the various "creeds" as he will, interpreting them literally or symbolically to his taste, even to the point of rejecting the personification of the Holy Ghost and the consequent doctrine of the Trinity, whereas, so long as he calls himself a Christian, he ought honestly and unevasively and *ex animo* to subscribe to the Faith as finally formulated at the fourth general Council. The language of the formula may be repellent to modern ears, we may perhaps regret that the exigencies of the long contest with heresy compelled the Fathers to adopt a bolder terminology than our understanding of the mystery warrants; but at bottom the test of orthodoxy as ultimately defined in the year 451 is no more than an explicit statement of the faith held so unequivocably by the little band of disciples at the beginning, that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had known and heard, who had been crucified and, as they believed, had risen from the dead, was one person of two natures, human and divine. That is all, and it is enough.

As I have said before, it does not fall within my design to debate the truth or error of Christianity. I have argued that the dualism of faith cannot on any sound philosophical basis be rejected out of hand as incredible because it is incomprehensible. I have tried to show that the belief of the Church corresponds with the deeper self-consciousness of Jesus himself; that is a problem of historic evidence. But as for the simple fact, whether Jesus was deceived or not in his claims, that is a question of a different sort, to be answered individually by each man as the voice of conscience responds to the words spoken so many ages since by the lake of Galilee. Only, thus much I would urge: if the supposition of Christianity be not true, then we have no sure hope of religion. The Ideal philosophy of Plato waits for its verification upon no belief in anything outside of what we can test and know in our immediate experience, and he to whom the other-world of Ideas is a reality possesses a spiritual comfort beyond which it

may be presumptuous to search—I do not say. But the full scope of religion requires a theology and a mythology as well as a philosophy, and if the crowning element of religion is to be more than a reasonable conjecture, as ultimately it was to Plato, if it is to be confirmed by the certainty of revelation, then I see not whither we are to turn save to Christianity. For mythology, the crown of religion, is just the coming together of the human and the divine, the descent of God to man and the consequent elevation of man to God. In this sense all religions have their myths, and might be regarded as the groping of men in the darkness, "if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us." Even the Buddhist, who in his dread of metaphysical entities thinks to do without a supreme deity, yet consoles himself with a variegated history of the Buddha's previous existences and with naïve tales of a humanized pantheon.

In contrast with all other religions the peculiar strength of Christianity is that in the Incarnation it reduces mythology to the simplest possible terms; every extravagance, every overgrowth of fancy, is swept away for the bare fact that God in Jesus appeared among men. Indeed, of all arguments for the supernatural origin of the Christian faith the most convincing is a frank comparison of its superb simplicity with the wild tumult of Hellenistic superstitions through which it cut its way by what has the semblance of providential direction. Read the fragments of literature left to us by the Orphic and Phrygian and Egyptian and Chaldean mythologies of the age, consider the monstrosities of Mithra and the fabulous follies of Gnosticism, each in its own fashion seeking like Christianity to bridge the gulf between the human and the divine,—and then turn to the Gospel of Mark! It is like coming out into the clear light of the sun from a misty region haunted by

> "The ghosts of words, and dusty dreams,
> Old memories, faiths infirm and dead." [2]

To say that the dogma of Christianity is endangered by the comparative study of religions implies a gross ignorance of facts or a wilful misapprehension of values. If there be any true myth, if the divine nature has at any time in any wise directly revealed itself to man, if any voice shall ever reach us out of the infinite circle of silence, where else shall we look but to the words of the gospel? Not Christainity alone is at stake in our acceptance or rejection of the Incarnation, but religion itself.

That is an alternative the modern man does not willingly face, and the desperate endeavour of liberal criticism, so far as it retains the spirit of reverence, has been to evade the issue. In the main the attempt has taken the form of an Hegelian substitution of ideals for Ideas, of what we should like to be true for what we believe actually to be true; the value of Christianity shall not be reckoned on the basis of objective truth, on the answer to the question, that is to say, whether Jesus and his disciples were deluded or not, but on the character of their delusion, whether it be beneficent or not. Such was the turn given to apologetics by Strauss; and Schweitzer,

[2] Swinburne, *Félise.*

summing up the trend of nineteenth-century theology, will say that "in the end it makes no difference to what degree the Incarnation was realized in the person of Jesus, since the idea [rather, the ideal] is a living thing in the community; . . . . religion in its essence is independent of any historic face." [3] Such is the famous philosophy of "modernism," the doctrine that we need not believe but must act as if we believed,—very ingenious, very pretty, but impracticable, and at heart a lie which the world will not tolerate: men will not long act as if they believed. The alternative is the Faith of the Greek tradition or no religion of Christ.

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[3] *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, 81, 519.

SACRAMENTAL INTEREST IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Clarence Tucker Craig

MODERN INTERPRETERS ARE still at antithetical poles in their judgment on the extent of sacramental emphasis in the Fourth Gospel. According to the recent expression of one American scholar, "For John, the two great rites of Christianity were of little importance." [1] According to the latest British commentator, "He is the foremost teacher on 'the sacramental principle.' " [1 2]

1. How is it that competent scholars,—granting that they come to the evidence with widely differing prejudices,—can arrive at such opposing conclusions? The answer lies in part at least in their divergent positions on the unity of the gospel and the purpose of its author. I can only indicate briefly the position on each of these questions which I find convincing; any adequate examination would call for separate monographs.

I do not deny the strong probability that the hand which added chapter 21 may likewise have made extensive changes in the body of the gospel. All that I would urge is that we cannot discover the redactor's additions by any such simple procedure as isolating the ideas that seem to *us* to contradict the main position of the evangelist. It is quite another thing to demonstrate that they were contradictory to *him*. To illustrate from the problem at hand, many of the greatest mystics of the church have at the same time been devoted to its sacraments. Catherine of Genoa was one of that type, as Baron von Hügel has shown. Because mysticism may exclude the necessity of sacraments to the mind of a modern scholar, it does not follow that a religious devotee who inherited them would come to the same conclusion. I do not see any need of following those scholars who excise the words which are inconvenient for the view of the gospel which they find more congenial.

Turning to the second preliminary question, it seems inescapable to me that the Fourth Gospel was written not for outsiders, but for the Christian cult group. That is in no way disproved by the purpose expressed at the close, "These have been written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in his name." Every sermon to church members today is preached for that purpose. The polemical interests and apologetic motives of this gospel have often been catalogued, but it is just the believers who need to have their faith stated

[1] E. C. Colwell, *John Defends the Gospel,* Chicago, 1936, 135, links this to the idea that the author writes for a group on a higher cultural level.

[2] C. J. Wright, *The Mission and Message of Jesus,* New York, 1938, 691.

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in opposition to other positions. The kind of books which would be written for outside propaganda is illustrated by Justin and the other apologists. The Fourth Gospel breathes the intimacy of the cult group.

The author begins with a hymn to the Logos, which is not identified as Jesus until almost the end. But surely the readers were expected to know at once who was meant. Ideas are thrown out quite without explanation, such as that the children of God are not born of flesh and blood; the readers were not expected to find them strange. The scheme of constant misunderstanding of mysterious words of Jesus presupposes readers who already possess the key to the symbols used. Most important of all, the introduction of the figure of the Beloved Disciple assumes that the first readers were expected to understand more than was clearly stated. It would be pointless for the appendix to identify this figure as the author if the readers were outsiders who had no knowledge of either the son of Zebedee or the Beloved Disciple.

If the Gospel of John had been written for those who knew nothing of the practice of baptism or the conduct of the eucharist, we might well conclude that its author had no interest in conveying the most elementary instruction on the sacraments. But in a gospel written for those with extended contact with the church, the cult practices could be taken for granted, and the emphases laid through the subtle form of teaching in which the evangelist delights.

2. The total point of view of the evangelist must be born in mind if we are to evaluate correctly the significance of two objections raised to a sacramental emphasis. We cannot conclude that baptism was unimportant for him because he omitted an account of the baptism of Jesus. The Christ of the Fourth Gospel was not one who should come to human hands to receive baptism, any more than he could be tempted of the devil, or suffer genuine agony in Gethsemane. I would quite grant, on the other hand, that we cannot build any conclusions on the statement that Jesus actually baptized during his early ministry, a statement contradicted in the next chapter. These passages involve the insoluble problem of sources incompletely worked up into the gospel. No connection is made with the teaching of the gospel, nor any indication of a fulfillment of the prophecy in 1:33 of one who would baptize with the Spirit.

Likewise, the omission of the so-called institution of the Lord's Supper does not indicate any minimizing of the eucharist. It would be truer to say that John verifies the critical position that there was no specific institution. I believe that the position has been definitely proven that the eucharist celebrations in early Christianity were not of one type but two. There was a Jerusalem type which was not a commemoration of the Last Supper, but a common meal continuing their table fellowship with the Lord and looking forward to reunion with him in a New Age. The Pauline type first stressed the commemoration of the parabolic action of Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed, as a memorial of the new dispensation inaugurated by that death. The eucharist teaching of the Fourth Gospel is divorced from the Last Supper for the clear-cut reason that any "commemorative aspect"

was entirely missing for its author. The eucharist was a present communion with the exalted Lord. John does not preserve simply the early Jerusalem rite; but despite the fact that the eschatological hope has faded almost entirely from his picture, he stands much closer to the Didache prayers than to Paul. Much confusion arises in many current discussions because of a failure to distinguish clearly between the Last Supper and the Lord's Supper. The Fourth Gospel has its teaching on the Lord's Supper where the evangelist thought that it belonged. The Last Supper was simply a farewell meal where other emphases predominate.

3. In contrast to these misunderstandings of the evangelist's procedure, we would call attention to the fact that *no other evangelist goes so far in insisting upon the necessity of the saving sacraments of the church.* Nicodemus is told that he must be born of water as well as the Spirit. Three times are the words repeated that the man who was born blind had to wash in the pool of Siloam (sent). Then and then only does faith in Christ bring sight (salvation). No other evangelist reports the baptism of the twelve disciples; but on his last night, conscious that he was returning to the Father, Jesus girds himself to wash their feet. He assures them that they cannot understand his action yet. When impulsive Peter protests, there comes the clear and unmistakable word, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me." Without baptism there was no entrance into the life of the Spirit.

How do the anti-sacramental interpreters attempt to escape these conclusions? We can pass by such positions as ascribing the word "water" to a redactor or glossator, for that has no adequate basis. The most important rejection of a sacramental reference is offered by Odeberg, who cites Jewish mystical writings to prove that water stands for "the divine efflux," or seed, the fertilizing principle from the world of the Spirit. Unquestionably there are references to water in the Fourth Gospel which have no connection with baptism; but in the Nicodemus interview Jesus is not discussing "the water of life" in general but the mode of entrance into the kingdom of God. Since baptism was the rite of entrance, how could the author say "water," and not have that in mind? Allusions to the "divine efflux" and the "fertilizing principle" *may* also have been in his mind, just as the forgiveness of sins was with other early Christains. For, it is the very genius of ceremonies that the one act may be interpreted from quite varied backgrounds.

The foot-washing scene is undoubtedly difficult from any point of view. It has a definitely ethical bearing—an example of lowly service which is set by the Son of God. The new commandment of love significantly replaces the new *diatheke.* It is highly possible that this emphasis may be related to the agape or early Christian charitable meal. An example of humility within the brotherhood is set by the Lord of the church.

But it is just as certain that the meaning of the foot-washing scene cannot be restricted to its ethical teaching. Central are the emphatic words of the necessity to receive this service, and then the enigmatical statement, "He who is bathed need only wash his feet to be clean all over." Most of the interpreters who have accepted a sacramental emphasis see here an allusion to the necessity of both sacraments. The bathing is baptism; that is never repeated. The

foot-washing is the eucharist which we continue to need. Despite the impressive list of representatives who support this interpretation, it must be excluded as improbable. Water is not elsewhere a symbol of the eucharist. Just as improbable is the suggestion of Hirsch that foot-washing refers to the daily forgiveness of sins which is necessary even after baptism. Forgiveness is a need almost never expressed in the Fourth Gospel; such an idea would involve much later conceptions of penance.

The most probable interpretation to my mind is that suggested by von Campenhausen. He calls attention to the transition from baptism by immersion to that by pouring. He assembles the archaeological evidence to show that candidates had water poured over their heads so that the water covered nothing more than the feet. In this scene, therefore, in language that was perfectly understandable to those who had listened to debates over the necessity of immersion,—possibly advocated by former disciples of John and represented here by Peter in his demand to be washed all over—Jesus is made to defend the adequacy of baptism by pouring. "He who is bathed (by the word) need only wash his feet"; i.e., a baptism by pouring that covers the feet.

4. Turning to the eucharist, we find a second categorical imperative. The discourse on the bread of life culminates in the word, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." Naturally the Jews cannot understand such predictions of cannibalism. Their query as to *how* this could be is answered just as the objection of Nicodemus, by the solemn reaffirmation of the necessity. Six times Jesus repeats that there is no communication of life without eating his flesh and drinking his blood. That such was the view of the evangelist is supported by a gospel which begins the revelation of the glory of Christ by the changing of the water of Jewish purifications into the wine of the Spirit and the eucharist at the word of Jesus. It leads up to the last sight when the life-giving union between Christ and his disciples is illustrated by the allegory of the vine and its branches. An essential way of abiding in Christ is by partaking of the fruit of the vine.

Now how do the anti-sacramentalists attempt to turn the force of these facts? We may ignore here the position represented by Wescott that Jesus could not have given eucharistic teaching at this time because the Lord's Supper was not yet instituted. We shall turn again to Odeberg for the most plausible attempt to exclude a sacramental reference. He holds that the essential message of the gospel is participation in spiritual reality through the messenger from above. "Bread from heaven" falls under the category of the "divine spiritual efflux." It is as real food in the spiritual world as earthly bread is in the material. The son of man is this celestial bread. He must be eaten in the world of the spirit; he must enter into and be assimilated with the spiritual organism of the believer. This is stated realistically in order to impress the fact that it is no mere allegory. But anyone who understands the words of eating and drinking the flesh and blood to refer to the bread and wine of the eucharist takes the mistaken view of the Jews. Spiritual realities

are not external, but must be so completely absorbed and assimilated that the most fitting expression is to eat spiritual food.

It certainly is a wholesome reaction against attempts to derive Johannine sacramentalism directly from the primitive magic of "eating the god" to appeal to ideas from the early Jewish and oriental mysticism. If this were a passage in Philo or a Hermetic teacher who belonged to no cult group with a sacred meal, the claim would have more cogency. But John belonged to a group which had long since spoken of the bread of their meal as a "sharing in the body of Christ," and nearly contemporaneous with him "the flesh" of Christ is called the "medicine of immortality." Of course John must be interpreted by himself, not by other Christian authors, but how could he use such language and not expect his readers to understand a reference to the eucharist celebration? We should rather picture the bread of life discourse as a communion sermon, and visualize the elder lifting the loaf as he solemnly repeats,"This is the bread which came down from heaven. . . . . He who eats of this bread will live forever."

The crucial support for a non-sacramental interpretation is sought in 6:63. Just as Paul would deflate the entire law by citing Genesis 15:6 in defense of his law-free gospel, it would appear as if some modern exegetes seek to negate all sacramentalism in John by this one verse. But it does not deny the realism of the preceding verses; rather, it binds together the whole exposition of the chapter. "It is the Spirit which gives life, the flesh profits nothing. The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and life." To eat of anything in the world of flesh cannot give life. But the eating which has just been described will become explicable when the Son of man ascends and bestows the Spirit. In partaking of the eucharist, therefore, they do not eat *mere* flesh, but they are fed by the life-giving Spirit. The *words* of Jesus in this context refer to what he said about the necessity of the sacrament. No words of *any* kind have lifegiving quality of themselves. It is their *content*. Naturally, what the Johannine Jesus says here on the necessity of the eucharist in no way excludes what he repeats elsewhere on the necessity of believing. But it must be insisted just as strongly that those passages do not eliminate his assertion here that the word about the sacrament is an essential, life-giving word.

Chapter six therefore sets forth the place of the eucharist in the mediation of the divine, spiritual life. It brings the climax to the three chapters devoted to a positive presentation of the Christian faith. Entrance is through a new birth from above, which takes place at baptism; it is a universal religion from which even a Samaritan woman can receive the "water of life"; but at its heart is the revealer who has come down from the Father to be the Savior of the world; he is the bread which through the eucharist sustains the life in the world of the Spirit.

For the fourth evangelist then the eucharist is primarily a rite of communion. He does not think of the personal presence of the Savior at the table as host, though that may be found in 21:13 where the risen Christ distributes the food. The evangelist looks rather upon the elements as the channels of the divine life. The value of the community meal lies in the

opportunity for the individual to participate therein. Such participation is not confined to one ceremony of the church, but this is their characteristic act of worship. Its meaning is defined by John in relation to his understanding of Christian experience. That view of the eucharist which finds in it an extension of the Incarnation has its first expression in the Fourth Gospel. It is the essence of any incarnation of the Word that the spiritual operates through the means of the material.

The view expressed in this paper would not for a minute ignore the number of times in which believing and knowing God are stressed without any sacramental reference. But the emphases of any author are not to be gathered by any purely statistical means. The central focus of the Christian message was from the very beginning the death of Jesus. The Fourth evangelist puts a new witness at the foot of the cross, the Beloved Disciple. We are given the solemn assurance that this man's testimony is reliable, for he bears witness of what he has seen. What is it that calls for these solemn words? That at the death of Jesus there flow from his pierced side blood and water. That death released the life-giving sacraments of the church.

JOHN, MYSTIC AND PROPHET

Burnett H. Streeter

Mysticism, Greek and Hebrew

If, then, we are asked to what class of literature the Fourth Gospel should be referred, we reply that it belongs neither to History nor Biography, but to the Library of Devotion. It will be misunderstood unless it is approached in a spirit comparable to that in which we approach the *Confession* of Augustine or the *Imitation* of à Kempis. We must read it, as we read the book of Job, with our attention fixed less on the events recorded or on the characters of the dialogue than on the profundities of thought which through them are dramatically bodied forth. This Gospel is a meditation, an inspired meditation, on the Life of Christ. It is the work of one whom one cannot call philosopher, because he is a mystic who feels that he has got beyond philosophy—like Plotinus when he had seen the beatific vision, or like Aquinas, who, when nearing the end of his *Summa*, hung up his inkhorn and pen, saying, "What I have seen so transcends what I have written I will write no more."

The starting-point for any profitable study of the Fourth Gospel is the recognition of the author as a mystic—perhaps the greatest of all mystics. To him the temporal is the veil of the eternal, and he is ever, to use von Hügel's phrase, "striving to contemplate history *sub specie aeternitatis* and to englobe the successiveness of man in the simultaneity of God." But, if this is so, it follows that any inquiry into the sources of the Fourth Gospel will be futile which does not approach the subject from the standpoint of the psychology of the mystic temper.

The title "mystic" has dubious associations; it has been used to cover a very large variety of experiences. It is often employed to give an imposing sound to childish speculations, or to practices which in the last resort are merely tricks of narcotic self-bemusement. In a nobler sense the word is used of the religious side of the philosophic tradition dominant in the Hellenic thought, seen at its highest in Plato and Plotinus. The mysticism of John is nearer akin to this, but it is not the same. His mysticism, like that of Paul, is a mysticism centred, not on Absolute Being, but on the Divine Christ. The character of the mystic aspiration is necessarily affected by the conception entertained of the nature of the object towards which it is directed. The passion for union with the One becomes qualitatively different if that One is conceived of in the likeness of the historic Jesus. And just in so far as the object is visualised by John

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as concretely personal, the religious experience which is its correlate is continuous, rather with the old Testament, than with the Platonic, apprehension of the reaction of the soul to the Divine.

The author of the Fourth Gospel stands between two worlds, the Hebrew and the Greek, at the confluence of the two greatest spiritual and intellectual traditions of our race. In him Plato and Isaiah meet. To call John a mystic is only correct so long as one remembers that in the Hebrew tradition the prophet is the counterpart of him whom elsewhere we style the mystic. The religious experience of the prophet is not quite the same as that of the mystic, though closely allied. We shall misapprehend both the psychology and the message of John if we forget that he is a Jew first, and never quite a Greek, and unless we relate the experience of which his Gospel is the record with that revival of prophecy which is the conspicuous feature of the Early Church.

The higher religion of the Old Testament was, humanly speaking, due to a long line of outstanding prophets. . . . . But there was this difference between prophecy in Old and New Testament times. The Old Testament prophet said, "Thus saith the Lord"; he believed that his message was from the ancient God of Israel. The New Testament prophet felt that he was in contact with the "Spirit," which he seems to have thought of more often as the "Spirit of Jesus" than as the "Spirit of God."

Paul lays claim to such direct inspiration, though not, be it noted, for all his utterances (cf. 1 Cor. vii 10); so, even more emphatically, does the author of the Apocalypse, *c.* A.D. 95. The warnings against false prophets in the First Epistle of John and in the Didache are additional evidence of the immense prestige enjoyed by a true prophet; while the way in which Ignatius of Antioch, *c.* A.D. 115, appeals to utterances made by himself when inspired by the Spirit,[1] shows that the belief that the age of direct revelation was not yet over was still powerful in the most orthodox circles. To ignore the phenomenon of prophecy is to study the Fourth Gospel apart from its environment. And, for myself, I must say that the more often I read the discourses of the Fourth Gospel the more it is borne in upon me that its author was regarded by himself, and by the Church for which he wrote, as an inspired prophet.

The Discourses of John

Whis this provisional assumption in mind, I proceed to raise the question, In what sense are the discourses ascribed to Jesus in the Fourth Gopel intended to be taken as historical? I venture to think that the answers given to this question both by the old-fashioned traditionalist and by most modern critical scholars are alike on certain points unsatisfactory.

In the ancient world there were two entirely different traditions in regard to the reporting of the discourses of historical personages or accepted teachers—the Jewish and the Greek.

The Jewish tradition had developed as a result of the existence of a class

[1] *Trall.* 5; *Philad.* 7.

of "wise men" in the ancient Hebrew community. Epigramatic sayings of these worthies were carefully preserved, as nearly as possible in their original form. In books like Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Wisdom we trace a new type of literature gradually developing out of the practice of making collections of such proverbial sayings. Originally most of the sayings seem to have been preserved without the name of the author. The Book of Ecclesiasticus breaks this tradition of anonymity; although, even in this case, the innovation was not made by the author of the sayings himself, Jesus the son of Sirach, but by his grandson, who published the collection somewhere about 130 B.C. From this period onwards, more and more of the epigramatic sayings of Jewish Rabbis came to be preserved with the author's name attached. It is to the continuance, in the preponderantly Jewish communities in the Early Church, of this Jewish practice of preserving as far as possible the exact words of the teacher that we owe the different collections of sayings of Christ which are preserved to us in the Synoptic Gospels.

The Greek tradition was quite different, not only in regard to the public speeches attributed to historical personages, but also as to the private teaching of the philosophers, who occupied in the Greek social and educational system a position not at all unlike that of the "wise men" or later Rabbis in the Jewish. Thucydides, the most conscientious of all Greek historians, explains in a famous passage that he has been at the greatest pains carefully to ascertain and accurately to record all matters of fact, but that where he professes to give a speech delivered on any historical occasion, he has as a rule put into the mouths of the characters the sentiments which seemed to him to be proper to the occasion. Similarly Plato, who felt that he owed everything to the teaching of Socrates, never, so far as we are aware, made any attempt to hand down to posterity the *ipsissima verba* of his master. But throughout his life, and it was a long one, he wrote a series of philosophical dialogues in which Socrates is represented as carrying on philosophical discussions either with ordinary citizens inquiring after knowledge or with the defenders of philosophical systems of which Plato disapproved. All through the series the views which Socrates is represented as expounding are those which Plato himself, at the date of writing a particular dialogue, had come to entertain. Plato attributed his whole philosophical system to the original inspiration of Socrates and it is probable that in the earlier dialogues the speeches of Socrates, though written in the style and language of Plato, do not inadequately represent opinions entertained by Socrates. But in the later dialogues Plato had developed his system far beyond anything which is at all likely to have been in the mind of the historic Socrates.

John was writing in the Greek city of Ephesus, and for a Church of which the more cultivated, if not the majority, of the members had been educated in Greek schools and on Greek literature. Even Jewish Christians there would be familiar with the Greek tradition in these matters. Realising this, we perceive that the original readers of the Fourth Gospel would never have supposed that the author intended the speeches put into the mouth of Christ to be taken as a verbatim report, or even as a précis, of the actual words spoken by Him on the particular occasions on which they are represented

as having been delivered. They would not have supposed that the author meant that the doctrine propounded in these discourses was verbally identical with what was actually taught by Christ in Palestine, but rather that it was organically related to what Christ taught in such a way as to be the doctrine which Christ would have taught had he been explicitly dealing with the problems confronting the Church at the time the Gospel was written.

In a sense the Discourses of John are an attempt to supply a systematic summary of Christian teaching. We must never forget that the Ephesian Church about A.D. 90 was not in possession of our New Testament. Mark had been in existence perhaps five-and-twenty years, and by the time John wrote would have been firmly established in the Church of Ephesus. Luke was a more recent arrival, and it is possible that Matthew had not yet reached Ephesus. The portion of the New Testament upon which the older members of that Church had been brought up was Mark and the Epistles of Paul, their founder. But Mark is conspicuously lacking on the side of teaching. Thus, while to us the Four Gospels, to them the ten Epistles of the Apostle, must have been the main authority for the "essence of Christianity." The discourses of the Foruth Gospel are intended, in combination with the selected narrative, to present the "essence of Christianity." Naturally they present the thinking of Jesus as organically related to the thought of Paul. Paul is the first that we know of the mystics whose mysticism is centred on Christ. John, too, is a Christocentric mystic. But he had lived longer and meditated more than Paul, and is thus able to give a simpler, clearer, and in a sense a calmer, expression to his creed.

Are we, then, to say that the Discourses in the Fourth Gospel are to be conceived of as on exactly the same level as the Melian Dialogue of Thucydides, or the speeches in the *Rebuplic* of Plato? Far from it. In this, as in other ways, John stands at the meeting-point of Greek and Hebrew tradition. The analogies with Greek literary methods are valuable mainly in enabling us to understand how an author who valued historical accuracy, even though his purpose was not mainly historical, could, in all good faith and without any risk of being misunderstood by his readers, set down as spoken on definite particular occasions speeches which he knew quite well were not so delivered. But beyond that the analogy breaks down. First of all, a man of the temperament of the author of the Gospel must have meditated year after year, not only on the Epistles of Paul, but on certain Logia of Christ, which had come home to him as being of special and profound significance. He appears to have a tradition of events independent of the Synoptics; it would be strange if this did not include some sayings as well. But what he gives us is not the saying as it came to him, but the saying along with an attempt to bring out all the fullness of meaning which years of meditation had found in it. It is not difficult, for example, to detect in the Johannine allegories of the Door, the Good Shepherd, and the Vine, interpretative transformations of what were originally parables of the Synoptic type. Epigrammatic Logia will have been modified in a similar way. But behind and beyond this, we must, I feel, look to that experience

of possession by the Spirit which is the New Testament counterpart of Old Testament prophecy.

There is no incompatibility between a conscious choice of the medium of literary expression and the conviction that the thing expressed has come through some superhuman channel. The poet Blake in one passage speaks of a poem as given him by an angel, and then proceeds to give the reason for his choice of a particular metre. And, viewed as the utterances of a prophet edited by him in accord with Greek tradition, the discourses ascribed by John to Jesus take on a significance completely different from that of the speeches put into the mouths of his characters by the ordinary Greek historian. John knows that they are interpretations of the essentials of Christianity rather than *ipsissima verba* of the historic Jesus; but they have come to him through direct inspiration from the risen Christ Himself. That is why he insists "The Spirit shall lead you into all truth." John knows quite well that his theology is a development of the original Apostolic teaching, but it is a development directly inspired by the Spirit. It is Christ Himself, speaking "in the Spirit," who says "I have many things to tell you but ye cannot bear them now." It is thus He fulfils the promise, "The Paraclete, when he cometh, he shall take of mine, he shall glorify me." "Glorify me" can only mean "lead you to perceive the truth that I am the Incarnation of the Word." John had reached this conclusion; but he believed that he had reached it, not by his own intellectual efforts, but by direct revelation of the Spirit of Jesus.

The author of the Gospel claims his interpreration of the Person and Work of Christ is a revelation of the Spirit. That claim must be set side by side with that of the Old Testament prophets that their message was in the same way derived direct from God. . . . . In this place, all I desire to emphasise is that the discourses of the Fourth Gospel and the prophetic writings of the Old Testament cannot be considered apart from one another. There is food for reflection in the fact that the original starting-point of the movement towards ethical monotheism in the Old Testament, and also the most complete expression reached in the New of the idea that in Christ God is in man made manifest, both ultimately derive from a conviction of direct inspiration, which to prophet or evangelist himself did not appear to be an open question. . . . .

Creative Memory

And the personality reflected is not that of a man likely to copy painfully other men's writings. Every scene he depicts, every discourse he relates—whencesoever originally derived—is the distilled essence of something that has been pondered upon and lived out in actual life until it has become of the very texture of his soul. But the subconscious depths of the human mind are never inactive, least of all so where thoughts or incidents fraught with passionate interest are concerned. Things disconnected are brought together, things dark become illuminated. Given also a mystic with the creative imagination of the artist—and no one without the artist's mind could have drawn the word pictures of the Fourth Gospel—old scenes will be

flashed up into recollection, with new but vivid details embodying the altered emphasis caused by later meditation on the meaning of the original experience.

We must also remember that the stories told by John are avowedly selected to illustrate certain fundamental religious principles. The presumption is a strong one that he has given us the selection which he had found most effective for that purpose, and had already used time after time in discussions with individuals or in addresses to the Church. But whenever anyone tells and retells the same story to illustrate some special point—whether the point be a jest, a trait of character of some well-known individual, the magnificance of an exploit, or the enormity of a crime—quite insensibly minor details of the story get modified so as to throw into greater emphasis the main point. The subconscious mind is more primitive than the conscious; it thinks in pictures; it dramatises; thus every time a story is told, it is told more effectively. But that is always at the expense of the minor accuracy which a cross-examining counsel demands of a witness, and which a historical critic ought to be aware cannot often be expected in an ancient document. Indeed, it is only in modern times, and under the influence of the demand for meticulous accuracy which modern science and its methods have made insistent, that people have begun to trouble at all about minutiae of description, so long as these do not seriously affect the general impression. An illustration of this relative indifference to minor details can be found in the Acts. The Conversion of Paul is described no less than three times in that book. The second and third occasions occur in speeches of Paul separated by only three chapters, and the context shows that the difference cannot be explained by the theory that the author is combining two parallel sources. Yet the exact details as to what was seen and heard, and how much of it was experienced by Paul only, and how much by his companions as well, is differently related in each of the three accounts.

That tendency in John, to which attention is so often called, towards an enhancement of detail in the miracle stories he records is to be accounted for in this way. He writes, not with the written document in front of him, but from the vivid reconstruction of the scene as, at the moment of writing, it stood out before his own mind's eye. . . . .

Fact and Symbol

To most of the mystics symbolism in one form or another appeals. But from the first century A.D. till well after the Renaissance the peculiar form of symbolism known as Allegory had an attraction for some of the finest minds with which it is difficult for the present age to sympathise. Much has been made by recent scholarship of the idea that the author of the Fourth Gospel was one of them. I quote again from the article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* by Baron F. von Hügel:

> Philo had in his life of Moses allegorised the Pentateuchal narratives so as to represent him as mediator, saviour, intercessor of his people, the one great organ of revelation, and the soul's guide from the false lower world into the upper true one. The Fourth Gospel is the noblest instance of this kind of literature, of which the truth

depends, not on the factual accuracy of the symbolising appearances, but on the truth of the ideas and experiences thus symbolised.

I hesitate to differ from so high an authority on such a point. Full allowance must, I concede, be made for the influence on John's mind of a strain so powerful in contemporary religious thought. The desire to find in events an allegorical expression of spiritual reality would inevitably act as a moulding influence on those imaginative pictures in which the memories are stored. Since memory is essentially interpretative, such a desire might easily determine the character and direction of the modification the mental picture of events would undergo. But the suggestion that John consciously and deliberately composed stories for the sake of their allegorical meaning seems to me to go too far. Such a proceeding on his part would, so it seems to me, be incompatible with the objects which he had in view, so far as we can estimate these by what we know of the circumstances and special needs of the Church of his day.

The Church in Ephesus, and indeed the Church throughout the world at the end of the first century A.D., was fighting a battle on two fronts. On the one side there was the impingement of Gnosticism from without, with the even more dangerous drift towards a gnosticising Christianity within. This threatened to undermine both the monotheism and the ethical soundness of the Hebrew and Apostolic religious tradition, and to substitute a vague mysticism, based upon speculations about complicated series of graded divinities, along with a belief in the inherent evil of matter. This tendency was accompanied by an insistence either that Christ was not really human—the Body which men saw in Palestine being merely an appearance—or that the Divine Christ was a separate Being from the man Jesus. On the other side was the conservative Jewish party, ethically sound and firmly monotheistic, but conceiving of the Person of Christ and His relation both to God and man in terms derived from Jewish eschatology—a native form of "picture-thinking" which must somehow be transcended if Christianity was to mean anything to the average Greek. The Gospel of Matthew stereotypes this phase of Christian theology, or rather the more progressive wing of it, at the stage which it had reached in Antioch about A.D. 85. The Apocryphal Gospel of Peter, the surviving fragment of which describes how the Divine Christ went back to Heaven leaving the human Jesus to die upon the Cross, represents the more conservative wing of the Gnostic tendency.

John saw clearly that the salvation of the Church lay in a *via media* between these two tendencies, in the position which he summed up in the idea of the Word made flesh. Christ was truly, really, and completely man; but in Him is incarnate the "Word of God." To John the Word means, roughly speaking, what a modern thinker would speak of as Divinity considered as immanent—that which is really God, not a subordinate emanation from God. But of the two tendencies John is combating, much the more alarming was that which came from the Gnostic; for the *Zeitgeist* was on that side. Orthodox Christians are so preoccupied nowadays in asserting the Divinity of Christ that it is easy to overlook the fact that in the early

Gentile Church, especially in Asia, it was the reality of His Humanity that most needed emphasis. The age was obsessed by the problem of evil, and the Gnostic solution, that evil arose because matter is essentially and eternally bad, necessitated the rejection of the belief that Divinity could possibly have worn a real body of material flesh and blood. That is why, while John dwells far more than the Synoptists on the miraculous power of Christ and the all-seeing intelligence that knows all without needing to ask questions or await information—the evidence of Divinity—he also, to an extent unparalleled in the Synoptics, emphasises the susceptibility of Christ to purely physical and simple human experience. John alone records that Jesus was wearied with a journey (iv. 6), wept for a friend (xi. 35), and in the agony of death could say "I thirst."

Does it not follow that to the mind of a philosophic mystic of that epoch a "mediating theology" would involve a double attitude towards the historical facts of the life of Christ?

On the one hand, seeing that every action of the historic Jesus is an expression in time of the Universal Divine, it is much more than a mere historical event. The visible fact must necessarily in every case be a symbolic expression of an invisible spiritual principle. If a multitude is fed with loaves and fishes, this is not a mere event which once happened by the Lake of Galilee, it is also symbolically the expression in time of the eternal verity that man attains to the Life Divine by feeding spiritually upon Christ the Bread of Life. If Lazarus rises from the tomb, this is not merely a wonderful miracle wrought on an individual, it is also an individualised instance of the universal principle that the Immanent Divinity revealed in Christ is eternally the Resurrection and the Life of Man.

On the other hand, from the logic of his position, John is no less bound to emphasise the idea that, because the Word *became flesh*, therefore these things *factually* occurred. To the Gnostic this world of fact was alien to the spiritual; it was a world in which the Ultimate Divine had no part. John affirms that the Word in becoming flesh demonstrated that this world of concrete fact was the expression of, and was in control of, the same world-creating Spirit that appeared as a Redeemer in Jesus Christ. It would seem to follow that John could not, consistently with his purpose, have recorded as history any incident which he did not himself believe to have actually occurred.

History to all the ancients, except perhaps Thucydides and Polybius, was a branch, not of science, but of letters. Effective presentation was more valued than accuracy of detail. There is hardly a battle in Livy described in a way which would work out correctly on the actual ground—and yet war was the "leading industry" of Rome. About minor details no one in those days troubled; what was asked for was the broad facts graphically described. And so far as the broad facts are concerned I think one must affirm that John recorded nothing which he did not believe to be historical. It does not follow that his belief was always justified. He records four stupendous miracles—the Feeding of the Five Thousand, the Walking on the Water, the Changing of Water into Wine, and the Raising of Lazarus. The diffi-

culties to the modern mind of supposing that such events happened exactly and in all particulars as they are described by the Evangelist is a point that needs no elaboration. All I would insist on is that, from the point of view of intrinsic credibility, all four stories stand upon exactly the same level. But two of them could have been derived by John from Mark, a work accepted in the Church at the time he wrote as an unimpeachable historical authority. The obvious presumption, then, is that he derived the other two from an authority which, whether mistakenly or otherwise, he regarded as no less authentic.

Some eminent critics hold that the raising of Lazarus in John has been developed out of the concluding sentence in Luke's parable of Dives and Lazarus. This suggestion is one which has never seemed to me particularly plausible. It will at least be conceded that, on the surface, the two stories and the morals drawn from them are very different. But even if it be granted that a sentence in the parable is the germ out of which the story of the miracle has grown, it is surely psychologically far easier to suppose that the growth had already taken place during an intermediate stage of oral tradition, rather than that the transformation was effected through a conscious manipulation by John of the written text of Luke.

To sum up, John may have been mistaken about his facts, but to him it is as important to emphasise the historical as to see in the historical a symbol of the Eternal. But he was interested in these stories, not so much because they were marvellous, as because they seemed to him to embody eternal truth. To him fact and meaning are related as flesh to spirit—the flesh is a necessary vehicle, but it is spirit which really counts. The familiar observation that in John the miracles are "acted parables" is absolutely correct; only it does not go far enough. To John the whole of the appearance in history of the Word made Flesh is an acted parable—including the Death and Resurrection. That being so, it is essential surely to his whole theological position, whether against the Docetic Gnostics, who denied the reality of Christ's human body, or against the passionless Christ of Cerinthus, to affirm that the parable *really was acted out* in the plane of material existence in this world of fact.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN SYNTHESIS

Mary R. Ely Lyman

WE HAVE SEEN that the New Testament literature arose in a spontaneous fashion—gospel, chronicle, epistle, homily, and apocalypse, each having its peculiar need to fulfill, and each responding to some conditions in the community life which called it forth. Often these needs were conditioned by the special localities in which the writings arose, and the books were thus an expression of the meaning of the Christian gospel for that place and time. That they had universal significance as well as one which was local and occasional needs no defense, for they have been read by generation after generation for nineteen hundred years, and there is no speech, no language, where their voice is not heard. But they were not intended by their writers as scripture for the ages.

The book of Revelation affords illustration of this fact. It was directed toward a particular need, the situation of persecution in Asia Minor under Domitian. It was intended to show the Christians how they ought to conduct themselves in relation to the demand for participation in Emperor-worship. Much of the book is so conditioned by this special time and place that it is not understandable without the key of the historical situation to unlock its cryptic sayings. Nevertheless, it has its meaning for a world beyond that of Asia Minor in the first century. Wherever men are called to suffer for righteousness' sake, they take courage and inspiration from its summons, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." Wherever men see through religion new vistas of opportunity and promise, they echo its words, "Behold I have set before thee a door opened which no man can shut." In the deep experiences of life men are lifted to courage by its picture of those who have come out of great tribulation, from whose eyes God shall wipe away every tear.

So it is also with the little book of James. It had its purpose for its own time, which was probably near the close of the first century. It was a protest against the overemphasis on faith at the expense of the ethical side of religion. Perhaps some who were admirers of Paul had carried too far his principle of faith as central to Christianity, and this author was concerned to show that "faith apart from works is dead." Although this discussion belonged to a special situation which is not duplicated in our world to-day, and which we do not expect to find duplicated, still the insight of the writer of this little sermon was such that he challenges us to-day by his classic description of the difficulty of being in full control of what we say, and by his noteworthy definition of ethical religion.

From *The Fourth Gospel and the Life of To-Day*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1931, pp. 70-82. Reprinted by permission of the author.

The first three Gospels also had come into being in response to local and occasional needs. We have seen that the death of Peter was probably the immediate stimulus to the writing of Mark, and that this first Gospel challenged other people to write for their own localities something similar to Mark, but more adequate for the communities that they knew. And again it is the inherent values of the writings themselves, rather than the intent of the authors that has given them their universal appeal. The Gospels have become the record of Jesus' life for all time and for all places. Their appeal is bounded by no geographical or temporal limits, but it is probable that their authors would have been greatly surprised if they had been told that their works woud have such a place in human history.

In certain respects the intent of the Fourth Gospel parallels this situation which we have just been describing, but in certain respects it differs. There are some aims apparent in the writing of the Gospel that show that it was directed to meet the given situation in Ephesus at the beginning of the second century. But there are other indications that the author thought of his work as having a meaning beyond that time and place. Inferences about the immediate situation for which he wrote may be drawn from several emphases of his thought. For example, he is at pains to show that John the Baptist was only the forerunner of Jesus, not himself the Messiah. "He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light." In bearing witness to Jesus, John the Baptist is here shown as quite explicit about his own relationship to Jesus: "This is he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me." And when the question of his status is raised by his disciples, the Baptizer announces unequivocally: "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him." And finally he affirms, "He must increase but I must decrease." It is hard to account for such a heavy stress on the subordinate position of John, except in order to meet just the situation that we know prevailed in Ephesus, where some "knew only the baptism of John."

A second motive for the writing of the Gospel that we can trace as having direct relation to the immediate situation is the desire to show the genuine humanity of Jesus. The author wants his readers to be sure that Jesus' life was real, and not as the Docetists would say, only a seeming. In affirming that Jesus was the Logos, he guarded himself against making him a mere abstraction by his surprising statement, "The Word became flesh." Jesus' thirst on the cross, the noting of blood and water pouring out when the soldiers pierced his side, and the tactual evidence presented to Thomas to convince him of Jesus' resurrection all testify to the fact that there was a question here in the community for which the Gospel was being written. There were people who said that Jesus did not actually live a human life, that he did not actually suffer, and that his participation in the things of this earth was only a seeming and not a reality. For this group in the community, the Fourth Gospel took care to show the true humanity of Jesus.

Again, the author of the Gospel feels called upon to deal with the hostility of the Jews to the Christian movement. This was something that belonged to the world of the writer's experience rather than to the time

of Jesus. True, there was opposition to Jesus from the scribes and Pharisees in Palestine, but the issues which rise between them are those of conduct, of the relation of Jesus and his followers to the Jewish Law. In the Fourth Gospel the issues are those that arise about the personality of Jesus, whether he was actually the Christ or not, what his relation was to the Father and to Abraham, and how it was possible for him to fulfill the claims that he made about himself. "The Jews, therefore, murmured concerning him, because he said, I am the bread which came down out of heaven," says this Gospel, and the question reveals itself even more fully as belonging to the Church and the Synagogue rather than to Jesus and the Pharisees, when in a later verse it appears as: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Here is the explanation for that surprising detachment from the actual situation that allowed the author of the Fourth Gospel to speak of Jesus' opponents under the inclusive caption "the Jews," when all who surrounded him actually were Jews, and his disciples, his followers, his friends, and family, not to say himself. This author lived in the midst of Gentile society where the Church was commending itself to Gentiles, and one of its greatest problems was the opposition to it that came from the Synagogue. As he phrases the Gospel for this situation, he thinks of Jesus as dealing with some of these questions, and probably unconscious of anachronism, transfers the problems of his own time to that of Jesus and thinks of Jesus as speaking upon them.

In close relation to this purpose of meeting the hostility of the Jews to Christianity, is the writer's desire to give such attestation to the mission of Jesus that even those who questioned most should see the validity of his claims. In this Gospel Jesus is shown as calling upon Old Testament Scripture, upon his own words, upon his miracles, upon John the Baptist, and upon the Father to confirm his claims to belief.

> Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness unto the truth. . . . . But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father that sent me, he hath borne witness of me.

And speaking of the Scriptures, he says: "These are they which bear witness of me." These appeals to the testimony that can be assembled to show that Jesus was what he claimed to be belong to the age in which the Gospel was being written, rather than to the age in which Jesus lived, and they too show the motivation of the Gospel for its own time.

In these ways which we have just noted we can see that the Fourth Gospel had, as the other writings of the New Testament had, a definite motivation for its own time. It was really dealing with some of the problems and controversies that belonged to the Christian society in the Gentile world at the beginning of the second century. But perhaps in a way that is peculiar to itself among the New Testament writings, it had also a purpose to show the permanent and abiding significance of Jesus. It was not merely a chronicle of the earthly life of Jesus that this author wanted to write. He yearned to show to the people of his time the eternal meaning of such a life,

of such an embodiment of the love and purpose of God. As Professor Kenneth Saunders has put it, the writer had "brooded long and lovingly" [1] upon the experience of God that was possible through Jesus, and his work was designed to show how always men could find God through him.

In setting forth this permanent significance of the life of Jesus, the author of the Gospel has turned to many phases of experience. He finds Jesus meaningful in the world of thought as the eternal Logos or Word of God. He finds him quickening in the realm of feeling in the mystical aspect of religion. He discovers that he has significance in the world of fact and history, as a person who lived the life of God in the midst of time. He is confident also that there are values for the ethical life of mankind in Jesus, in his teaching about love as the basic law of life. These values that he sees in Jesus are not simply for the time and place that surround him, but are for all time. The experience of Jesus is indeed to be a progressive experience enlarging as time goes on. "When the spirit of truth is come," he is to guide them into all truth. There are many things to be said, but they cannot bear them now. They are to do greater works in the future than it is possible to do now. The enlarging life of the Church is in the view of the author as he writes, and it seems clear that he thinks of his interpretation of Jesus as one that points out the values which will be permanent and abiding in it.

And so while the Fourth Gospel has its particular message for its own time, its special attention to the controversies and interests of the Church in its own community, it has more than any other writing of the New Testament its face turned toward the future with the hope of stating the "good news" about Jesus in such a way as to show his enduring meaning. And as the writer found Jesus meaningful in all phases of his own life, so he thought of this manifold significance in the life of the Church. He interpreted Jesus in relation to the world of thought, of feeling, and of ethics, and the Gospel became in this way an actual synthesis of mystical, philosophical, and ethical religion, the first blending, indeed, in a literary work, in the development of Christianity, of these different aspects of religion.

This is not to say that the author of the Fourth Gospel set out in a deliberate and formal way to make a synthesis of the various types of religious experience and thought, which it was important to include if Christianity were to develop satisfactorily as a world religion. Nothing could be farther from the case. More than anything else this Gospel reveals itself as a work of spontaneity. Like the song of Shelley's skylark it comes forth from a full heart "in strains of unpremeditated art." It is a work of exaltation and of exultation, the product of rare and sublime genius. A deep personal experience of religion lies back of it, and only as the expression of such an experience can it be rightly understood. But in that sense of oneness with God which had come to the author through Jesus, there was something that satisfied the intellectual demands of his nature, something that was quickening of those deep feelings that are basic to religion, and something that

[1] *The Gospel for Asia*, p. 12.

challenged him to live nobly and fulfill the law of love in relationships with his brothers in Christ, and all three of these aspects of the experience had to find a place in his story of it.

It is after all an unusual mingling of purposefulness for the future and of unstudied art that we find here. One must not fall into the error of supposing that we can fully analyze at this date the personal experience that went into the making of this Gospel. Its germination in thought, its development into the conscious expression of the written word, the full flower of its poetry and symbolism will always remain, for the most part at least, a hidden mystery, as little understood by us as the mysterious processes of life in the natural world. So is it with any work of genius. But so far as we can penetrate into the intention of the writer by scrutiny of his work, it would seem that he had a vision of the future life of the Church and was eager to state the permanent significance of Jesus for that expanding life—that this was his major purpose and motive. But as he wrote, many of the problems of his immediate environment pressed upon him and he directed himself to the answering of those questions as he went along. And as both these interests were being served, he brought together the various strands of his own experience of Jesus, the religion of mind, heart, and action that he had entered into through Jesus, and produced in his writing, probably quite unconscious of its being such, the first Christian synthesis—a Christianity that had a theology, a mystical religious experience, and a principle for the practical handling of life. This was the task, and this the achievement of the Fourth Gospel.

Part III

JESUS' RELATIONSHIP TO HISTORY

THE HISTORICAL EXISTENCE OF JESUS

Charles Guignebert

I

The Problem

The poverty and uncertainty of our information about Jesus long ago gave rise to the question, of first importance to us here, whether this person, of whom we know practically nothing, ever really existed, or whether that which claims to be the record of his life is anything more than a tissue of myths, allegories, and symbols. The controversy was started at the end of the eighteenth century by some of the French *philosophes*, notably Dupuis and Volney, and has continued ever since, alternately raging furiously and lapsing into periods of quiescence. It is evident that if the personality and influence of Jesus disappear from history, the birth of Christianity has still to be explained, and it is to this task that those who deny his historicity have applied themselves, with a confidence only equalled by the variety of their theories and the flimsiness of their arguments. . . . .

II

The Mythological Explanation of the Christian Movement

It remains only to explain the origin of the Christian movement and the gospel legend itself, and to this each of the radicals applies himself in his own way, according to his own system. Jensen, for instance, sees in the gospel figure of Jesus an adaptation of the saviour hero Gilgamesh of the Babylonian epic, and since the legend of Gilgamesh represents a solar myth, the Jesus of the gospel becomes the sun surrounded by the twelve signs of the Zodiac, personified by the Apostles. Our Assyriologist takes enormous—and incidentally, quite futile—pains to fit into his general contentions all the details of the gospel story.

Kalthoff, again, maintains that Christ was not a man, but the personification of a social movement. This movement was Roman in origin, due to the fact that the social organization of the Empire had created a wretched and turbulent proletariat, but Jewish in form, because the Messianic conception of the Jews, once "denationalized" and universalized, lent itself readily to exploitation by the outcasts of society, and also because the police and military organization of the imperial government made any direct uprising of the lower classes impossible. The reason that the four Gospels differ is because they represent different trends in the great social upheaval out of which they arose. Their unity consists in the fact that their combined accounts give us

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From *Jesus*, London and New York, 1935, pp. 63-75. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd.

the total process by which the Church was established; their variety comes from the fact that the four authors did not all witness the same phase of the movement which brought it into being. Their Palestinian appearance is only a mask; they are in reality Roman products. The Christians of the first Century mirrored their own life of trials, and embodied their own ideal, in this picture of Christ. It was made in their own image, and, once it had passed from the status of fiction to that of accepted fact, it became their guide and pattern.

Robertson believes that Jesus was the hero of a sacred drama which was performed in the secret circle of a company of initiates of Jewish origin, and represented the story of a god sacrificed by his father for the salvation of men. In primitive times the drama may have culminated in the real sacrifice of a man playing the part of the god. At the time when the Gospels were written it ended in a ritual feast at which the faithful were supposed to eat the god, symbolized by the consecrated bread and wine, for the purpose of assimilating his substance and becoming one with him. It was, in short, a syncretistic cult for which the Mysteries of Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, Attis, Dionysus-Zagreus and Heracles furnished the models and the main features. The movement from which this cult sprang originated in Israel, at least a century before the beginning of the Christian era, in the lower classes of society, amongst people who were hostile to Pharisaic Judaism and who were called "the poor" (*ebionim*). One of the sects of *ebionim*, that of the Nazarenes, transported its god to Greek soil, and there he flourished. This god was, in fact, no other than Joshua, an ancient divinity of the tribe of Ephraim, who had brought his people into the Promised Land, and who, under his new name of Jesus, was to open the Kingdom of God to his followers. He symbolizes the triumphant progress of the sun. The Gospels are, accordingly, propaganda intended to systematize and to give a basis of probability to the legend operative in the sacred drama of the sect, to bring it into conformity with the mythological conventions of the age.

Another critic, B. Smith, sums up the matter as follows. Jesus the Nazarene is the special god of the syncretistic and "occult" Jewish sect of the Nazarenes, or Nazoreans, who, more than a century before the time of the supposed birth of Jesus Christ, worshipped a divine Liberator, Guardian, and Saviour, or, preferably, worshipped Jahweh under that special aspect, since Jeshuah is Jahweh the Saviour. The whole gospel narrative is the concrete development of symbols and myths according to well-known processes. This pre-Christian cult of Jesus was spread by preachers, of whom Paul is the perfect type, and whose activities the Book of Acts depicts. The basis of the gospel story was probably drawn (Drews) from the Oriental Mysteries, and crystallized around the myth of the young god who dies and rises again as Saviour and exemplar of his worshippers. Primitive Christianity is thus to be explained as a vast syncretism, in which were combined the solar myths of India and Persia, the Messianic hopes of Iran and Israel, the Greek mystery cults of a divine mediator, and numerous practices from various sources. The origin of the story of an earthly existence of the god is to be found in the pretensions of the Judaeo-Christians of Jerusalem. In their desire to humble

Paul, they pretended that the Saviour had lived amongst them, that they had known him *in the flesh,* and were possessed, on that account, of an indisputable superiority.

Various other systems have been advanced, all based on the same ideas and composed of practically the same elements. The most general conclusion, in which almost all concur, may be stated as follows: *The Jesus of the Gospels is only a mythological figure, created, in one or more of the syncretistic Jewish sects, prior to the Christian era.* M. Couchoud distinguishes himself by seeking his explanation, not in mere myth, but in a spiritual movement and a religious conception actually operative in Israel. On his view, Jesus is only one aspect of Jahweh—for his name means Jahweh the Helper or the Saviour—an aspect which had previously been neglected or unrealized in his worship, and of which Jewish religious feeling, or one section of it, finally became conscious. The type of Saviour depicted was modelled on recollections of the Scriptures, and is, properly understood, only an interpretation of the famous fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, wherein are described the trials of the Servant of Jahweh. This chapter is, in fact, the epitome of Christianity and the original source of the life of Jesus. The source of the Passion is to be found in the account of the trial of Stephen in the seventh chapter of Acts.

III

Criticism of the Mythological Theories

Learned and ingenious though many of them are, the mythological theories have not succeeded in gaining the adherence of any of those independent and disinterested scholars who are always open to conviction by established facts, and whose support would have been of real significance. This is a failure for which the enthusiastic reception of those unqualified to judge hardly compensates.

Jensen's theory reveals itself on first examination as the colossal aberration of a specialist obsessed by the desire to explain everything in terms of his own particular preoccupation. Actually, the most characteristic features of the traditional life of Jesus—the passion, the crucifixion, and the resurrection—are not found in the epic of Gilgamesh, and conversely, the most prominent incidents of that poem do not appear in the gospel narrative.

The theories of Kalthoff have a sociological cast which renders them at first more attractive. But all the details of the popular movements, the social unrest, of the Empire of the first century, on which the author depends, are in reality, purely hypothetical. He has no proof that the Roman proletariat was affected by Jewish apocalyptic beliefs. It is merely assumed by him on the strength of the idea that both tend to communism—a belief which itself needs proving, especially in the case of Jewish Messianism, of which we have no reason whatever to suppose that one of its fundamental features was the hope of an economic revolution. The theory of the substantial creation in Italy of the gospel narrative seems an untenable paradox, and Kalthoff himself makes a poor show of defending it. Finally, there is the question how a social movement of revolutionary trend could have given rise to a religion of resignation, and by what precise process the Christian com-

munity came to make the projection, personification, and deification of itself.

Robertson, Benjamin Smith and Drews accept the existence of pre-Christian, syncretistic, Jewish sects, an essential feature of whose cult was the worship of a sacrificed god called Jesus, who was the Saviour, Mediator, and Protector of his people. That such sects did exist is probably true, but unfortunately we know nothing of their cult, and if we may regard it as probable that it centered around the Messiah (Greek, *Christos*) expected by the Jews, we have no grounds whatever for believing that it gave him the name of Jesus. Similarly there is no documentary evidence for the belief that Joshua whatever may have been his original character, was still regarded as a god at the beginning of the Christian era, and, consequently, no foundation for the statement that Jesus is simply a continuation of Joshua.

M. Couchoud, in deriving the Christian movement from a vision of Simon Peter, only substitutes the riddle of Cephas for that of Jesus, for if we know hardly anything about the carpenter, we know nothing at all about the fisherman up to the moment of his appearance in the synoptic narrative. His claim that the most ancient form of the religion of Jesus is that of Paul, sounds, to a critic who has spent his life in the study of the Epistles, like a somewhat laboured attempt at humour. For the supreme influence of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah on the story of the Passion, there is simply no evidence. It is surely significant that Mark, who makes considerable use of the Scriptures, does not appear to attach any particular importance to the ancient prophet, and makes no citation whatever of the crucial passage, the famous fifty-third chapter. Even Matthew, who is so anxious to point out every instance of the fulfillment of a scriptural text, makes no reference to the chapter. The truth is, that at the beginning of the Christian era Isaiah liii was not regarded as of Messianic significance. It was the Christians, later on, who found in it the means of amplifying their meagre tradition regarding the Passion of the Lord.

When we consider the mythological theories as a whole, problems start up on all sides. If Jesus was a god, how was it that the Christians, even Paul himself, did not regard him as one, and why this parody of humanity with which they unanimously clothe their myth? The answer of Drews to this question is not satisfactory, for even if the people at Jerusalem had invented the earthly life of the Lord to give themselves an advantage over Paul, why should he have apparently agreed with them? Moreover, the Christianity of the gospel is not an independent religion; it worships the god of Israel. Why, then, should it have created for itself another divinity, and then proceeded to conceal him, for he never appears as such? If the god Jesus is an aspect of Jahweh, why is this great truth never even hinted at? It is suggested, that we are in the presence of a Mystery, in which secrecy is the rule. But the god of the Christian cult dies openly, at the hands of the Roman authorities, after a public trial; this has nothing in common with a Mystery, or anything like it. If the legend of the god is purely imaginary, divorced from all foundation in fact, it is strange that it should have been left so full of gaps and inconsistencies, that it should have been encumbered

with the details of a common human existence, which serve no useful purpose, and are even rather shocking. Why take the trouble to speak of the brothers and sisters of the god, and even to give their names (Mark vi. 3)? Why represent his family as believing him "beside himself" (Mark iii. 21)? Why show him exhibiting anger and grief, and weeping over himself and others? Why cause him to reject the designation of himself as good (Mark x. 18), and to proclaim that God alone is good? Why should he, who has come down to proclaim and to bring about salvation, declare that he does not know when the great day, his own day, from the Pauline point of view, will come (Mark xiii. 3, 2)? And why is his last cry, at the very moment of his consummation of the divine mystery (Mark xv. 34), one of despair ("my God, why has thou forsaken me?")? To explain all this as an attempt at *verisimilitude*, is surely to attribute an incredible amount of method and consistency to men who are, in other respects, so conspicuously lacking in either. How are we to reconcile this with so much vagueness and ambiguity in the teaching, so that even today the exact meaning is sometimes doubtful? Above all, why did those who created the myth, place the hero of it in their own time, instead of, in accordance with the universal practice of religions, seeking to avail themselves of the enormous prestige of antiquity?

It would be only too easy to prolong the list of such questions, to none of which can those who deny the existence of Jesus give any satisfactory answer. If the figure of Jesus had really been a deliberate and intentional creation of the Gospel writers, they would naturally have been supremely interested in him. But we have only to read the Gospels to see at once that, as a matter of fact, they are not interested in him at all. That is precisely why their quasibiography of him is so inadequate. The truth is that this man, this Jesus, is already, in their eyes, Christ, the god. His humanity is something thrust upon them, which they have to make the best of. Their narrative is composed of mythical variations on the facts of an actual existence, which hampers them, and which they would never have imposed upon themselves. The Jews were in a position to know the truth, and were restrained by no scruples in their polemic against the Christians regarding the person of Christ. Had there been any possibility of denying his existence, we may be sure they would have seized upon so conclusive a retort. But while the Talmud attempts to disparage Jesus, it never denies his reality.

The best witness of the historical existence of Jesus is, paradoxically, Paul, the alleged mainstay of the mythological view. Undoubtedly his Christ is a divine being. We may even grant, though it is straining the term, that he is a god. But *he is a god who has been a man*, or Paulinism is unintelligible. For the mystery preached by the Apostle to have any meaning, the Lord must have been a mortal man, for the sham crucifixion of a god, the unreal death of a supernatural being, is quite incompatible with the realism of the Pauline teaching. Moreover Paul states definitely that in the flesh—and he is confident that he might have known him *in the flesh*—the Lord sprang from the race of David, that he was born of a woman, became subject to the Law, and voluntarily, in obedience to God, assumed human form, and submitted himself to a human life of suffering, culminating in the death of the

cross. It is unquestionable that Paul regards him as a man, a human being capable of death and pain, for without that he cannot become the vicarious sacrifice necessary for the salvation of the world. The fact that Paul declares that the Lord was "in flesh a man born of woman," seems of itself proof enough, but the comparison of two passages in the Epistle to the Corinthians appears to put the matter beyond all possible doubt. In the first (2 Cor. v. 16) the Apostle emphasizes the necessity of living ἐν Χριστῷ, *in the risen Christ,* and declares that he is now determined to know no other Christ, even though he had known Christ formerly *in the flesh,* that is to say, as Jesus, in his life upon earth. In other words, the divine Lord, glorified after having accomplished his work of salvation, is all that matters in the Pauline mystery, in spite of the men who set themselves up as authorities on the strength of having known Jesus in life, and who have tried to claim precedence over Paul on that account. That is why he asserts (1 Cor. ix. 1) that *he, too, has seen the Lord,* not in the flesh like the people at Jerusalem, but *in the realm of the spirit, by the divine grace which would exalt his* lowly status as an apostle. The desire to establish by means of this glorious compensation, the dignity of his mission against the prestige of the Twelve, proves conclusively, in the opinion of the writer, that Paul of Tarsus implicitly believed that Jesus had really lived.

It is no answer to this to say that Paul's attribution of humanity to Christ is merely ideal, a symbol demanded by his soteriological scheme. A hypothetical interpretation of that kind has no weight against a precise passage which is perfectly clear in itself—still less against a whole collection of such passages. Moreover, it is difficult to see what object men who lived in a perpetual confusion between the mythical and the real could have, in making a god into a man. As an attempt to give probability to a legend, it might be a comprehensible proceeding on the part of some mythologist of our own time, but in the case of a mystic, or even of an initiate of the first century, that explanation is absurd. To make a man into a god is, on the other hand, a characteristic step in ancient religions. It is asserted by Couchoud that such a thing is inconceivable among the Jews. This is, perhaps, not strictly true, since at the very same period Simon the Samaritan was calling himself " the Great Power of God," and had obtained a following. But in any case, the Pauline metamorphosis that transformed Jesus Christ into the Lord before whom every creature bows the knee (Phil. ii. 10) did not take place on Jewish, but on Greek soil, in the atmosphere of the salvation Mysteries and of syncretism. In the world of Palestine, in the bosom of Jewish orthodoxy, only a madman could have conceived the incarnation of the Spirit of God, and such an idea would have been received with the utmost horror and indignation.

The inevitable transmutation of the original tradition into a myth took place by several stages. First *the Messianic idea* was developed in the Jewish communities by grouping all the supposedly Messianic passages of the Scriptures around the figure of the man who had come to be ragarded as the Messiah, and embodying them in events of his life. Then when it reached Greek soil, the tradition took over the conception of the *Soter,* in order to

assimilate the picture of Jesus to the generally recognized characteristics of the role of the *Soter*. Our Synoptics are still in the first stage. Paul belongs wholly to the second. John and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews represent a more advanced development of the same phase. The transformation of Jesus into the Saviour no more excludes his human existence than his transformation into the Messiah. In fact, it is true to say that neither of them is historically conceivable without that existence.

Christian propaganda created, developed, and elaborated a Christ myth at the expense of Jesus. But it did not invent Jesus himself, and it was Jesus himself who was in some way the inspiration of its faith in him.

Those who surrender to the heady delights of theory-building may possibly see things in a different light, but this is the view that emerges when we regard the facts soberly in their historical setting, respecting the unconscious evidence of the documents, and making no attempt to extort from them findings conformable to our own desires.

JESUS AND THE PROBLEM OF HISTORY

Chester Charlton McCown

. . . . THE PROGRESS WHICH historical studies and the criticism of the Gospel records have made in a hundred years should have produced far more positive and generally accepted results. One of the chief reasons for the failure, as disclosed by this survey, so it appears to me, is not that historical methods of criticizing and evaluating documents are at fault, or that the Gospels, as source materials, have not been critically treated; the fundamental difficulty is philosophical, just as it was a hundred years ago. Partly because of ecclesiastical dogmas, partly because of the pride of "science," partly because of philosophical theories, partly because of intrinsic difficulties, there is no accepted philosophy of history. Indeed, until recently, historians of all kinds, with a few exceptions, have been working at their documents without any adequate integrating conception of history about which to gather their results, but with a comforting and deceptive pride in the "presuppositionless," scientific methods. All that they had was an indefinite, blind but optimistic trust in progress. What philosophies of history were available have been idealistic, derived from antiquated Hegelianism. Students of the life of Jesus, being usually theologians, have treated him as a theological, not a historical problem. Consequently the place of Jesus in history has not been adequately discussed. Schweitzer showed how the problem of Jesus' death had been theologically, but not historically considered. So also the problem of his life, of Jesus as a historical character, not his influence or the influence of Christianity in history, nor the work of the "exalted Christ," but the philosophical question of Jesus' relation to the stream of human experience, has been neglected.

The popular, "orthodox" conception of history and of Jesus' place in it has been well phrased by Walter Lippmann as a belief that "there is a drama in progress of which the principal event was enacted in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago." He had every right to add that "modern emancipated man" wonders how he ever believed that such an insignificant event had any considerable part in the tremendous drama that is playing on the stage of "this universe of stars and atoms and multitudinous life." [1]

Why should "modern emancipated man" not be skeptical? The drama and the stage have both been enlarged into the immeasurable. Obviously the "chief event," as conceived in prescientific ages, is no longer commensurate. "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained" cannot serve the religious needs of modern man. Lippman was right when he followed the late Fundamentalist,

[1] *A Preface to Morals*, New York: Macmillan, 1929, p. 8.

From *The Search for the Real Jesus*, New York, 1940, pp. 288-309. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

J. Gresham Machen, in insisting that Christianity demands a historical Jesus. He was wrong in implying that the traditional, Fundamentalist construction of the drama and conception of its principal character were the only possibilities.

The old "drama" actually was christology, and the new cannot avoid being that also. To make Jesus partly or wholly suprahistorical and to make him historical are equally christological formulations. As Paul Tillich has said, "History and Christology belong together as question and answer." Here no attempt at a complete survey of recent attempts to determine Jesus' place in history is possible. However, it ought to be allowed that only historical evaluations of the historical Jesus need be considered. Neither theological Christs nor pietistic "Jesus-stereotypes" have any claim to attention. The old orthodox Christologies universally failed to do justice to Jesus as a historical character. He was actually supernatural and therefore, suprahistorical, the transcendent God intervening in temporal affairs for a brief time in order to accomplish the eternal salvation of the souls of believers, a supernatural result which actually belonged to a transcendent world and was to be consummated there, beyond history. Such a conception, often in so many words, abandoned history to Satan and his hosts. The old drama was theological, not historical. It must be rewritten, not as a multitude have done, with the principal scene and the title rôle omitted, but with a new conception of both the historical drama of human life and of the one unique Life, the truly significant Event which occurred in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago. Can historical research discover an adequate new conception? Is the real Jesus, as a century of search has discovered him, to play any part in the drama of history and of the universe as men approaching the middle of the twentieth century now conceive it? . . . .

The real problem, the problem of overshadowing importance, is that of Jesus' relation to history and to revelation. This involves not only historical method, but also the philosophy of history. With brutal insistence the question, What is the meaning of history? has been drumming itself into the ears of the twentieth century. The Christian must not only give an answer to that question but also with it he must say what part the historical Jesus played in history. What did the real Jesus, not some theological Christ or pietistic "Jesus-stereotype," accomplish during his brief ministry to have become the founder of the church, the incomparable teacher of the world, the inimitable model, the Master, Lord, and Saviour of millions? . . . .

Some modern theories present the old supernaturalism in modified guise under the caption of a "suprahistorical" element in Christianity and its history. To this use of terms various objections can be made. Such a doctrine is only an unconscious concession to conservatism. It serves to bolster the Christian's sense of religious superiority and to allow him to claim that Christianity is not only better than other religions, but ultimate and absolute truth. But it is only a smoke screen. Christianity's claim to allegiance must be based upon its character, not upon the boasts of its adherents. The theory that Jesus is suprahistorical is of a piece with the Barthian doctrine of an outside God, a doctrine which only carries the suprahistorical idea to its logi-

cal conclusion and inner refutation. In any case, a suprahistorical explanation has no connection with the historical Jesus.

A difficulty, fundamental but often overlooked, appears in aggravated form in those accounts in which the transcendent impinges upon the immanent, the supernatural upon the natural, as in the Gospel accounts of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. A "modern emancipated" Christian can eliminate the story of the virgin birth and the miracles of Jesus without hesitation or suspicion of doubt, but with a sense of relief. As to the resurrection the situation is different. The scientifically educated student cannot accept the form of the accounts, especially that of ascension. He cannot believe that "heaven" is a place which happened to be somewhere vertically over Bethany above the Ptolemaic crystalline sphere at the moment when Jesus' disciples last saw him, or that a physical body can be so transformed into immortality and incorruptibility as to endure eternally. Ancient Jewish-Christian cosmology and eschatology are too fantastic for today. But can one discard the faith upon which the church was built?

The answer which a historian would make in any other field would be that he cannot deal with such a tradition as historical fact. History is posited, says one of the leading New Testment scholars of Germany, on

> an absolutely rational, immanent view of the world. The contents of religious tradition which bear a transcendent character are emenable (to history) only as the contents of the consciousness of the bearers of these traditions.[2]

The historian must recognize faith in the living Lord as one of the tremendous forces behind the Christian movement. Farther than that he refuses to go. But even many who are not Fundamentalists object: Is "an absolutely rational, immanent view of the world" borne out by the experience of life and history?

The answer of dialectical theology is a decided negative. No one better illustrates the determinative influence of a consistent theory of revelation and God's relation to history and to the world than Karl Barth. Perhaps one should not speak of consistency and Barth in the same book. One of the chief objections to his theology is the kaleidescopic changes through which it has passed and the paradoxical and contradictory utterances which disfigure its presentation. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to say what he believes. There are many individual sentences and ideas in Barth's discussion of revelation and of Jesus' part in it with which any one must agree. Yet hardly a page, certainly not a complete chapter, but is disfigured by the egotistical dogmatism which insists that God is the "wholly Other" and that only Barth's *ex cathedra* definition of the terms within which the subject is to be considered is correct. The socialism in which he once believed, the historical Jesus, and revelation of God in nature or in history, all are absolutely anathema, "World history . . . . certainly contains no so-called history of the great deeds of God." One can say, "Revelation becomes history," but not "History is revelation." It is incorrect and dog-

[2] Georg Bertram, *Das Neue Testament und historische Methode*, Tübingen: Mohr, 1928, p. 11.

matically dangerous even to speak of the "historical Jesus." He grants that Jesus was "man like us in all finitude, infirmity, and helplessness that characterizes our human life and results from our utter distance from God." But that means only the revelation of the grace of the "Wholly Other" God amid human sinfulness. God's grace brings a thoroughly individual salvation. Revelation has no connections with "any plan for saving men by the solution of political, economic, or social problems." [3] When Emil Brunner made some place for a revelation of God in nature, Barth spoke a vehement "*Nein*," which ended their theological partnership. Whatever values the crisis theology may have—and one of them is its protest against superficial optimism—it has no solution for the problem here under consideration, for the existence and legitimacy of such a problem are denied. . . . .

The flight of Karl Barth and other followers of Kierkegaard from reality is easily explained by the failure of the facile hopes which had been built upon the "liberal" theology and upon the social optimism of the nineteenth century. The gloomy ghosts of Calvin and Kierkegaard will have rendered an inestimable service if they succeed in calling attention to the irrational elements in life and history. Under the same disappointment, others—and they far outnumber the supernaturalists—have abandoned religion. Christians like Albert Schweitzer have given up the hope of rebuilding their *Weltanschauung*, but still attempt to construct amid its ruins a refuge in a Christian *Lebensanschauung*. The mystic who seeks the kingdom of God only within himself, as C. H. Dodd and Edwyn Bevan appear to do, is following the same path of escape. Nicolas Berdyaev pours scorn on any theory of progress and discovers the goal of history in an eternity which is beyond history. The individualistic, mystical solution, which finds the kingdom of heaven within the soul, and the eschatological solution, whether it awaits a spectacular Second Coming and an audible last trump or merely looks for eternal reality beyond history, should have been discarded ninety years ago when Charles Kingsley disclosed their true nature as merely opiates. That pragmatic test—to say nothing of the modern recognition of social values—should be enough to condemn such a view as merely a refusal to see the problems as they are. Present disillusionment cannot destroy the facts of social evolution. . . . .

If Jesus is to play a significant part in the thought and life of "modern emancipated man," his figure must be integrated into a new synthesis which takes account of both the values and the disvalues which twentieth-century experience has discovered in the universe and in the life of mankind. As an American review of the Oxford Conference Book on *The Kingdom of God and History* succinctly puts it, the Oxford Conference "failed to come to terms with the American naturalistic-empirical school of theology." [4] Worse than that, it had not even so much as heard that there is such a school of thought. The book lacks both specific guidance as to the goods for which the kingdom of God stands (which "Copec" did offer) and an epistemolog-

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[3] In *Revelation*, eds. John Baillie and Hugh Martin, New York: Macmillan, 1937, pp. 53, 81.

[4] Dan Williams in The Chicago Theological Seminary *Register*, Nov., 1938, p. 36.

ical discussion of the grounds upon which a socially pertinent theory of its meaning in history may be based. . . . .

Those who have learned from the experience of the past will not expect to attain final and absolute truth. The accidental truths of history, to paraphrase Lessing, cannot be expected to reveal the nature of the absolute or the mysteries of the future. However earnestly God may strive to reveal himself to man, the results will always be relative to man's comprehension. However God may use history in the education of the human race, multitudes will never learn and the best will never fully understand. The problem of historicism is only another phase of the problem of the inescapable relativity of human knowledge. The religious teachings of Jesus are only relatively and conditionally true, for they were given for a certain time and place and people. They must be translated and interpreted for other times and places and peoples. This has always been recognized in practice, though denied in theory. It is not a serious admission. Practically all of men's decisions have to be based upon the best they know at the time. Until a better than Jesus appears, he is the ultimate. No one can predict that a better never will appear. Meantime we may worry as little over that contingency as over the possible dreadful outcome of the second law of thermodynamics.

One very simple but often forgotten consideration explains why Jesus maintains his incomparable position. Ernst Troeltsch, who was greatly concerned over the problem of historicism and the finality of Christianity, died before he gave his complete solution. In the lectures which he wrote but did not live to deliver in England, he suggested a pertinent phase of the answer: Christianity, he said "is not a theory, but a life, not a social order, but a power." [8] Because they are not intellectualistic or philosophical, the basic qualities in Jesus which have always appealed to man can be fitted into the Orient and the Occident, into ancient and modern civilization with equal ease—and difficulty.

"Palestine nineteen hundred years ago" raises serious objection in many minds. How can "modern emancipated man" be expected to learn from an ancient Jew who lived in one of the remote provinces of the Roman Empire? The answer is, first, that men are fundamentally alike in all lands and in all ages that are known to history. The differences are essentially superficial. The second answer is that in nineteen hundred years, culture has not changed as greatly as moderns like to think, and that Palestine, lying between the east and the west, at the center of the ancient world, was less "provincial" than far-western Rome, or even than unique and learned Athens, for it had a much longer and more varied cultural inheritance.

In the third place, the answer is that the Hebrews represent one of those phenomena which appear again and again in biological and social evolution, different as the two are in many features. A strange and as yet inexplicable combination of circumstances selects certain groups and certain individuals to make them bearers of peculiar values. As a yet undiscovered group of

[8] *Christian Thought: Its History and Application*, London: Williams & Norgate, 1923, p. 20.

primates developed the human skeleton, as India developed the decimal system and Babylonia the duodecimal, as Greece developed art, science, and philosophy, and Rome business, law, and government, so the Jews developed ethics and a spiritual monotheism. The problem of Jesus' place in history is therefore in part a problem for the sociologist as historian.

It is also in part a problem for the psychologist. The genius, the artist, the prophet possess insight which detects and expresses values which others may not see or, seeing, may not be able to express. The biological, social, and psychical factors which differentiate race from race and individual from individual are only partially explicable. But a part of the explanation is especially applicable to Jesus. The late Archbishop Söderblom of Sweden used the analogy of the genius, the late Canon Streeter that of the sudden flashes of insight which come to those whom long and arduous thought has prepared to receive them. The argument is beautifully supplemented in Canon Streeter's last book in his interpretation of "guidance." (I remember how clearly and persuasively he put it in an afternoon I spent with him less than a year before his fatal accident.) He whose perceptions are undisturbed by selfishness, whose judgment is not warped by sin, whose will is wholly devoted to God and righteousness, arrives in a perfectly sure, but simple and natural way at correct decisions in the crises of life. That Jesus exhibited this unbiased mind at its highest, that he has shown himself the supreme religious genius, few would attempt to dispute. He who exhibited unequalled purity of life, singleness of purpose, and devotion to God's will until the last supreme sacrifice must inevitably have received the unique divine illumination which made him, in the language of Karl Heim, "God's silent action" and "God's speech."

One feature of Jesus' teachings which is frequently used to depreciate his unique importance serves rather to establish his value. The mathematician's flash of insight must be substantiated by laborious calculations. The scientist's brilliant guess must be proved by long and wearisome experiments. Moral truth must be tested in the laboratory of life. It is said that Jesus borrowed practically every item of his teachings from prophets and teachers who were before him. To the claim that he had received them by special revelation from on high, that is a legitimate and unanswerable argument. But, if it be understood that all truth that applies to morals and religion must be a social product, forged in the hot fires of history, then the fact that Confucius, Buddha, Zoroaster, the Hebrew prophets and the moral teachers of Egypt, Babylonia, and Greece had already more or less fully proclaimed the truths that Jesus taught only serves to confirm their trustworthiness. He brought the essentials of religion and morality together in the simplest, most direct, and most appealing manner of any, and he embodied them in his life as no other has done. A view which makes Jesus truly historical escapes all religious solipsism. Jesus and his religion are anchored firmly in the past history of his time and place.

As truly historical, he must belong to subsequent history. Every prophet's visions must be submitted to the long and gruelling test of social and historical experience. A great part of the revelation of Jesus has already been

sufficiently tested again and again. But the test is far from complete. If what Jesus taught and lived is true, then history may have a meaning. If men believe and follow him, it will have a goal. As Frederick J. Taggart of the University of California has expressed it, there can no longer be faith in the certainty, but only in the possibility of progress. The possibility depends upon men's intelligent choices. There is no "mysterious unconscious impulse," no *élan vital*, which has placed man on an infallible evolutionary escalator. Likewise Paul Tillich insists that it is useless to try to demonstrate that history must have a meaning, because the element of freedom in the constitution of man makes history incalculable. Arbitrariness is both the demon and the goddess of history. Only faith and decision can give meaning to history. The faith which gives the affirmative decision and thus gives meaning to history is possible only through Christ as "the center of history." To quote from the Hulsean Lectures of Mr. H. G. Wood of Woodbrooke Settlement, history is a "series of significant changes" due "primarily to man's creative decisions." It is "a spiritual adventure, the record of spiritual achievements." In the long record of critical and decisive changes Jesus holds a position which is unique and significant beyond all others. . . . .

In spite of all literary and prehterary criticism, in spite of consistent and inconsistent eschatology, there is still enough of the historical Jesus to stir the conscience and challenge the world. The historical Jesus is not swallowed up in biased apostolic propaganda for the Gospel. The Gospels contain, not merely the apostolic faith in an already idealized, mystical Christ, but also a record, meager, but vivid and vital, based upon authenic and largely trustworthy tradition, about a Jesus who actually lived in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago. The Gospels are not merely cult ritual, catechism, and *kerygma*. They contain all three, but also unimpeachable reminiscence. Historicism, in the sense of historical uncertainty is not a menace to religion.

In a proper philosophy of religion, faith is not founded on historical fact but upon a realistic interpretation of all human experience. In this sense also, historicism is not a menace to religion. A philosophy of history and of religion is possible which faces both the rational and the irrational with realism and makes a place for the historical Jesus in the world of modern science and modern cynicism without apology and without subterfuge. Such a philosophy is in the making. The world is still young, and, for the brave there are fields of conquest still untouched. If the present generation has not lost its nerve, it will still be able to see in Jesus a leader who challenges it to its best and a Saviour of all who follow him. . . . .

Empirical religious realism is the path to the truth. A philosophy of history and a *Weltanschauung* which gets nearest to the facts of life will be the basis for the successful prosecution of the search for the real Jesus. It will not serve the world to claim for Christianity exemption from the laws of nature, the processes of a reasonable reason, or the methods of historical research. Progress will come by proving all things and then holding fast that which stands the test. . . . .

Too much must not be expected. The past teaches that progress is woefully slow, finality unattainable. The picture that historical research can

draw of Jesus will never be a photograph. Its details will always be obscure. If God has anything to do with history—as Jesus and Christians generally have believed—it would appear that He did not intend the details to be crystal-clear, lest men sit down to worship the perfect picture instead of following the Leader, who goes on over into new worlds. Salvation will come to individuals and societies in proportion as they choose the light that is in their world instead of the darkness.

Evolutionary optimism, which expects the processes of nature to save mankind, and soteriological optimism, which expects a divine magic to do it without man's effort, are equally discredited by the records of history. But an apocalyptic pessimism which sees the world wholly in the grasp of evil is likewise unjustified. If the myriads of years of unwritten history and the brief 5000 that have been recorded teach anything, it is that the human race moves slowly onward and upward. If the search for the real Jesus teaches anything, it is that he has in the past and will in the future come ever to be better understood and to mean more in the life of mankind.

THE GOSPEL PORTRAIT OF JESUS

Hans Lietzmann

JESUS GREW UP, and was probably born, in the little Galilean village of Nazareth. Joseph His father must have died early, for we only hear of Mary His mother. He had four brothers whose names have come down to us, James, Joses, Jude, Simon, and also several sisters. By trade, He was a carpenter. However, He was not confined to timber, saws, and axes, for the Spirit drove Him forth into the solitude. When the preaching of John the Baptist re-echoed in the land, He went as a pilgrim to the Jordan and had Himself baptized. But then the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness, where he wrestled with God and with the Devil in prayer. His wonderful personality was watched with many shakings of heads at home, and in the end He was pronounced mad. When He began to attract attention and the people crowded round Him, His family set out to take charge of Him, and to bring the disgrace to an end. We find in Him the tragic quality of the lonely soul whom God has laid hold of by force, lifted out of the love and the friendliness of the world and filled with deep anguish of spirit, but who nevertheless courageously confirms the divine imperative. There is the sound of an heroic inversion of all nature in His hard saying: "If any man cometh unto Me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."

When John the Baptist was imprisoned and hidden from public sight, Jesus came back out of the wilderness to His Galilean home and took up the preaching of him who had been silenced. But it sounded different in His mouth. He did not terrify His hearers by threatening them with the fiery flames of impending judgment; rather He spoke of God and the nature of His rule. For Him also, the transmutation of the age was at hand, and men of the present generation would experience the Kingdom coming with power. Then all suffering would be assuaged, all tears wiped away, and he who, for the kingdom's sake, had sacrificed anything dear to himself, would be well rewarded. But it was necessary to prepare oneself properly for this reign of God—and here the simple ethical preaching of John was not sufficient. The Kingdom of God attracted every one's desire to itself, just as treasure hidden in a field draws the lucky discoverer, as a precious pearl the merchant. All mankind must place themselves at the disposal of God's will and obey His call, leaving behind family, friends, and every possession: he who put his hand to the plough and looked back was not suitable for the Kingdom of God. While it is necessary that we should

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do God's will on earth as it is done in Heaven, we must recognize it as a mighty somewhat which threatens to disrupt every earthly relationship. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I am not come to send peace but a sword." There will be disputes in the family, and enmity in the house—thus He preached, and it was in accordance with His own experience. The people crowded to Him and listened open-mouthed; many ran after Him, and a few remained with Him and became His disciples. The first of these were two pairs of brothers, fishermen of Lake Genesareth, Simon and Andrew, John and James.

But he did more than preach, He also worked miracles and testified thereby to the divine origin of His mission. The news of His deeds, spreading more rapidly than the content of His preaching, was told far and wide among the people. Cripples, epileptics, and madmen were healed at His command, and evil spirits vanished before the divine power. The lame and the blind, the deaf and the dumb, and even lepers—felt His healing power. In one place indeed, He raised from the dead a twelve year old girl; in Nain, a young man. It serves no purpose to try with meticulous pedantry to determine the "historical kernel" of the various miracle-stories in the gospels, even if here and there it seems possible. No person of judgment to-day can any longer doubt that Jesus possessed miraculous power and worked "miracles" as understood in the ancient sense; and to the historian, our popular records which flash light from so many facets are more valuable than dry officials reports could be, for from them comes a reflection of His acts and deeds which pierces far into the deeps of human nature.

A prophet mighty in word and deed had arisen, armed with the miraculous powers of Elias—was he not the very Elias who was to be the herald of the Messiah? Or was Jesus even the Messiah who was to bestow the kingdom of God upon His people? No! the other side replied, he is a false prophet and has made a compact with Beelzebub the prince of devils, that is why the demons must obey him. But how could Satan destroy his own kingdom, objected Jesus; and if I really do cast out demons by the finger of God, then take notice that thereby the kingdom of God has come to you. In this way it would seem that His miraculous power was a glorious divine gift and at the same time a pledge that His gospel of the kingdom of God was true. When in prison, John the Baptist heard of the deeds of this successor of his, and the popular opinion about Him, and sent to inquire of Him: Are you He that was to come, or ought we to look for someone else? For His deeds harmonized badly with the Baptist's prophecy of a fiery judgment. The answer resounded the words of Isaiah: The blind see and the lame walk, lepers become cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead rise, and the gospel is preached to the poor—the prophesied signs of the End are here; blessed is the man who takes no offence in Me. At a later date, Jesus asked His disciples: Who do men say I am? to which Peter replied: You are the Messiah. And Jesus knew that he spoke the truth.

The kingdom of God was not merely knocking at the door; it was already present. It was like a bit of yeast in a bowl of dough which would soon leaven the whole batch. It was put in the earth like a mustard seed

which began to sprout and to grow to a tree. And all this was a great divine miracle: he to whom God has promised the seed, sows it on the ground; it sprouts and grows of itself, and brings forth blade and fruit—finally comes the day of harvest, the Last Judgment and the glorious End. In the present world, all sorts of weeds are still growing apace among the wheat, and even this is surely according to God's will; only at the Last Judgment will the chaff be burnt in the fire. There is no need for you to rise and look round for the kingdom of God, or to lie in wait in case some one say to you: here it is or there it comes, for it is in your midst. That was a new, astonishing, and estranging message, the paradox in Jesus' preaching, which would not sink into the people of His time nor the scholars of to-day. It is true that Jesus used the colours of prophetic apocalyptic in preaching of the kingdom of God and its glory as of a future salvation whose commencement no one could calculate because the Father had kept that entirely to Himself. But this language was meant to describe the full revelation of the kingdom, the final phases of which would be preceded by the signs foretold by the prophets; it was the coming of the kingdom "with power." At this time, the Messiah would also appear on the clouds of the sky and set up His throne in the midst of a renewed Israel. But the kingdom was coming with no less reality even in the present, and the Messiah was passing unnoticed through the land, illumined only by the splendour of miraculous deeds. He was thereby made recognizable, and He gathered the first subjects of the kingdom round Himself. The new aeon had already begun, before the old had collapsed—the apparatus of time and space fail wherever a genuine prophetic message of divine reality is proclaimed.

Popular imagination took most delight in depicting the splendour and the joys of God's kingdom on earth, and even Jesus' disciples would gladly have known the answer to the question as to who would sit at the right and the left of the Messiah at the future festival. Jesus had more important matters to publish about the kingdom of God. In the forefront was the teaching that the legal preciseness which was so keenly watched in Pharisaic circles would not be sufficient for one belonging to it; for God was not satisfied with the outer fulfilment of commands, but required the complete surrender of the heart to its deepest depths. Jesus takes up again the Old Testament saying that we must love God with the whole heart, and our neighbour as ourselves, but He draws out of that saying the final consequences of making religion an inward matter, and in the Sermon on the Mount the classic examples are brought together. In the command to love our enemies, He opposes natural feeling, and in the command to look for no reward and no revenge, as well as in the prohibition of taking oaths, and of divorce, He opposes the Mosaic law. In so doing, He knows Himself to be proclaiming God's will and thus He troubles little about the indignation of the guardians of the Law. Fasting and ritual prayer count for little with Him: a man must speak with God in solitude. He regards Sabbath observance as objectionable if it prevents neighbourly actions or even only the usual eating and drinking. We find here and there many parallels to all this in the surviving sayings of

the Rabbis, but each of these is an isolated attempt which quickly falls back and is lost in the sea of legal observance. With Jesus, life with God is like a broad river flooding all the land and sweeping away every hindrance; there is nothing that would not be covered by its waves. From it there springs everything which men call righteousness, virtue, good works.

The Jew regarded God as the righteous judge who dealt with men's deeds exactly in accordance with the written prescriptions. He also believed in a mercy which God evinced towards His favourites by forgiving their sins, and he hoped that his good work would receive a just reward, and his sins divine forgiveness. Even Jesus often spoke of reward in the manner of popular belief, as if the self-denials and sufferings of this world would be recompensed in the kingdom of God. But when He reveals the final secret of the kingdom of God, the idea of recompense vanishes into nothing. God is like the employer who at different times in the day engaged workpeople for his vineyard, but who gave them all the same wages, and calmly set aside the complaints of the discontented by saying: You who were engaged first, have received what was agreed—are you jealous because I have been generous to those engaged last? In the kingdom of God, all righteousness is simply divine grace. And if you have fulfilled all the commandments, you have only done your duty; you have no claim on any reward, but are good-for-nothing servants. In the Talmud, we find the answer given by Judaism to this conception of God—we have the same parable but another moral. Here also, a vinedresser had worked only two hours, and yet received a full day's pay. But the employer answered those who were discontented with this: This man did more in two hours than you in the whole day. Thus everything happened according to justice and merit. Hence the contrast was quite clear: on the one hand the Jewish conception of God with formal righteousness in the human sense, and on the other, the God of Jesus, whose righteousness consists in unmerited grace.

Moreover, it appears that the "righteous" are not those who are the first to enter the kingdom of God, but the despised and the lost, the taxgatherers and the sinners, the poor and the sick. In the kingdom of God, there is more joy over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine "righteous persons" who, on account of their very righteousness, never come to the idea that they lack the best, i.e. knowledge of the nothingness of every human being in the sight of the eternal God. The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican brought that to classic expression once for all. It is a new thing, and it comes with a shock, that Jesus' preaching of the kingdom is directed towards sinners; we have to learn it painfully, because the call is meant for us after 1,900 years.

The Old Testament religion sees God's blessing in riches as a reward for good conduct upon earth, and is inclined to regard poverty, illness, and suffering, as the divine punishment for sin. The obscure and the simple knew better—that God had promised His salvation to the poor and the pitiable. And now Jesus came, and blessed not only the

poor and the suffering, but also the sinners—for God is near them and calls them to Himself. The guests of the wedding feast were invited in vain to come to table, and therefore the messengers of God went into the streets and lanes and invited the beggars and the cripples, the lame and the blind. Who is the better son: The one who says no! to his father's order but repents and does it, or he who says yes! and does not do it? Thus the sinner enters the kingdom of God if he searches his heart and repents—the very thing which the righteous man thinks he need not do. In the same way, the poor man is nearer to the kingdom of God for he is not blinded by the wealth and the cheap self-righteousness of the giver of charity. He is not bound fast to this aeon and its values by concern for material possessions, and he has no treasure on earth which fills his heart and closes it to God. The rich young man would gladly have followed Jesus, but he could not well abandon everything for the sake of the kingdom of God: it would not do; everyone could understand that —but it was regrettable. Hence: blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Jesus did not preach like the scribes, but like one authorized by God —thus Mark expressed the judgment of the hearers. But for this very reason, if the accustomed teaching was held in respect, no one wished to have anything to do with Him. In Nazareth His home, He said bitterly that a prophet counted for nothing in his native place; even in the larger sphere of Lake Genesareth, He gained no hearing; He pronounced woe upon Chorazin, Bethsaida, and even Capernaum. Therefore He avoided the towns and became the preacher of the Am-ha-Arez. Galilee was surrounded by pagan districts, separated by Samaria from the Judaistic centre of religion, and penetrated with foreign elements. Hence it had no understanding of Pharisaic strictness. In this region, therefore, a hearing could be found for a message which said that the kingdom of God was open to the pagan or half-pagan taxgatherers, the despised sinners, the poor and the pitiable, but closed to the Pharisees with their display of righteous correctness, and to the rich givers of charity. Here Jesus became a popular hero followed by the masses; Herod Antipas regarded Him with considerable doubt as to whether He was the Baptist risen from the dead, and therefore to be rendered harmless. It was the necessary consequence of His deeds and words that the Pharisees should hate Him as one who contemned the law, and should persecute Him as a false prophet. There was no escaping a decisive struggle if He wished to be really the Messiah, and not be content with the part of a forerunner.

Our sources are unanimous in recording Jesus' Messiahship. Peter's confession, "Thou art the Messiah," in Mark, harmonizes with the indirect answer to the direct question of John the Baptist preserved for us in "Q." But we have no authentic tradition of a word of Jesus in which He claims this dignity for Himself. On the other hand our two principal sources have preserved quite a number of sayings in which Jesus described Himself as the Son of Man, and it can be clearly seen from

the context in Mark 8:31 that this was understood in the Messianic sense. But also other passages inform us that the enigmatic title means the future ruler of the kingdom of God, who, according to Daniel 7:13, "comes on the clouds of heaven like a son of man." In spite of the fact that hitherto no successful solution has been found for the philological problems raised by this term, the general reliability of the tradition is as little in doubt as the Messianic significance of the phrase. And it is just as certain that "Son of Man" was not a current term for the Messiah, for even the earliest Christians no longer understood it and they avoided using it; thus it has remained a riddle to the present day. We may take it as a reliable tradition not only that Christ was regarded as the Messiah by His disciples and by various individuals among the people at large, sick and well, healed and possessed, but that He was conscious of Himself as such. And, just as in the case of the kingdom of God, so also the conception of the Messiah was fundamentally transformed by Jesus. The eschatological and apocalyptic imagery remained to light up the horizon of the times, but in immediate and present experience the seeds of *the kingdom implanted by God germinated in the souls of repentant* and believing people. The secret kingdom of the bearer of the new divine communion, who was supplied with the miraculous power and guaranteed by the witness of His heavenly Father, brought His people the long-promised salvation. In addition, there was something new, in that Jesus taught his disciples that the Messiah must die in order to complete His work. It was most difficult to understand and they simply did not believe it. No Jew had ever heard of a Messiah who would have to die by the very nature of His office, and therefore this conception cannot have been applied to Jesus from the outside. Rather, just as the message of the kingdom and the consciousness of His Messiahship received their characteristic nature from Jesus' experience of God, so it came home to Him, in His own soul, that His death was necessary for the accomplishment of His task, and this, in its nature, was an inner acceptance and affirmation of what His experiences of His opponents led Him to suspect as His personal fate.

We do not know how long Christ's public ministry lasted, for the single year into which Mark compresses his account is only a literary form and was not intended to be historical chronology. The Fourth Gospel quite obviously counts upon three years, but without our being able on this basis to regard it as a more reliable witness. It describes Jesus as attending the Passover in Jerusalem at least twice before He went there for the last time. The synoptics know nothing of this, and the saying from "Q," found in Luke 13:34, is probably a quotation from the Book of Wisdom mentioned in 11:49, and has no relevance to this question. Tradition tells of only one journey to Jerusalem, and Mark put His third prophecy of death, like a direction sign, at the head of his account (10:32-34). Luke set down a valuable piece of material that had been circulating freely in the popular memory (13:31-33): In that hour there came certain Pharisees, saying to him: Get thee out and go hence: for

Herod would fain kill thee. And he said to them, Go and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I must journey, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. In both cases the same sad echo: He is going to the capital to die there, for that is God's will. But in the Lukan passage we can also see the outer context. Antipas sends those Pharisees with the message for Him to go out of Galilee. It was possible for Him to go either to Samaria or into gentile regions—but He had no call there. Hence He recognized that His hour had come, and He entered on the fatal journey. His disciples were amazed, and the crowds were troubled about Him, for even they knew into what danger He was running.

The road leads through Jericho, where He heals a blind man; then He approaches Jerusalem from the east. In the neighbourhood of Olivet, when exhausted by the journey, He appears to have borrowed an ass, an incident out of which later legends developed a Messianic entry into Jerusalem on the basis of Zechariah's prophecy (ix, 9) which foretells of the gentle king riding on an ass into Jerusalem. According to the view of the tradition preserved in Mark, it appears that Jesus then entered Jerusalem for the very first time, for that is the natural presupposition of the following remark that in the temple He looked around about upon all things, and then, because it was getting dusk, He went out into Bethany for the night.

As has been the case with many other devout persons in later centuries, so it was with Jesus: His proper religious feeling was most pronouncedly offended by the more than profane business carried on in the forecourt of the holy place. He drove out the dealers with their sacrificial animals, and likewise the money-changers, broke up their stalls, and then closed the forecourt as a thoroughfare; this can only mean that He gathered the people round Himself to take forceful measures against the evil of sacrilege, and, with the accusing words of the prophets upon His lips, put Himself at their head.

That was a first sign of the storm in Jerusalem; the prophet from Galilee had raised a tumult in the temple, and that must have caused concern to the people in authority. Nevertheless, they did not attempt to overmaster Him by means of the police, but tried by various questions to entrap Him. Mark records a few disputes between Jesus and the Pharisees and Sadducees, which might well be ascribed to this period, the most illuminating being the question as to the payment of tribute money. In Galilee, politics was not a matter of common argument, and the national insurrection in A.D. 66-70 found no echo there. Jesus held quite aloof from political hopes, and the national Messianic ideal with its worldly complexion such as we know in the Psalms of Solomon appeared to Him on at least one occasion as a temptation of the devil. Opinion was different in Jerusalem, and liberation from the Roman over-rule was equally a national and a religious desideratum. When Jesus gave an equivocal answer to this question and showed Himself lukewarm, His standing in the capital was gone. His answer avoided the trap and dealt with the problem on the decisive point. Since you have been

obliged to surrender to the Romans the right of minting gold and silver money, it is foolish to ask whether one ought to pay taxes to these same Romans with foreign money. As soon as the insurrection broke out in A.D. 66, the Jews once more coined silver money.

We have no idea how long this period of struggle lasted in Jerusalem. Not a syllable in Mark hints that Jesus—possibly in a pilgrim caravan—had come to Jerusalem for the Passover, and we have already mentioned the notice in Luke about Antipas' expulsion, which makes it indeed unlikely. We may assume that Jesus worked for a considerable period in Jerusalem, during which He gained numerous adherents among the people and many influential enemies among the Pharisees and Sadducees. The members of the sanhedrin eventually decided to get rid of Him, and it was to be done without causing a sensation, and before the Passover. Only two days were left.

After He had prayed in a garden on Olivet, Jesus was arrested by night in the midst of His disciples, one belonging to the inner circle having informed the bailiffs of the place where He was accustomed to spend the night. At the arrest, the disciples fled, and only Peter turned back and slipped after his Master into the courtyard of the High Priest's official residence. There he mingled with the crowd and, by a couple of lies, managed to escape detection. But it is scarcely probable that we can depend upon his report, for from what we read in Mark about the night-trial before the sanhedrin, all signs indicate that we have a later Christian version here. Mark says that a night-sitting of the sanhedrin was held at once under the presidency of Caiaphas the High Priest. The first charge was that Jesus had desired to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, but the reports of the witnesses did not agree, and Jesus maintained silence in spite of all the charges. Then the High Priest put to Him the crucial question, which was one of conscience: Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Most High? And He answered: Yes, and prophesied that He would sit at the right hand of God, and that He would return as the Son of Man upon the clouds of heaven. Thereupon the High Priest condemned Him to death for blasphemy. The question cannot be answered whether this account preserves undimmed recollections of actual truth.

But we can say, with some certainty, that the sanhedrin came to no legal condemnation on the count of blasphemy, for then they would have had to execute Jesus on their own authority by stoning. That was prescribed in the Law, and was accordingly carried out, as we see, e.g. in the case of Stephen. It is an error, which the Gospels themselves share and have spread, that the Great Sanhedrin did not possess the power to pronounce and carry out capital sentences. Rather the undoubtedly trustworthy progress of events shows that the Jewish authorities, probably on quite good grounds, refrained from dealing with this matter in the form of a religious trial, and preferred to hand Jesus over to the Roman authorities as an insurgent. The procurator, Pontius Pilate, who is well known to us from other records, and who governed as Jewish procurator from A.D. 26-36, was staying at that moment in Jerusalem, obviously because the people were streaming there

for the Passover and he wished to keep his eyes on the masses. Jesus was denounced to him as the "King of the Jews," which is as much as to say: a Messianic agitator in the political sense. After a short hearing, he had Him taken away, scourged, and crucified. How the fate of their Master, lighted up by Old Testament prophecy, was reflected in the hearts of His own people is shown with moving power in the passion story of the gospels.

On the thirteenth or the fourteenth of the month of Nisan, in the afternoon, in any case before Passover eve, Jesus died on the cross. A devout member of the sanhedrin took the body down from the cross and put it in a rock tomb. We hear no further of the disciples. The prophecy was fulfilled: the shepherd was killed and the sheep were scattered. The Messianic dream was at an end.

THE WAY TO THE REAL JESUS

Cecil John Cadoux

THE FIRST STAGE in the reconstruction of our picture of the real Jesus is the separation from the Gospel story of those elements which belong in all probability to the unhistorical embroidery with which Christian devotion adorned his memory. The task of identifying these unhistorical elements is not in the nature of an "attack" made by "materialists," "skeptics," and "rationalists," but is the work of that love of truth and common-sense loyalty to evidence which we all know to be valid everywhere else, and which Jesus himself, with his stern demand for sincerity, would be the first to condemn us for not using here also. Here, then, are the features in the story which there are good reasons for discarding or, at all events, gravely doubting, on historical grounds.

(1) Jesus was in all probability not miraculously born of a virgin, but was the legally born son of Joseph and Mary. I have enumerated and discussed elsewhere the various grounds on which most modern liberals conclude that the ascription of a virgin birth to Jesus by Luke and the author of "Matthew" is to be accounted for as a devout legend rather than as a reliable historical record. I refrain, therefore, from enumerating these grounds here, and confine myself to one observation. In Isaiah 7:14 a normal and nonmiraculous, but significant, birth from a "young woman" (הָעַלְמָה) is foretold. When this passage was translated into Greek in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, the young woman was gratuitously transformed into "the virgin" (ἡ παρθένος), and the birth was thus represented as miraculous. This Greek version was the only form in which the Old Testament was known to many of the early Christians, and they searched it diligently for prophecies regarding Jesus the Messiah. We have several instances in the Matthean story of Jesus of prophecies which clearly in the first place could not have referred to him being stated to have been fulfilled by him, e.g. Matthew 2:15, 17 f. In face of the immense historical and other difficulties in the birth stories, therefore, do we need to look further than the Septuagint rendering of Isaiah 7:14, which we find actually quoted in Matthew 1:22 f., for the source of the belief that Jesus was virgin-born?

I do not therefore agree with the statement, "concerning the origin of the belief in the virgin birth the critical historian can say nothing."[1] Still less can I accept as satisfactory Dr. Karl Barth's extraordinary account of the matter in his book, *Credo*. His discussion of the virgin birth is one

[1] Hoskyns and Davey, *The Riddle of the N. T.*, 135 f.

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of the worst instances I have met of a theologian's sense of historical truth and the value of historical evidence being blunted to the point of virtual destruction by an overwhelming concern for his own dogmatic standpoint. The force or relevance of the historical evidence is not considered; indeed, it is hardly more than just mentioned. Yet the virgin birth, Barth tells us, should be believed because we cannot safely separate the form or sign (virgin birth) from the content or thing (real incarnation).

> The miracle of the virgin birth [he says], has not ontic but noetic significance. It advertises what here takes place . . . . the sinful element that has here to be excluded will . . . . not have to be sought in the act of marriage or in sexual life as such, but in the sovereignty of human will and power and activity generally and as such. . . . . Therefore the judgment strikes the male; therefore Joseph is excluded as earthly father of Jesus.

One would have thought that, in that case, Mary also should have been excluded. But she can " be blessed, because she has believed (Luke 1:45), not on the score of her virginity, not on the score of her femininity." Why Joseph too could not have been similarly blessed, Barth does not undertake to explain. He concludes his chapter on the subject by observing "that in the theologians who reject the virgin birth, one comes, at a lesser or greater remove, upon a 'natural theology' limiting the theology of free grace." Quietly to substitute in this way one's own dogmatic preferences for the evidence as to what actually happened is to reduce the profession of loyalty to historical truth to a pure farce.

(2) Jesus was probably born, not at Bethlehem, but at Nazareth, his parents' normal home. If one is satisfied that the virgin-birth story is not historical, but owes its origin to the mistaken application of Isaiah 7:14 (in its Septuagintal form) to Jesus, it becomes more natural to believe that the assertion that he was born at Bethlehem similarly arose from Micah 5:2, which passage is also quoted in Matthew 2:5 f., as having been fulfilled in Jesus' birth. "Was not our Lord the Messiah foretold in Scripture?" Christians of the second generation would ask one another, "and where else could the Messiah have been born but at Bethlehem, as Micah says?" This supposition as to the origin of the Bethlehem idea is confirmed by the mutual inconsistencies and numerous other inherent difficulties in the Lukan and Matthean birth stories.

(3) He was not omniscient.

(4) He probably did not walk on the water, or still a storm, or multiply loaves and fishes, or wither a fig tree. Apart from all question of impossibility or inherent improbability, the actual evidence for these "nature miracles" is distinctly weaker than that for the healings and the raisings from the dead; for no nature miracle occurs in Q (the collection of teachings used by Luke and in Matthew) and none more startling than a great catch of fish in L (the matter peculiar to Luke). The earliest Gospel document in which we find real nature miracles recorded is the Gospel of Mark, written probably about A.D. 67. It has indeed been truly observed that the duplication of the crowd-feeding by Mark indicates that the story was considerably older than the conposition of his Gospel. But if ap-

peal is to be made to the possible sources of Mark, we must not ignore the possible sources of Q and L. We do not know *how much* earlier than A.D. 67 the story of the miracle of the loaves and fishes may be. Moreover, the statement that Jesus increased a few loaves and fishes into enough food for five thousand persons surely requires stronger evidence, before it can reasonably be believed, than a narrative written down *even considerably less* than thirty-seven years (A.D. 67 minus A.D. 30) after the supposed occurrence, especially in view of the tendency (clearly demonstrable elsewhere) to adorn the Saviour's record with imaginary wonder stories. The withering of the fig tree seems almost certainly a garbled version of the very probable *parable* in Luke 13:6-9; and if so, the inclusion of it in Mark as a miracle throws an unfavorable light on his other nature miracles.

I therefore submit that the general acceptance of the healing miracles and the rejection of the nature miracles is not to be set down as due to a priori prejudice in favor of immanentism; nor is it to be tacitly treated as a departure from "the Christian standpoint." It is rather an objective historical judgment, such as would be accepted without cavil if the story were any other than that of our Lord's life. It is no answer to this judgment to urge that miracles are integral to the Gospel story (for this, however true of the healings, is not true of the nature miracles), or that the nature miracles are easy of belief in face of the still more stupendous miracle of God's saving work through Christ. Considered from the religious point of view, stories of supernatural physical marvels with no definitely moral character of their own figure largely in primitive religions as evidence for the presence and activity of the divine, and have often been preferred by Christians, before the religious and moral character of Jesus, as proofs of his divinity. Thus Leo the Great, in his famous *Tome* (A.D. 451), after a long-drawn-out contrast between the divine and human natures in Christ, observes:

"And so he whom the craft of the devil tempts as man, to him as to God do the attendant angels minister. To hunger, to thirst, to be weary and to sleep, is evidently human. But to satisfy five thousand men with five loaves, and to impart to the Samaritan woman living water, the drinking of which would prevent the drinker thirsting again, to walk over the surface of the sea with unsinking feet, and to allay the surging waves by rebuking the storm, is undoubtedly divine, ..."[5] and so on. But to judge from Jesus' own reply to the request for a sign, the preference for such marvels as the distinctive marks of divinity was not such as he himself would approve.

(5) He was not conscious of having been pre-existent. Paul seems to have been the first Christian who explicitly ascribed pre-existence to Jesus. There is no evidence in the Synoptic Gospels for such a belief; and in Acts, as in his Gospel, Luke ignores it. The late Dr. Charles Harris thought there was evidence of it in Jesus' use of the term "Son of Man" of himself, and probably also in the past tense of the verb εὐδόκησα in the voice from heaven at his baptism. But the precise sense in which Jesus used the phrase "Son of Man" of himself is too uncertain a basis on which to rest a claim on his part to pre-existence, while the aorist εὐδόκησα merely represents the

stative perfect of the Hebrew passage quoted, a perfect which implies definiteness rather than past time. Besides, there were the previous thirty years of Jesus' life, if past time was really intended. Others have inferred a consciousness of pre-existence in Jesus from the obscure saying in Luke 11:49.

(6) Jesus probably did not claim to forgive sins in his own right. There are only two Synoptic passages in which he is asserted to have himself done so.

(a) Mark 2:3-12 and parallels. Here, the awkard repetition of λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ in verse 10 creates difficulty, as does also Jesus' early and public application of the term "Son of Man" to himself. Hence the suggestion adopted by Dr. A. E. J. Rawlinson that "the story in its original form told simply how the man was healed of his disease," all between λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ in verse 5 and the same words at the end of verse 10 being an interpolation—not necessarily into the text of Mark, but into the original version of the story. If, as Dr. Rawlinson believes, "The episode of the paralytic came to be expanded in Christian preaching," the persons addressed in verse 10 ("in order that ye may know") may well have been originally the preacher's audience, and in that case the clumsiness of the second λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ will disappear.

(b) Luke 7:49—the comment made by Simon the Pharisee and his guests on Jesus' words about and to the penitent prostitute. But those words, like Mark 2:5, were really only an *assurance* of God's forgiveness. I do not doubt that the *Synoptist believed* that Jesus was entitled to forgive sins; but that is not the point. Had Jesus himself actually claimed this right, the fact would surely have stamped itself more deeply on the narrative.

(7) So far as we can discover, Jesus did not regard himself as the sole exception to the rule that all men are in some sense and measure morally imperfect. It has long been customary for Christian authors to assume that absolute sinlessness was not only an indubitable datum regarding Jesus' life, but its most significant characteristic. It is, however, needful here to bear certain considerations in mind.

(a) The meaning of the term "sinlessness" is incapable of being clearly and precisely defined. While we can distinguish *in the abstract* between (I) conspicuous and indubitable sins committed against the light and in willful disobedience to God, and (II) unintentional imperfections or lapses incidental to all human life as it develops out of its initial immaturity, yet, in the actual experience of living, it is virtually impossible clearly to separate the one from the other. While differing widely in their extreme forms, these two types of imperfection interpenetrate inextricably over a broad intermediate zone. Hence it was with some reasonableness that the Jewish teaching, in which (we must remember) Jesus himself was educated, included both varieties under the general concept of "sin," such as needed the divine pardon.

It was perhaps with an eye to the unintentional imperfections that Jewish theology affirmed the universal sinfulness of men. Certain exceptions to this universality were admitted in the case of some of the Old Testament saints, and indeed the potentiality or possibility of sinlessness was

conceded to the ordinary individual. But these exceptions probably had reference to willful transgressions only. . . . . But so long as our conception of sin is clear only when sin is considered as a pure abstraction, we cannot treat the sinlessness of Jesus—in the way it is usually treated—as if it were one of the obvious factual data on which our Christology must be based.

(b) When we have regard to the Jewish conception of sin as covering not only intentional wrong-doing but unintentional error and frailty, the application of the term "sinless" to Jesus raises the difficult question of the limitations necessarily involved in his humanity and clearly attested by the evangelists.

There is, first of all, the question whether the criticisms which have been directed against his ethical character on the ground of his behavior to his mother, to the Syro-Phoenician woman, to the Pharisees and to the traders in the temple courts are justified or not. It will not do to try to block such criticism a priori by pleading that, since our consciences are themselves the work of Jesus, we cannot in the nature of things turn them against him, or alternatively that, because we know human perfection only as it is seen in him, it is *ultra vires* for us to criticize him at all. If we were constitutionally incapable of discerning imperfection in his conduct (supposing for the sake of argument it were there to be discerned), we should by the same token be incapable of discerning the glory of his goodness. This criticism therefore has a right to be heard. I am not personally convinced that it is justified. But even if it were, what follows? The fact that Jesus' intellectual outlook on life was subject to certain limiting conditions is patent from the Gospel narrative and is widely accepted by many conservative Christians as inevitably involved in any real "incarnation." It necessarily follows from this fact that such limitations must have made a difference to his words and acts in religious as well as other connections. But if these limitations were such as were inevitably incidental to a developing human mind, they were not necessarily inconsistent with a perfect desire on his part always to do the will of God.

This conclusion, however, does not settle the question whether Jesus did or did not regard himself as exempt from all moral imperfection. Such little evidence as we have tends to show that he did not.

(i) Thus, the earliest noncanonical Gospel, that "according to the Hebrews," records that, when invited by his family to go and be baptized by John, he exclaimed: "What sin have I committed that I should go and be baptized by him?—unless perchance this very thing that I have said is ignorance." I submit that no Christian would be likely to put those words on paper unless he had the warrant of trustworthy tradition to justify him in doing so. Moreover, the words, here ascribed to Jesus, would be entirely natural and fitting on the lips of one who, though trained as a child to hold the pious Jewish belief in the universality of sin, was not himself conscious of having ever intentionally disobeyed God.

(ii) The Synoptists tell us that Jesus accepted John's baptism, and Mark and Luke add that this was a baptism of repentance unto remission of sins —a fact felt by Matthew to be so awkward that he refrains from describing

John's baptism in those terms and inserts a very unconvincing conversation between John and Jesus in order to remove the difficulty—unconvincing, because the explanation which he represents Jesus as offering is one that explains nothing. We may, of course, believe that he wished simply to identify himself sympathetically with the new and penitent people of God, or to consecrate himself more completely to the specific interests of his Kingdom, or more probably to do both; but in any case his refusal to mark himself off, on the ground of personal sinlessness, from John's other converts, is worthy of note.

(iii) Again, when accosted by the rich ruler as "Good Teacher," Jesus replies: "Why callest thou me good? There is no one who is good except one—God." Once again Matthew feels this language to be undesirable, and transfers the ruler's "good" from the Teacher to the Teacher's requirements, so that Jesus can reply quite safely: "Why askest thou me about goodness?" Modern scholars see the uselessness of defending Matthew's originality in this case, but they try to evade the natural meaning of Jesus' words by giving them a special interpretation. It is supposed that Jesus checked the ruler for his conventionally respectful address in order to rouse him to greater seriousness. But the story does not suggest that the ruler was not serious. And even if it had been Jesus' main purpose to make him so, why should he need to remind him that only God is absolutely good? The exegesis of the passage given by the late Sir Edwyn Hoskyns, in *Mysterium Christi* and *The Riddle of the New Testament*, to the effect that Jesus "merely tests the sincerity of the man's address" and challenges him to recognize his messiahship, is as farfetched and unsatisfying as its predecessors.

I do not wish to overemphasize these features in the record, still less of course to suggest that they are inconsistent with Jesus' intimate and constant communion with God. I submit only that they ought not to be explained away, and that, in view of them, and in view of the scantiness of our information, absolute and miraculous sinlessness is not a historically suitable form in which to express the nature of his admittedly unique goodness. The late Dr. H. R. Mackintosh truly wrote: "Ultimately, it may be argued, the complete certainty that Jesus never sinned is given by our faith in his person; for there is no way of proving experimentally the impossibility of a fact." [2] In other words, Jesus' sinlessness is not a given fact of history from which we can start.

(c) The selection of "sinlessness" as the most significant feature of Jesus' life, and insistence upon it as an absolutely certain and absolutely vital feature, reflects a theological obsession which, as I urged above, seems largely foreign to the view which he himself held regarding mankind, as well as to the realities of the human situation. To say this is, I am aware, to expose myself to the charge of "making light of sin." But the charge, if made, would be unwarranted, for I am under no illusions as to the tragic seriousness of sin. The theologians have supplied no better definition of sin than this, that it is that in us which obstructs our close fellowship with God, or of forgive-

[2] *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, 403 n.

ness than that it is that in God which effects the removal of the obstruction. Now normal growth, as the emergence from the immaturity of childhood, necessarily involves the enlargement and deepening of our fellowship with God—the increase in wisdom and in favor with God spoken of in Luke 2:52. It therefore necessarily involves the progressive removal of such obstruction as is due to immaturity. Here we have, I suggest, the justification of the wide sense given in Jewish teaching to the concept of sin. To assert that Jesus was exempt from the necessity of such advance is to fly in the face of the Gospel evidence. To deny that, as a human being, he was so exempt is not to forget the frequently appalling character of the obstruction in the case of *other* men.

(d) The idea of sinlessness is at best a negative idea.

> The goodness of Jesus is not to be looked for in the absence of everything in his conduct which may cause hesitation on our part as to its meaning or reason. It lies in the positive victorious love which manifests itself so plainly in the whole tenor of his life.[3]
>
> Beside this overwhelming fact (of salvation through Christ) our discussions about the infallibility or the sinlessness or the pre-existence of Jesus assume a merely academic interest. The business of Jesus is not to be a source of invariably correct information, nor yet to obtain an unvarying succession of alpha's when judged by our ethical standards. His business is to be the Savior of the world by having and imparting that perfect love of God which utterly condemns and yet saves to the uttermost.[4]

We shall therefore do better justice to the facts before us by concentrating on their positive quality than by making our interpretation of them hinge on a dogmatic negative, the precise meaning of which it has again and again proved impossible to state.

(8) Jesus probably did not utter the bulk of the discourses ascribed to him in the Fourth Gospel. While the Johannine narrative at some points valuably supplements and even corrects the Synoptic story, it is in other respects strangely negligent of the demands of history. Could a personal disciple of Jesus—or even a historically careful narrator—have represented him as publicly claiming and discussing his messiahship from the very commencement of his ministry, when we know from the Synoptists that he did not even divulge it to the Twelve before Peter's confession at Caesarea-Philippi and then commanded them to keep it a secret? The Johannine discourses are (a) quite different in subject matter and style from the sayings reported in the Synoptic Gospels, and (b) almost exactly similar in both respects to the reflections of the Fourth Evangelist himself. That is enough to determine their real character. We may, if we please, argue that they are a helpful interpretation of Jesus' meaning; we may note the full significance of the fact that men wished to ascribe such speeches to him; we may dwell on the unquestionably high Christology of the Synoptists; we may concede the possibility that here and there a real saying or very short discourse of Jesus has been preserved in the Fourth Gospel. But we have no right to quote its discourses indiscriminately as things actually said by

[3] R. S. Franks in *Congreg. Quart.*, Jan., 1932, 35.
[4] T. W. Manson in *Congreg. Quart.*, Apl., 1935, 159 f.

Jesus himself, and so as furnishing direct evidence for his self-consciousness. Nothing could be more unsatisfying than the way in which Dr. H. M. Relton, though fully aware of the critical arguments, persuades himself that he is entitled to quote the words of the Johannine Christ as reliable evidence for the thoughts of the real Jesus.

(9) We cannot be in any way sure that Jesus' physical body left the tomb, nor can we think of it as having ascended into the sky. Much of the heat generated in the discussion of this problem would have been avoided had it been consistently remembered that the narratives arose among Palestinian Jews, who were constitutionally unable to conceive of a person or soul continuing to live after the death of the body unless the body itself were resuscitated, and for whose minds therefore evidence for the former, in the shape of appearances, would automatically constitute evidence for the latter. The historical evidence for the visible appearances of Jesus after the crucifixion is early, strong and convincing; the evidence for the emptiness of the tomb is later and, because of its numerous inconsistencies, weaker. In view of the disciples' brief regarding soul and body, and in view of the inconceivability of the ascension *as narrated in Acts 1*, the evidence for the empty tomb is to me quite unconvincing. I am interested to see that, while Dr. Barth (along with other conservatives) insists on the emptiness of the tomb, Dr. Brunner apparently is not prepared to do so. Scholars who retain it usually find themselves driven to some explanation of the ascension quite inconsistent with the simple narrative in Acts 1; and even Barth, most of whose elucidations of the meaning of the resurrection are extremely obscure, is no exception here.

On the other hand, I agree with those who contend that a psychological explanation of the appearances as purely subjective is not adequate. The facts compel us to believe "that after death Christ became a living spirit, acting directly upon the minds of men, making his presence felt in their lives, directing and shaping the program of his church, using it as his instrument for the conversion of the world";[5] and that "only a genuine experience of intercourse with a living person victorious over death can lie behind the original creation of the Christian church." [6]

Some feel that even objective visions without the empty tomb would have certified mere survival after death, not triumph over it—particularly to the minds of those who normally assumed that resurrection would follow death only after a long interval of time, during which both soul and body were lifeless.

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[5] H. T. Andrews in *The Lord of Life*, 101.
[6] C. C. J. Webb, *The Historical Element in Religion*, 104.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF HISTORY

John S. Whale

How can the eternal God be revealed in and through the events of time? How can the relative disclose the Absolute? How can time be the vehicle of eternity? How can any human life, least of all a life ending on a gallows, make the Kingdom of God—the realm of the "wholly other"—a matter of actual experience? The very expression "historical revelation" is surely paradoxical to the verge of absurdity. Christ crucified—as the power of God and the wisdom of God! Is it surprising that this was, to the Greeks, foolishness? To quote those famous, almost hackneyed words of Lessing's Inaugural Lecture at Jena in the eighteenth century: "Particular facts of history cannot establish eternal truths. There is the ugly wide ditch over which I cannot get, oft and earnestly though I spring." . . . .

That the eternal God should give himself to man in terms of time is a great mystery, obviously enough; it is a mystery having no parallel since it is the only one of its class. Nevertheless, Christian faith lives on historical realities and refuses to disown them. Christian doctrine refuses to try to reduce the Gospel to a general philosophic truth. Great philosophical systems, notably those of Spinoza and Hegel (not to mention Hindu monism), have often disparaged history with its hard facts and its unique persons; there is something gross and carnal about its hurly-burly. Hegel can believe in the Logos, a great philosophical idea; but to believe in a Man who died for our sins and to whom we owe everything for our living relationship with God, is to ask too much of the philosopher of the Absolute.

The Gospel is not superior to history in this way. Its secret lies with the divine Saviour who, being found in fashion as a Man, lived the human life "under Pontius Pilate," and tasted death for every man. The Gospel, so far from being superior to history, *is* history.

What is history? A careful accumulation of all the facts? But that is a sheer impossibility. Facts are infinite in number; there are countless billions of events happening in every moment of historic time. History is always the selection and interpretation of facts. . . . .

The Christian faith asserts the significance for God of certain facts of history, which gives them their significance for man as revelation. The Kingdom, which is eternally in Heaven, comes to earth through facts which God accepts and transforms. God uses history to make his eternal and holy purposes of redemption actual. A Greek would say that time is only the moving image of eternity. But the Bible knows that it is more

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than this; it is an actual part of eternity because it has been taken up into eternity by God himself.

But here someone may raise a formidable difficulty. He may say: "Surely this is arbitrary. Why just the history of Israel and its consummation in the events of the New Testament? Why not the history of, say, the Incas of Peru? Why not all history? Granted that historical facts, human activities, do give actuality in time to the eternal Thought of God, why limit this so narrowly to the 'here-and-nowness,' the 'once-for-allness' of Palestinian history two thousand years ago? Surely the events of which Christian doctrine speaks are only examples, admittedly striking, but still only examples or illustrations of general religious truth."

This difficulty has been called "the stumbling-block of particularity," and it is a real stumbling-block. The answer which Christian doctrine makes to it is, in the main, two-fold.

First: there is no such thing as general religious truth; this is an abstraction from historical reality. Living religion is always related to certain events in the past which are peculiarly its own. Real faith never exists *in vacuo*, but in a social context, an historical tradition. Even the most nebulous mysticism which contends that no events or facts are vital for religion, forgets that mystics themselves are not the individualists they think they are; they, too, belong to a continuous tradition of religious experience.

The fact is that the present is not merely present; in some sense it comes out of the past and is an extension of that past. That is why Bacon could write: We are the ancients. And, similarly, the only past which matters to us is no mere past; it is our past. That is why Croce can write: Real history is our contemporary.

Thus, those who contend that all events of history are equally significant for religious faith, and that Christianity is therefore as old as creation, forget that natural religion of this kind is a sheer abstraction. This notion of a ready-made natural reason, which the whole movement of history illustrates, is an illusion; it is not natural, in the sense of being independent of the continuous social experience of the community.

Now, Christian doctrine insists that Christian faith is what it is—that it only exists at all—because certain events in the time process have a present, abiding, growing meaning. In and by them a new relationship between God and Man was constituted; it really was. Our presence here to-day in this lecture room is only one of many proofs of it. The Events which constituted what Christianity knows as Incarnation and Atonement created something new, not so much for the historian perhaps (though it certainly did that), but for the believer. He believes that certain facts to which the New Testament bears witness have momentous meaning because they do in fact create a new relationship between God and Man. It is not merely that they exemplify certain perennial truths; they have a creative, revolutionary import for religion. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." That is what they mean. It is strange; extraordinary; uncompromising. Yes; it is. No satisfactory explanation of it can be given, save that it authenticates it-

self to the heart of a believing Church, the Church of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

In the second place, the believer adds this: Jesus Christ is unique. No one is a revelation of God in the sense that he is. Perhaps there ought to be another history as enlightening about the will of God as Biblical history is. Perhaps there ought to be other revealers of his redeeming love as remarkable as the Man, Christ Jesus. But in fact there are none. Christian experience and Christian doctrine take their stand, not on what might be but on actuality, on something given. Not on a theory of natural reason (so called) but on *Sachlichkeit*, the factual; what has been and is.

Moral life is only possible for man as he is confronted by eternity. This temporal life of his is confronted by eternity in one unique event in time, of which the whole Bible is the record and the explanation. That event is Jesus Christ, crucified and risen from the dead. In it there is all the majesty of what has happened and can never be turned back into the not-happened by a reversal of time's wheel. The Cross towers over the wrecks of time; it is for evermore.

> Wisdom will repudiate thee if thou think to enquire *why* things are as they are, or whence they came; thy task is first to learn *what* is.[1] . . . .

The Christian religion means that Jesus Christ is the supreme and central miracle of history. He is the mightiest of God's mighty acts in time, and the earnest of the eternal Kingdom of Heaven. More than a prophet, more than a witness to God's redeeming activity, he is the full and final expression of that activity; he is God's presence and his very Self, under the veil of human life. The prophets had proclaimed the Word of God; he was and is the Word of God. The prophets promised the Kingdom; Jesus Christ was God's very agent and representative in bringing the Kingdom. Indeed, he was the lonely embodiment of its judgment and redemption, as he hung on the Cross and poured out his soul unto death.

Some words of Professor Dodd may be quoted here in exposition of this New Testament conviction that in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ history reached its supreme crisis. "The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was an immeasurable disaster, in which the rebellion of men against God came to a head, and sin wrote its own condemnation indelibly on the pages of history. His resurrection made out of the disaster itself a source of altogether new spiritual possibilities for men living in this world. By that two-fold event, the death and resurrection of Christ, the available range of communion between God and Man was enlarged to a point beyond which it is impossible to go. A new era was inaugurated. There was, in fact, a conclusive act of divine judgment and redemption in history. It was the coming of the Kingdom of God." [2]

To say that God revealed himself in Jesus, or that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, is to say nothing of real meaning unless

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[1] Robert Bridges, *The Testament of Beauty*.

[2] *Christian News-Letter*, Supp. No. 31.

we take our stand with the New Testament at one decisive point. That point is where God manifests Jesus as the Son of God with power, by the Resurrection from the dead.

All the evidence of the New Testament goes to show that the burden of the good news or gospel was not "Follow this Teacher and do your best," but "Jesus and the Resurrection." You cannot take that away from Christianity without radically altering its character and destroying its very identity. It is the presupposition, explicit and implicit, of every chapter in the New Testament. At the Cross, the Christian Church sees not merely a striking illustration of the Sublime, but the Sublime of omnipotent action. If the Passion had ended with the Cry of Dereliction in the darkness; if the immemorial problem of evil and pain is only intensified by the Cross; if he came, not to the rescue like a second Adam, but only to the old hopeless fight against sin and death, why should mortals worship this fellow-mortal as their victorious Saviour? If, after all is said, he is one more unfortunate gone to his death, the pathos of man's mortality is increased rather than lessened, and the dark riddle of human existence is darker, for ever. So far from unravelling the knot of human death, this death ties it tight once and for all; and the Christian faith, so far from lightening the burden and the mystery of all this unintelligible world, is its supreme and most pathetic illustration. That the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ should pronounce the doom, "Out, out, brief candle" on him who is the Light and which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, could only mean that there is no such God, and that Jesus Christ is his prophet(!). My meaning is that the very idea involves contradictions far less tolerable than the difficulty which it is supposed to meet. Indeed, no man can read the New Testament without realizing that the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, though an inscrutable mystery, is not the contradiction which his annihilation in death would be. His resurrection contradicts all human experience, admitedly. But Christ himself contradicts all human experience. Unless the whole structure of Christian experience and belief is a gigantic illusion, Jesus Christ is "eine wunderbare Erscheinung," a unique phenomenon which we can explain only in terms of the miraculous; a particular which is its own universal. Those who argue (with the best intentions, of course) that Jesus Christ is "like us" are silenced as soon as they are asked "like which of us?" The truth is that his likeness to us—"the likeness of sinful flesh"—only accentuates his qualitative and fundamental unlikeness to us, in that his relation to God is unlike anything that our race has seen.

All men, himself excepted, are wanderers in the far country. He alone among men has no need to return to the Father saying "I have sinned. . . . . and am no more worthy to be called thy son," because for him alone the perfect filial relationship has never been broken. He is the eternal Son. He is our Elder Brother who leaves the Father's home, coming into the far country to seek and to save that which was lost. He is in the far country, but not of it. Tempted in all points like as we are, he is nevertheless with-

out sin (Hebr. iv. 15). Wordsworth's description of our mother earth as the homely nurse, doing all she can

> "To make her foster-child, her inmate Man
> Forget the glories he hath known,
> And that imperial palace whence he came," [3]

includes all men except the One who "though he was divine by nature, did not clutch his equality with God, but emptied himself by taking the nature of a servant; born in human guise and appearing in human form, he humbly stooped in his obedience even to die, and to die upon the cross."

If this language corresponds to reality, any sequel to the Gospel story other than the Resurrection would be incredible and worse; it would shatter the very presuppositions of the Gospel story. The Resurrection of the Redeemer is logically inseparable from his uniqueness; his power in life and his power over death are necessarily correlative. The language of the Epistle to the Ephesians (i. 20) means that his cosmic victory is the inevitable expression of his Sonship; with the result that to doubt his exaltation after death is to put everything else which the Gospel says about his redeeming power in jeopardy. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (I Cor. xv. 17). St. Paul's logic is unanswerable.

The conviction which possessed Christian men from the beginning and which is not only the historic basis of the Church but its animating principle, is that Jesus Christ overcame evil and death and is alive for ever "at the right hand of God." In speaking thus, the Church, the very Body of Christ, is not making a vague rhetorical flourish. It is affirming that Christ was really victorious in man's unending battle against Satan and the powers of darkness, and that he could not be held captive by the grave. The Church of Christ owes its very existence to the fact that in this open graveyard of the world there is one gaping tomb, one rent sepulchre. Indeed, for those who begin with the adoring recognition that in the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ there is shown forth an unbroken communion with the Fountain of Life, in all its fulness, blessedness and glory, anything other than his glorious Resurrection and Exaltation would be the supreme problem demanding solution. From such premises any other conclusion would involve complete pessimism; it would wipe out everything in the Bible save the grim conclusion of Ecclesiastes: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

In short, if are to have a Christian philosophy of history at all, we have to choose between an unambiguously human martyr with whom "the President of the Immortals had ended his sport," [4] and the Christ who is the Power of God, going down like a celestial Samson into Hades, carrying away the gates, leading captivity captive, and bringing life and immortality to light.[5] In the words of Karl Heim of Tübingen, "Faith in Christ involves a question: Is he merely a great personality of the past, or is he the living Lord of history who can tell me with full authority what I have to do, amid

[3] Ode on the *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.*
[4] T. Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles.*
[5] J. S. Whale, *The Christian Answer to the Problem of Evil,* pp. 72-73.

all the complicated problems of the present? Jesus the Lord confronts us all with an Either-Or; we must either commit the whole of our life to him or repudiate him passionately and completely." [6]

Belief in the Resurrection is not an appendage to the Christian faith; it is the Christian faith. The full diet of public worship on any Sunday, anywhere throughout Christendom, is the celebration of the Resurrection of the Redeemer. This is the only sufficient basis and guarantee of Christian faith and worship. It is not tacked on to the Gospel story to make a happy ending, or to hide what, without it, would be the supreme tragedy of history; it is implicit in the story from the beginning. It is from the foundation of the world.

We cannot begin to understand how it happened. The Gospels cannot explain the Resurrection; it is the Resurrection which alone explains the Gospels. Here is the mightiest of the mighty acts of God, foreign to the common experience of man, inscrutable to all his science, astounding to believer and unbeliever alike. But here and only here is an activity of God, wrought out in this world of pain, sin and death, which is the key pattern for the world's true life. Here is the sure promise that life according to this pattern is eternal. This and this alone is the key to the Christian doctrine of history.

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[6] *Jesus der Herr*, frontispiece.

CHRISTIAN OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM

Nicholas A. Berdyaev

I

MY ATTITUDE IS not so thoroughly hopeless and dark as some of my critics think. It is true that I feel strongly the evil in life, man's bitter lot, but stronger than this is my sense of life's supreme meaning. For me the evil in the world does not mean the impossiblity of believing in God, rather than the converse: it proves that the world is not self-sufficient, and that God does exist. Any thinker who faces facts must join with me in sharp contradiction of the too-smooth and happy conception of Christianity, one which sees no tragedy, anywhere. Such a concept is based on the idea that the world is divided into two parts: those who are saved in the bosom of the church, where everything is light and joyful; and those who are lost in the world, where everything is just the opposite, dark and full of suffering. To me, such a division and such a self-consciousness of being saved seemed to be not in the spirit of the Gospels. The image of Christianity presented in the New Testament teaches us something quite different. Following Christ means that we will mingle with scribes and usurers, with those lost in the world and writhing in pain.

It is hard to understand how anyone can calmly and happily feel that he is safe in the garden of the church and refuse to share the terrible sorrow and suffering of the world. We are always in danger of pharisaical self-satisfaction. Many of those now outside the church have left it from high, rather than from low, motives. And toward these, those remaining in the church visible dare not assume a superior attitude. Instead of continuing its efforts to attract these seekers back to itself by the use of the ancient, time-worn methods, the church should offer some creative answer to their questions. It is not enough to say to those who suffer under the world's tragedy, "Come back to the church." We must open a new epoch in Christianity; our faith in such a new epoch must never waver.

It is surprising that anyone should derive from my books the impression that God has deserted the world, is not active in history. As a matter of fact, nothing I have written has sense at all unless God is active in history. Without this there would be no higher judgment, either upon history, or upon man himself. But God's action in history is mysterious, and cannot be rationalized. God is active in history, but so are man and nature. Hence history is an interaction of divine providence, natural determinism and human freedom. There is nothing in the Gospels, in the Christian teaching of God's having given his only Son for love of man and of the world,

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that decreases man's dignity or diminishes his creative power. The Gospel demands that man should be active; that he should actively perfect himself; that he should actively serve his neighbor; that he should likewise actively seek the Kingdom of God, which can be attained only by violence, that is, by the application of effort.

The whole course of history was altered by Christianity. All the teaching of European humanism about the high dignity of man, the value of every individual human personality, and man's endless prerogatives, was of Christian origin. Christianity transformed the very depths of the human soul. Without this inner transformation of human nature by Christianity, slavery never would have been overcome; the equality of man—above all in the sight of God—never admitted. The high ideal of freedom of human consciousness and its independence from the state could never have developed without this intervention of Christianity.

Not that Christian authorities and Christian hierarchs have always admitted human freedom, man's liberty of conscience. How often have they rejected and crushed it! Men have been tortured to death for their religious convictions. Though the Gospels did not, the church often denied the dignity of man. But this does not affect what God revealed to man through his Son, that is, the true essence of Christianity, rather than the human conception of it. It was Christianity which introduced into history true freedom of conscience. Christianity first established man's spiritual independence from nature and from the state. Christianity placed man face to face with God and denied the right of the state or of society to judge man's relations with his Lord.

It may be objected that historical Christianity often subjected itself to the state, became its obedient servant, even used the power of the state for its own interests; that it burnt heretics at the stake. But all these accidents were but the remnants of heathendom in the midst of Christian humanity; they were a human perversion of Christian truth. Thus when we speak of the part played by Christianity in history we must always keep in mind not the actions of separate historical Christians who have often shown themselves unworthy of Christianity, but the inner influence of the Christian conscience on the human soul.

II

The most important part of Christian teaching about man is that he is fashioned in the image and likeness of God; he reflects the highest in material creation; he is the child of God, and not merely a drop in the vast ocean of nature. As the image and likeness of God, man himself is a creator, and is called to create. We read in Genesis that man was made to rule over all created beings, to organize and till the soil. The very fact of his fall proves that man possessed power and freedom, which could be turned toward either good or evil. But Christianity also teaches that the Son of God, that is, God himself, became man, was incarnated, and took unto himself our human body, thereby elevating human nature to heights unknown and opening to man the possibility of becoming divine. The Son of God is also the son of

man. Therefore, man is also the son of God; man has been adopted by God. Through Christ, the God-Man, man receives creative power, which raises him above all the rest of nature.

Christianity affirms the dignity of man, and for this very reason wants to transform him and prepare him for his high destiny in eternity. The church has long since, for this very reason, rejected the quietism which taught that man should be completely passive, just as it has laid aside the doctrines denying human freedom of action. We know that man may be active; he may be victorious over the elemental forces of nature both within and without himself. Man may be the organizer and orderer of the world, but only if he possesses the spiritual life which raises him above nature; only if the creative principle within him is independent of outward influence. Now Christianity teaches the existence of just such an inner spiritual principle, which is equivalent to stating that both God and man are at work in a world which belongs to both.

Christian consciousness has always rebelled against a fatalistic conception of God's activity in the world. God is at work in the world, not independently of man, but through man, through man's freedom and man's activity. This is expressed in the popular proverb: "Trust God, but do your own best." If one had to choose, there would be much more reason for saying that man was inactive, that he was only the passive instrument of natural and social processes. But we refuse to consider man as the passive reflection of material social processes. Communists or other anti-Christian champions may declare that nature and society act through man's activity, and through the active struggle between classes. They may say that in Christianity God is supposed to act upon men mechanically, as a force from without, just as the "mechanization" theory explains the movement of matter. But there is much more basis for understanding Christianity as the action of God and of God's grace through man's activity, by means of this activity, and not as a divine action independent of man, carried out, so to say, above man's head. It is an inner, not an outward action, one which enlightens and enforces the freedom of man. At any rate it is easier to picture such relations as existing between God and man, where relations are spiritual and free, than to imagine them as existing between man and nature and society, materialistically conceived. Material relations always imply a certain outward violence. Only God, as a spiritual Being, can act from within, on the depth of man's conscience; he can act upon human freedom and by means of it. Belief in God implies belief in this inward power, illuminating human freedom and demanding man's activity.

In the final analysis, only that which proceeds from within merits the name of activity; only that which is not from without. Labor itself may be passive. The toil of slaves is passive not only in the midst of a slave-owning society, but under capitalism or communism as well. Of course men may be so perfectly disciplined that they will feel free even in the midst of slavery. But in such a case man has lost his true image, his God-given worth. And sooner or later man will rebel, and reassert his right to inner freedom. No, God's action always implies freedom of spirit, man's

spiritual activity. Only the inner reaction of spirit upon spirit presupposes the freedom and activity both of the doer and of the object of the deed, thereby excluding at once all violence and all passivity. God is a spirit and he reacts upon man as upon a spiritual being. Spirit is freedom and activity.

Thus God is active in history, together with man and nature, and his judgment upon history consists in his revealing the imminent results of man's following a road which does not lead toward the Kingdom of God. This judgment is not punishment by God: that is a thoroughly anthropomorphic and esoteric conception. It is rather an experiencing of the results of turning away from God. It is wrong, in this connection, to think only of a wrathful and vengeful God, and not a God of love. Actually, punishment does not proceed from God: we are led astray by the insufficiency of our language. I believe only in a God of love and not in a God who terrifies and punishes. But the love of God diffused as by a prism into its elements, may act like a fire, and be experienced as punishment. The immanent judgment upon history is not the final judgment upon man and upon the world.

III

The most difficult, and at the same time the most fundamental, problem which we face in this connection, is that of the source of and responsibility for evil. It is hard to reconcile oneself to the idea that God is responsible for evil. Everything is in the hand of God. He uses even evil for his good purposes. Nothing is free of relationship to God. Hence Calvin drew the logical and radical conclusion expounded in his doctrine of predestination. Does God really act in evil and by its means? If so, then responsibility for the evil and suffering in the world rests upon him. If not, then there exists a certain freedom in our own relations with God. But this limits his omnipotence; it makes God powerless (I recognize the limitations of the language used here) in relation to the problem of evil.

This is the most troublesome of all problems, and it has no satisfactory and optimistic solution. It tortured Dostoevsky. Most of the theodicies, from Augustine to Leibnitz, are not merely unsatisfactory, but downright shameful, for both God and man. We may, of course, accept the purely agnostic position and agree that here we are face to face with the final mystery, which cannot be solved, rationally. This is better than rationalized theodicies; but in both theology and metaphysics it has never managed to persist in a pure form, and at last theories have always been developed, more or less offensive to a sensitive conscience.

Many of the church fathers, we know, taught that evil is non-being. But if we think out this theory to the end, we have to admit that the source of evil lies outside being, but even there the omnipotence of God extends, that is, in a non-being and a non-created freedom. This is only a philosophical interpretation and expression of the final mystery of freedom of the will and of evil. This problem is the source of our tragic sense of the world as a whole. And to this we are led, both by our experience of the world's sin and suffering, and by our experience of creation, the creation of any-

thing new in the world. The one escape from evil is in the suffering of God himself, that is, in Christ—not in God the Omnipotent, but in God the Redeemer, the God of sacrificing love. This, I believe, is the essence of Christianity.

IV

Jesus Christ is not merely a historical figure. He is our eternal contemporary. His work on earth will continue to the end of the world. We cannot admit any doubt as to the continuous existence of Christ on earth, or of its inner significance in the process of history. The question we face is quite different: What is the nature of the church, and what are its limits of action? Is the church, as a mystical organism, limited to those visible forms we now have, of one or another confession?

Some preachers often present the loving God's participation in human life as though it applied only to those already in the church—those aboard the ark in a time of flood. But the greater part of humanity in history, and especially in our day, lives outside the church, is not aboard the ark, and is drowning in the stormy sea of the world. Does this mean that God has turned away from the major portion of humanity in this world? Can believing Christians overlook the world's agony and think that this suffering does not concern them? Can they continue to be optimistic, in spite of the pessimism which must result from attentive observation of the world? This would be to sin against the commandment of love. In André Gide's novel *The Prodigal's Return*, an abnormal treatment of the gospel theme, when he was asked what he did in the world abroad, the Prodigal replies, "I suffered." The same reply may be made equally well by those who left their father's house in search of truth and justice, as by those who forsook it to seek happiness and the pleasures of life. Christians cannot be indifferent to the sufferings of those who have left their father's house and are caught in the world's agony.

And our interest in these sufferers may not be limited to efforts to convert them to Christianity and restore them to the church. Christians have much to learn from them. We must give special attention to man's fate in the world, and consent to share his trials and sufferings. When the modern man is threatened with destruction, Christianity can help him only if it pays special attention to the restlessness, the searchings and questionings of the modern spirit. This is evidently not well understood in most church circles. They seem insensible of the movement of time, and continue to think that man is in the same position that he was five hundred or a thousand years ago.

It must not be thought that this means the eventual disappearance of the church. But the historic church is passing through a crisis in our day, and upon it, too, judgment is being passed. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it, for they are powerless against Christ, but terrible assaults are being made, and not only by means of forces outside the church, but by influences within it, as well—forces which have debased Christianity to human interests. The responsibility for contemporary atheism lies not alone upon the atheists themselves, but even more and even previously, upon those who

have constantly cried "Lord, Lord," and offered a distorted image of belief in and worship of God. The church may be defended against this criticism only if we recognize the existence of two conceptions of the church. The church is the mystical body of Christ, a spiritual organism, a continuing incarnation, as it were. But the church is also a social institution; it is made up of sinful human beings; it is bound up with its social milieu, its influences and inspirations; it has its own law and economy, its own definite relationship to the state.

In this second sense, the church, in the course of its history, has borne the limitations and committed the errors of all historical, social institutions. It has served worldly interests, has sometimes presented the temporal as something eternal. In this sense we have a right to expect the church to repent, to acknowledge its errors and its partial betrayal of its Master. The greatest sin of the church as a social institution in history has been not the errors of its individual hierarchs or laymen, but a sinful distortion of the very principles of Christianity, an adaptation to human interests of the substance of the creeds. Too much of what was human and sinful has been acclaimed as holy and divine. Upon this situation judgment is being passed and here we demand that the church repent.

But it is only in its human aspect, in the person of its clergy and laity, that the church can acknowledge its errors and do repentance. It must repent of betraying God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. And here we are not thinking of *the personal sins of hierarchy or laity, but of the errors of the church as a* whole, of its distortion of Christianity. The membership of the church, both lay and cleric, are greatly to blame for the godlessness of our present world; they have small excuse for posing as the preservers of the truth or as critics of others. The pharisees of today are not all outside the temple.

Let no one think that the reactions against pharisaism which fill the New Testament are something of the distant past. Pharisaism is an eternal element in the history of the church, and it has often distorted Christian thinking and morals. Pharisaism exists even in communism, and pharisees exist in the church today, accepted among the faithful. Instead of being excommunicated themselves, they excommunicate others. And the publicans and sinners are all too often outside the walls of the visible church.

V

God is always at work in the world, but his gracious activity does not resemble our human judgment with its cruelty, its lack of attention to human personality, its ruthlessness. God's activity is something very complex and really incomprehensible for us, because of its interrelationship with human freedom and with the dark elements of the world. This activity can never be something of violence or action from without. Even God's judgment on the world seems ruthless just because he respects human liberty and does not wish to do it violence.

Man's fate in his searchings and sufferings is that of Job. And I fear most of all lest we come to resemble Job's comforters. Job himself was justified by God, and his comforters were condemned. Christians all too often take

the attitude of Job's friends. By this means they think to remain optimists, regardless of the incommensurate sufferings of man and of the world. Let the "evil" writhe in suffering, that is but just; the "good" are satisfied to separate themselves from this painful fate. But this is absolutely inacceptable to the thinking Christian. No one can separate himself from the common fate of man and of the world. No one can say, self-satisfied, that he is going the right road. How can we approve of a spiritual attitude which, while protecting itself from contact with evil, calmly consigns to perdition the greater part of the human race?

I know very well that it is considered an essential sign of the way of salvation that the Christian should recognize his own unworthiness and sin. But, unfortunately, in the minds of many Christians this consciousness has taken on rhetorical and conditional forms. The problem I am stating is somewhat different. It is not a matter of recognizing ourselves as sinful and unworthy—this is inescapable for every Christian—but rather of taking it upon oneself to share the searchings and the sufferings of the rest of the world. We are all responsible for all. In times past men retired from the world into monasteries, to go the way of asceticism. But now the truly ascetic way is life in this world. Battle against God may even sometimes be more pleasing to him than some forms of piety and worship. Job struggled with God; his comforters were the pious ones. And in our day Job exists, together with his friends. Job was passing through a moment of pessimism. His friends could remain optimists because they believed that everything which took place was just. But the judgment of God is always more mysterious than we think, even theology cannot rationalize it.

VI

I am not an optimist, but it would be just as wrong to characterize me as a pessimist. Complete pessimism is incompatible with Christianity and would mean treason to being itself, temptation by the spirit of non-being. Least of all am I what might be called a passive pessimist; mine is rather an active pessimism, a pessimism of conflict. More than anyone I believe in man, in his God-like nature, his supreme worth, his calling to creative effort in the world, in a way continuing the world's creation. Everything I have written has witnessed to this. But this is not at all a purely optimistic, one-sided belief in the innocence and natural state of grace of human nature—optimism in the spirit of J. J. Rousseau. The very presence in human nature of the spirit of liberty and of creativeness makes human life inescapably tragic.

Man is placed before the abyss of being or non-being. And he cannot, of his own power, overcome the abyss; he has need of help from above. This is an affair for God and man, together. And if, in our day, the very essence of man's image is threatened, if man is being torn asunder, it is just because he has depended exclusively upon his own strength. Man is passing through what may perhaps be the most perilous phase of his whole history. But I do not think that man's fate is altogether sealed and hopeless. Its hopelessness is only on our side of the line, not on God's side. We do not believe that the history of the world will go on forever; the world will have an

end, and so will history. But this means that we do not believe in the possibility of a final solution here, on this earth, in our time. This proves the hopelessness of the situation from the world's viewpoint.

But the consciousness of this hopeless situation should not hinder man's creative activity or his efforts to realize justice here and now. This creative effort will have its influence on the end of the world itself. The end is a divine-human matter. And the last word, which is God's, will include also a word of man. Thus an absolute pessimism is also logically impossible, since every judgment upon the meaninglessness and evil of this world presupposes the existence of a higher Meaning. Every judgment upon life here postulates the existence of God. In this sense we may even say that the existence of evil, properly understood as evil, really proves the existence of God himself.

CHRIST AS THE CENTER OF HISTORY

Paul Tillich

1. The Kingdom of God as the Meaning of History

(1) *For the Christian consciousness Christ is the center of history. His appearance is interpreted as the "fulness of time," that is, as the fulfillment of all historical preparation.*

In calling Christ the center of history we do not apply a general category to a special case, but we apply a category which is found through the analysis of the significance of Christ (in Christian faith) to Christ; we return to Christ what we have taken from Him. For in Christ, namely in the reality which is contained in different original interpretations in the New Testament, Christianity sees the appearance of the ultimate meaning of life in history. The fact that the Christian nations speak of a period before and a period after Christ shows how deeply Christian consciousness is penetrated by belief in Christ as the center of history.

The center of history is decisive for the beginning and for the end of history. From the Christian point of view history has a supra-historical beginning—the fall; and an intra-historical beginning—the rise of the expectation of a redeeming event. History has also a supra-historical end—the final consummation or the parousia of Christ; and it has intra-historical end—the victory over the anti-divine powers which arise in history, or the reign of Christ. Neither this beginning nor this end can be determined in terms of physical time. We can express them only in symbolic records of the past (Gen. 1-12) and in symbolic interpretations of the future (millenniums).

A specially important category of the New Testament interpretation of history is *Kairos*. It designates the fulfillment of the period of expectation or preparation, and the beginning of the period of reception or fragmentary actualization. The Greek word *Kairos*, which originally only meant without discrimination the "right time," is used in a prophetic interpretation of history for *the* right time in which all time gains its meaning and qualification. The predominance of the logos-doctrine within the Greek church prevented the development of a *kairos*-doctrine, i.e., a Christian interpretation of history.

(2) *The Christian interpretation of history considers the history of mankind ultimately as history of salvation.*

The belief that Christ is the center of history, and that in him the reality of salvation has appeared in history, implies the belief that human history is ultimately to be interpreted in terms of salvation. Salvation means the ful-

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From *The Kingdom of God and History*, by H. G. Wood and others, Chicago, 1938, pp. 119-27. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Willett, Clark & Company.

fillment of what existence ought to be by overcoming the destructive, meaning-defying, powers of existence. As in Christian doctrine, Christ is saving man in temporal life as well as beyond temporal life, so the history of salvation is going on in history as well as beyond history. Salvation is actualized in history whenever a demonic power in social or individual existence is overcome by the divine power which has become visible in Christ. And salvation is actualized beyond history in the ultimate unification and purification of meaning.

The human mind is not able to conceive salvation beyond life and history in terms taken from world experience which are technically called "ontic." It can be conceived only in terms of meaning. If ontic terms such as resurrection, immortality, new earth and new heaven are used, they have a symbolic character, since they point to some elements of the ultimate meaning of existence. So, for instance, the symbol of resurrection points to the truth that the totality of personal life, including the human body, belongs to the ultimate meaning of existence. The symbol of a new earth points to the truth that the natural basis of history is not excluded from the ultimate meaning of existence. Hence it follows that the choice of symbols is decisive for truth or error.

Salvation is related to individuals as well as to groups, to mankind as well as to nature, to personalities as well as to institutions. For the problem of history the salvation of groups and institutions is of special importance. It means that the demonic perversion and destruction of groups and institutions is overcome, partially in history, completely beyond history. While the Christian churches in the Catholic period dealt with the salvation of individuals and with the salvation of groups and institutions only with respect to the church itself, and in Protestantism the salvation of groups and institutions is neglected altogether, the post-Protestant period of Christianity probably will deal predominantly with the ultimate meaning and the salvation of groups and institutions. The fact that a religious interpretation of history has become a very urgent problem of applied theology testifies to this.

2. The Kingdom of God in History

(1) *The realization of the Kingdom of God within history is determined by the history of the church, in part directly through the historical growth of the church itself, and partly indirectly through the conscious or unconscious relation of all history to the history of the church.*

If the meaning of history is salvation, then all history must be related to that course of history in which redemption is prepared and received. The church is the "bearer" of this course of history, both in the stage of preparation and in the stage of deception.

Hence we are justified in calling the church the "bearer" of history. Of course this does not mean that the events of world history have been determined, in an historico-empirical sense, by the synagogue and the Christian churches; only a very small part of mankind, from the point of view of space and time, has any contact with the churches at all, and even where

there is contact, or even very close touch, it is truer to say that the secular powers have far more influence on the outward destiny of the churches than the other way round. But the church is more than the Christian churches and their precursors. The church is the community of those partly visible and partly invisible, who live in the light of the ultimate meaning of existence, whether in expectation or in reception. The church, understood in this way, is the power which gives meaning to historical life as a whole.

The meaning of Christian missions is based upon this truth. It is the task of the Christian mission to gather the potential, divided church out of all religions and cultures and to lead it into the actual church, and in so doing to transform potential world history into actual world history to give humanity a unified historical consciousness. This also means that all over the world expectation is to be transformed into reception.

(2) Through Christ as the center of history, history is divided into two main periods: the period of preparation and the period of expectation. In each of these two main periods, however, this division is repeated, in so far as history always has the basic character either of expectation or of reception and fragmentary actualization of a new principle of meaning. The transition from the one to the other may be called a special *Kairos.*

From the standpoint of its ultimate meaning all history is either the preparation for or the reception of the center of history. But the preparation is never merely preparation; it is always also anticipating actualization. If it were not so, all pre-Christian history would be devoid of meaning. But this would be true neither of the prophetic Hebrew stage of preparation nor of the general "sacramental" preparation within paganism.

The vital force of both is drawn from their anticipating reception of the center of history; the Jewish development in direct preparation for its appearance, and the pagan development in indirect preparation create the parallelism of understanding. On the other hand, the post-Christian development is never only reception, since it always contains pagan and Jewish elements of expectation and preparation.

The fundamental division applies also to the two main periods themselves. Each period is subdivided into shorter periods, each with its own center which gives it meaning, its own beginning and end. Periods which seem to be controlled by expectation are succeeded by periods which prove to be a fragmentary actualization. From the sociological point of view this has been described as the rhythm of "critical" and "organic" periods. Even the history of the church often follows this course. But no age is completely lacking in "reception" and none is without an element of "expectation."

For the Christian interpretation of history the centers of particular periods are dependents upon the center of history. This gives the criterion for the interpretation of each center and for historical universal action from every particular center. If the New Testament idea of the *Kairos* is applied within a definite period, it expresses the conviction that that which has appeared once for all in "the fulness of time" has reappeared in a special way as the center of a particular historical period. The unique, non-recurring *Kairos* remains the standard for all the particular forms in which it reappears.

For instance, the period preceding the Reformation may be called a period of expectation and anticipating actualization. The appearance of the new interpretation of the center of history by Luther may be called a special *Kairos* (as Luther himself felt), and a Protestant materialization after him may be called a period of reception and fragmentary actualization. In the same way the present period of the decay of liberalism and secularism may be called a period of expectation which perhaps may be followed by a period of reception after the turning point, the *Kairos*, has occurred. It is exactly this feeling which gave rise to the renewal of the doctrine of Kairos by "Religious Socialism." It is impossible to give criteria abstracted from the actual situation by which the existence or non-existence of a special *Kairos* can be judged. It is a matter of the faith of those who act in a special situation; it is a venture which may fail because faith and spiritual power may not be strong enough. The "will of God" in any given historical situation cannot be recognized by general criteria but only by daring faith.

3. Salvation and World History

(1) *For the Christian interpretation of history salvation is the meaning of world history. But salvation is not the same thing as world history. Primarily and above all salvation is judgment passed upon world history.*

The negative presupposition of world history is human freedom with which the symbol of temptation deals, and the emergence of the contradiction between essence and existence which is expressed in the symbol of the Fall. From this presupposition of history there follows the contradiction in which it stands to salvation: salvation is the actual overcoming of the contradiction between essence and existence upon which world history is based.

A direct expression of the contradiction in history is the abuse of power. Power in itself is a structural principle of historical existence. But it is not only in accordance with but also in opposition to the meaning which is to be realized through historical power. It not only fulfills historical vocation but it also betrays it. In so far as all history is a history of struggles for power, salvation is judgment passed on world history. The external expression of this judgment is the destruction of power by power. Hence in the Kingdom of God, the goal of world history, power is only found in absolute unity with love.

(2) *If world history were only opposition to salvation, it would directly destroy itself. It can only exist at all because it is not only judged by salvation but is also supported by it.*

Power cannot exist without a meaning, in the name of which it is power. The values with which power must unite itself are realizations of the meaning of history, moments in the fragmentary actualization of salvation upon which the possibility of power, and therefore of history, are based. The sociological expression for the fact that power needs a meaning, in order to be able to exist, is "ideology." The word "ideology" has acquired a negative sense, challenging the deliberate or unconscious misuse of ideas for the preservation of a power whose existence is threatened. But the thing itself,

the combination of power and value, should not be estimated in a merely negative manner; it is the positive foundation of history as a whole.

History is carried by those groups and individuals who represent in their existence a meaning which belongs to the ultimate meaning and is unified and purified in it. As far as salvation is the latent meaning of history those are its real bearers who incorporate and represent in themselves this meaning, either in expectation or in reception. The spirit of salvation radiating from those personalities and groups is the power which again and again overcomes the demonic self-destruction of historical existence. If we call the latent community of those people the invisible church, we must agree with the New Testament in asserting that the church is the real bearer of history. This is not a claim for the empirical churches, but a demand upon them.

It is a general experience that in the moment in which the divine breaks into the temporal and a new *Kairos* is approaching the demonic acquires increased power. It is, however, impossible to derive from this experience a general law of progressive regressive development of universal history. Both judgments, the optimistic as well as the pessimistic, should be avoided.

(3) *As salvation is carrying world history so, on the other hand, world history is the fragmentary actualization of salvation.*

The seriousness and the gravity of human history depends upon the fact that world history is the fragmentary actualization of salvation. Each particular act which is related to the ultimate meaning which has appeared in Christ has infinite significance, because it is the "coming of the Kingdom of God." It is a logical result of their point of view that those who interpret the Kingdom of God in a purely transcendental manner finally come to regard history as a meaningless occupation of man with himself, while the concept of salvation falls away altogether.

The fragmentary actualization of salvation in world history does not mean that salvation can be fulfilled within history. For salvation within history is opposed by destruction; the divine is opposed by the demonic. Salvation is actual within world history to the extent in which the destructive forces are overcome, the power of the demonic is broken, and the final fulfillment of meaning appears. Thus salvation within world history does not remove the conflict between the divine and the demonic.

Accordingly the doctrine of the millennium should not be interpreted as a static final condition, and certainly not in Augustine's sense of the sovereignty of the hierarchy. The millennium should be interpreted as a symbol of the victory over concrete demonic forces within history. The demonic is subdued in actual victories from time to time—but it is not extirpated. When the power of a particular form of the demonic is broken the *Kairos* of a particular period is fulfilled. To expect not only that the power of concrete demonic forces will be broken at definite periods in history, but that in some future age the demonic as a whole will be utterly destroyed, is a religious "utopianism" which should be regarded as quite untenable.

The relationship of the fragmentary actualization of salvation in history and its fulfillment in the transcendent unity and purity of meaning cannot be expressed in terms of time and history. Every attempt to do so makes the

ultimate meaning a section in the totality of meanings, a history after history, a time after time. History itself can define the supra-historical only in negative terms. Every positive expression is a symbol and has to be understood as such in order to avoid that "transcendent utopianism" which belongs to the distortions of religion and Christianity.

THE NEW CHRISTOLOGY

Albert C. Knudson

MUCH CAN BE said from the practical point of view in favor of the positivistic or agnostic attitude toward the problem of the person of Christ represented by Ritschl and his school. If Christian believers would accept the Christ of the New Testament without theorizing about him, it might be better both for the church and for religion in general. But this they seem unable to do. Their minds demand some sort of an explanation of Jesus' uniqueness. Then, too, in self-defense they need a theory of their own with which to meet the purely humanitarian views of unbelievers. So interest in the construction of a satisfactory Christology seems to continue unabated.

The various developments in modern thought . . . . make inevitable a revision of the traditional Christology. They call for a more historical, a more empirical, a more anthropocentric, a more ethical, and a more personalistic approach to the problem. This is evident from the history of Christological thought during the past century.

The specific changes that seem called for are in the main three. First, complete humanity must be attributed to Jesus, not only in the sense that he had a human spirit as well as a human soul and body, but in the sense that his personal center, his ego, was human. This does not exclude his divinity, but it does mean the relinquishment of the traditional theory that the human nature of Jesus was impersonal and that the ego or personal center of his being was constituted by the eternal Logos. In the second place, the uniqueness of Jesus is to be regarded as due, not to the union of two "natures" within him, one human and the other divine, but to his unique dependence upon the divine will and to his unique enduement with the Divine Spirit. Third, divinity is to be ascribed to Jesus, not because he made this claim for himself, nor because he was possessed of omniscience and omnipotence, but because of his unique consciousness of oneness with God and because of his creative and redemptive agency in the founding of the kingdom of God. On each of these changes it may be well to comment briefly.

The first is the most fundamental of the three and to a large degree carries with it the other two. Perfect manhood, it is true, was affirmed of Jesus by the Chalcedonian creed; but so long as self-consciousness and selfhood were not included in his human nature it is evident that his manhood was not complete. Indeed, apart from the "I," the personal center of one's being, one's manhood is a mere abstraction. It has no real existence. To have been truly human, then, Jesus must have had a human ego. And no one

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would probably ever have questioned this if it had not been the place assigned him in Christian worship. To be a proper object of worship he must have been divine as well as human, and in order to be divine it was felt that his human nature must have been curtailed. Hence the personal center of his being was transferred to the incarnate Logos.

But now that Jesus is again thought of as having had a human ego, the question arises as to what differentiated him from other men and made him unique in the sense claimed for him by the Christian faith. One might repeat the ancient formula and say that he had a divine as well as a human nature. But in that case we should have to ask whether the divine nature was personal or not. If personal, we would be ascribing to Jesus two centers of consciousness and would thus fall into a hopeless dualism. If impersonal, we would have on hand a bare abstraction similar to that of an impersonal humanity, and no real advance toward the solution of the problem would be made. So the second change above mentioned is taking place. Modern thought is turning away from the two-nature doctrine and is substituting for it the idea of Jesus' unique dependence upon God. We are all to a large extent dependent beings, dependent upon God. Our dependence as spiritual beings might in physiological terms be said to be a dependence on the brain and in psychological terms a dependence upon the "subconscious" self, but in the last analysis it is a dependence upon God. The dependence varies with different individuals, and varied to an extraordinary degree in the case of Jesus. He was dependent upon God, as are all men, but at the basis of his life there was a unique divine creative activity that made his metaphysical relation to God different from that of other men. This difference did not consist in his possession of a divine "nature" or substance but in the special mode of operation of the immanent divine will upon which he was dependent.

From this point of view there seems to me to be an element of truth in Dr. William Sanday's theory of the "subliminal consciousness" as the "seat, or *locus*, of the Deity of the incarnate Christ." Doctor Sanday speaks of Jesus' human consciousness as "the narrow neck through which the divine alone could come to expression" and represents a horizontal line or plane as separating the upper human medium from the lower and subconscious deeps which are the proper abode of the divine. Taken realistically, this theory is open to serious objections, but if we regard the realm of the "subconscious" as a mere symbol of the dependence of much of our conscious life upon hidden forces within us, there is no reason why we should not in Jesus' case think of it as the seat of his divinity. What would then be meant by this figurative mode of expression would be that his divinity consisted in his unique dependence upon God. Within the deeps of his being there were hidden divine forces that made his life and mission different from those of other men.

Another way of conceiving the uniqueness of Jesus is to think of the Divine Spirit as present in him to an unprecedented degree. This is a religious mode of representation with which we are all familiar and which we are accustomed to accept as self-evident in meaning. But when we come to in-

quire how the Divine Spirit dwells in us and how it dwelt in Jesus, the matter turns out to be less simple and clear than we may at first have supposed. We cannot think of the Divine Spirit as spatially present within us, and so we speak of it as dynamically present. But a dynamic relation is not representable to the imagination; in its inmost essence it is a mystery. All that we can do, then, is to operate with the general idea of casual agency. We may conceive of the Divine Spirit as causally or dynamically present in two different ways. We may think of it as the power upon which our lives are dependent or as a Being with which we are or may be in reciprocal interaction. Both of these conceptions are significant as applied to the person of Christ; but it would perhaps be best to restrict the word Spirit to the second. We may then think of Christ as uniquely dependent upon God and also as standing in a unique relation of reciprocal interaction with the Divine Spirit. In both respects God may be thought of as incarnate in him.

The third change, above referred to as introduced by the newer Christology, had to do with the nature of Jesus' divinity and the evidence for it. According to the older view Jesus was divine in the full absolute sense of the term and was conscious of himself as such. He was omnipotent and omniscient and knew that he had these attributes though he may have temporarily relinquished their exercise. This followed naturally from the view that the Logos formed the personal center of his being. But with the new emphasis on the humanity of Jesus limitations came to be placed on his divine nature. It was said that the Logos in becoming man laid aside the metaphysical attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscence, and retained only the ethical attributes of Deity. Then it was said that the incarnation was limited by the receptivity of human nature and was consequently gradual in character. Finally, it was affirmed that the personal center of Jesus' consciousness was human, not that of the Logos, and this involved a still further departure from the traditional conception of his divinity.

The divinity of Jesus was now grounded in the divine will rather than the divine nature, and was thought of as manifesting itself in a heightened human consciousness rather than in a type of experience alien to that of normal humanity. The evidence of it was consequently sought, not in the miraculous deeds that he performed nor in the miraculous events that accompanied his birth and death, nor in his own claim to divinity, but in his filial consciousness, in his sinlessness, in his spiritual authority, and in his redeeming power. These extraordinary characteristics did not generate in Jesus himself the conviction that he was God, nor is it probable that he had what could be called a memory of a pre-existent state. His divinity in other words, was not his own theory about himself nor was it explicit in own self-consciousness. It was rather the church's conception of what he was or should be to his followers and to the world. Looking back upon what he was and upon his moral and spiritual significance in the history of the world the church has confidently affirmed with Paul that God was in him. This is the church's interpretation of his unique personality. How God was in him, has been and is a subject of dispute. But from the modern point of view the tendency is to think of the divine presence as manifesting itself in his unique religious con-

sciousness and in his unique spiritual power. This consciousness and power were due to a unique dependence on God and to a unique reciprocal interaction between the free spirit of Jesus and the Divine Spirit; and hence it may be said with Schleiermacher that these unique and creative qualities in Jesus' life were "a veritable existence of God in him."

The theory outlined in the preceding paragraphs might be called the consciousness and dependence theory. It differs from the two-nature doctrine in that it is more strictly theistic and personalistic. It recognizes, as the other doctrine does not, the ultimate and underivable character of personal unity and also the distinct individuality of both God and man. The hypostatic union of two natures must be conceived pantheistically if at all. There is no other way of combining the two natures into a personal unity. So to avoid this difficulty and to bring the doctrine of the person of Christ into closer harmony with the Christian conception of God and man, the new Christology sets aside the idea of two component natures and thinks of the unitary personality of Jesus as uniquely dependent upon the divine will and as standing in a unique relation of personal interaction with the Divine Spirit. The result of this twofold relation to God, one dependent and the other interactive, was the production of a unique God-consciousness, in which God was actually present and which made Jesus both the ideal man and the perfect organ of divine revelation.

From the very nature of this Christological theory it follows that the doctrines of the Virgin Birth and the bodily resurrection of Jesus are not essential to it. The relation of Jesus to God, as conceived in the thory, is quite independent of the method of his advent into the world. It may have been miraculous or it may not. The question is one to be settled by historical criticism so far as this is possible. Beyond that one's sense of aesthetic fitness and one's attitude toward miracles in general are likely to have the deciding vote. The same is also to be said of the bodily resurrection of Jesus. The physical miracle may or may not have taken place. The question is not one that vitally concerns the Christian faith. Much can be said in favor of the view that Paul knew nothing about the empty grave, that this belief arose later, and that his own belief and that of the other disciples in the resurrection was based on the appearances of Jesus to them. What the nature of these appearances was, is not altogether clear; but judging from Paul's Damascus experience they were probably subjective and spiritual in character. They carried with them, however, the firm conviction that Jesus had triumphed over death and was alive. On this conviction the Christian Church was founded, and no Christology would be adequate that did not take account of it. If Jesus' life had ended with the grave, it would not have mattered how perfect his character had been nor how intimate his fellowship with God; the faith of the disciples both in him and in his God would have been mocked by such an outcome. What alone gave rise to the Christian Church was the deep-seated conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead and had actually appeared to the disciples. But how he arose and what became of his body was no essential part of that belief. It was enough to know that he

who was dead was alive again and in living fellowship with his God and with those who believed in him.

An objection is sometimes raised to the new Christology on the ground that it does not bring out adequately the idea of the divine condescension and the divine self-sacrifice. If the Logos was the subject of the mental life of Christ and particularly if, while such, his being or his consciousness was reduced to the dimensions of a human soul, it is evident that a real self-abnegation could be ascribed to him. The self-denial would be much more evident in case he relinquished altogether this absolute consciousness than if he retained it along with his incarnate life; but in the latter case also it is to some extent implied. If we, however, think of God as present in Christ only in the sense of being the sustaining ground and inspiring source of his unique life and consciousness, the element of self-renunciation is not so evident. We have in that case merely a condescension similar to that involved in the divine creative activity as a whole, but no such special act of sacrificial love as has commonly been associated with the advent of Christ into the world.

In reply to this objection several considerations may be urged. For one thing, it is doubtful if such self-depotentiation as that contemplated by the kenotic theory would be a truly ethical act. The Logos, it would seem, would be under obligation to maintain the fullness of his own life. Again, it would hardly seem necessary that the Logos should become the subject of the mental life of Jesus in order to express adequately the divine love to man. A real divine presence can be conceived under the form of an immanent activity of the divine will and Spirit, and because of this unique divine presence it is still possible to speak of Christ as pre-existent, pre-existent not only in the divine purpose, but also by virtue of the divinity resident within him. Then too, a true condescension must be spiritual rather than metaphysical. It must consist in a sympathetic and compassionate love, and this love must have been a permanent divine attribute. It cannot have been limited to a single act of self-depotentiation nor is it inherently probable that it would take this metaphysical form at all. What was needed was a more perfect revelation of the divine love, and this we have in Christ. In his life and death we have not only a reflection but an actual expression of the sacrificial love of God himself.

Another objection to the theory under consideration comes from those who think that the uniqueness claimed for Jesus unfits him to be our example. This objection is urged still more strongly against the two-nature doctrine; but in neither case is it valid. For Jesus is not our example in the sense that we can or ought to be able to do all that he did. We read in the New Testament that he left us an example that we should follow his steps and that we should have in ourselves the mind which was also in him. But nowhere is it stated or assumed that this put him on the same level with ourselves or that it is within our power to be all that he was. No doubt a person's example would in one sense be more encouraging to us if it began on as low or even lower level than our own and from that moved on to moral perfection. But Jesus' example was not of that type, nor would anyone seriously maintain that it would have been more efficacious if it had been. What has

made his example so gripping and so transforming in its influence is the fact that he was more than an example. Not only did he exemplify the perfect life; he did what was far more important—he created in others the love of it and the power in some measure to realize it; and this he was able to do only because he was more than man.

The idea that Jesus is not a real example to us if he was in a unique sense of the term divine, is due partly to a dualistic mode of thought and partly to a failure to understand what it involved in the idea of an example. There are three factors in a perfect ethical life; an obedient will, an ideal moral character, and blameless conduct. Of these the last with its numerous concrete acts is largely relative to the age and circumstances in which one lives, and hence can form no fixed part of a universal and authoritative human example. The obedient will, however, is a constant element in the perfect life wherever it may be found. To be obedient to what one knows to be one's duty may be more difficult for some than for others, but the obligation is the same for all moral beings whether human or divine. At this point, therefore, Jesus, if perfect in his obedience, is an example to us, whatever we may think of his uniqueness. The same may also be said of the absolute moral ideal which he represented. This ideal lies beyond the power of any human will fully to attain. Even in Jesus it was in part at least a divine gift, and was the result of his unique dependence upon God. But in its essential principles of love and holiness it is nevertheless as a goal obligatory upon all moral beings. In this respect too Jesus is, then, an example of what we ought to be, and that irrespective of the question as to his unique relation to God. Only on the unwarranted assumption that uniqueness excludes freedom could it be maintained that the uniqueness of Jesus unfits him to be our example. Any free spirit living under human conditions, whether originally pre-existent or not, would face essentially the same fundamental moral problem and, if victorious over evil, would be an example to others.

It is often assumed that since Jesus was manifestly "the subject of faith," he could not be "the object of faith," and that, if he somehow were both, we ought to find him occasionally at least, "worshiping himself." But this we never do, and hence the belief in him as object of faith is to be rejected. Even a serious scholar has recently expressed himself to that effect; and from the standpoint of the two-nature doctrine something might be said in support of it. But the new Christology offers no occasion for such an objection to the doctrine of Jesus' divinity. We have already seen that this doctrine was not Jesus' own theory about himself but the church's interpretation of his personality, and so did not imply any such absurd idea as his worshiping himself. There is also no necessary antithesis between the conception of Jesus as subject and as object of faith. "If we enter deeply," says Haering, "into the nature of God's working, of God's revelation of himself in the sense of our religion, we arrive at the opposite conclusion: only a man who believes, prays, contends, can call forth trust in the God in whom he believes, in whom he desires to believe." In other words, it was only because Jesus was the perfect subject of faith that he could reveal God to us and thus become the object of faith. For what we mean by calling him the object of faith is "noth-

ing more than our having trust in him as the one through whom God works saving trust in his saving work." It was the faith-producing faith of Jesus that led the church to see in him the personal working of God and so to look upon him as both object and subject of faith. If he had not been a man of perfect faith, he could not have been the perfect revealer of God; for the faith, necessary to revelation can be awakened only by faith.

The type of Christology here outlined interprets the incarnation in terms of immanence and inspiration. Some regard this as an abandonment of the doctrine of the incarnation and the substitution for it of another doctrine. Immanence, it is said, means something quite different from incarnation. But that depends on how we define the terms. If we restrict incarnation to the idea that God was the subject of Jesus' mental life, either the sole subject or one of two subjects, we may distinguish it from immanence, provided we limit the latter term to a merely dynamic or mystical presence of God. But there is no necessary reason why either term should be limited in its use to such a restricted meaning. We may extend the idea of the divine immanence so as to include the narrower idea of incarnation, and we may broaden the meaning of incarnation so as to make it practically synonymous with the divine immanence.

For there is justification both in current usage and in the original motives of the two doctrines. Both doctrines sought to bring God near to men. The doctrine of the incarnation did so against the background of a metaphysical and ethical dualism; the doctrine of immanence did the same thing against the background of a deistic and mechanistic world-view. The doctrine of the incarnation fixed attention on the manifestation of God at one supreme point of history; the doctrine of immanence emphasized the presence of God in the world as a whole. But between the two there is no antithesis. Each needs the other as a supplement. The bare idea of immanence needs to be supplemented by the idea of different degrees of immanence, the highest degree being in the person of Christ. The incarnation in Christ, on the other hand, needs to be supplemented by the idea of an incarnation in mankind as a whole and also in nature. The two doctrines of incarnation and immanence thus overlap and tend to merge in each other. Taken together, they express the thought "that in the conditions of the highest human life we have access, as nowhere else, to the inmost nature of the divine." No fundamental or vital religious significance attaches to the distinction between a conception of the divine presence which identifies the ego of Jesus with that of God and one that does not, provided the divine presence in him is in the latter case regarded as so complete as to guarantee the validity of his revelation of God.

There is, then, no sharp line of division between the doctrine of the incarnation and that of immanence. Incarnation is best interpreted in terms of immanence, to which the idea of inspiration and that of the indwelling Spirit stand closely related. But while some light is in this way thrown upon the incarnation and upon the unique personality of Christ, the problem is far from being fully solved. For immanence, inspiration, and the in-

dwelling of the Divine Spirit are, as we have seen, by no means transparent ideas. How the realities to which they refer are possible in human life we do not know, and still less do we know how they were possible in a supreme degree in the person of Jesus. After human thought has done its best we are still forced to acknowledge with Paul "the mystery of Christ."

THE INCARNATION

Lynn Harold Hough

IT HAS OFTEN been said that the central matter in Greek theology was the doctrine of the incarnation, while the central matter in the Latin theology was the doctrine of the cross. At all events, there has always been a stream of thought in the Christian Church which has found the incarnation the very crowning fact in the history of humanity. And the incarnation has been seen to have been possible just because of the inherent dignity of man. Great preachers have felt the strength of this tradition. Phillips Brooks may be said to have belonged to it. One of the texts which brought out his full powers consisted of the words: "Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee." Phillips Brooks was an apostle of the loftiness of human nature. He believed with all his mind and heart in the dignity of man. And the final seal and glory of this dignity he found in the incarnation. To a man of this type of thought, it is a thing of overwhelming importance that the very structural qualities of humanity are such that God could enter into human life and live the life of a man, and so reveal himself to man. God could not become incarnate in a stone because its nature could not be the vehicle for the expression of the defining characteristics of the divine life. God could not become incarnate in a tree because its impersonal vitality could not express the essential glory of the divine life. God could not become incarnate in an animal because the richness of its organic functioning could not express that purposive will of love which is at the very center of the divine nature and the divine character. God could become incarnate only in man because man alone is made in the divine image. Man can think God's thoughts after Him. Therefore, God can think His own thoughts in human life. Man's free intelligence alone offers an organ for the expression of the free intelligence of God. Whatever the tragedies of sin and evil may have done to human life, it is still true that in its very structure humanity is an organ capable of being the instrument for the expression of the intellectual and moral and spiritual purposes of God. To the Danish theologian Martensen there was the most glorious fitness in the fact that humanity itself came to full flower in the coming of Jesus Christ. In a very real sense humanity was revealed to itself only in that one glorious life. It was only when the Son of God made human life His own that the possible life for men was at last made clear. The human was created with such subtle kinships with that above the human that only the Divine could reveal humanity to itself. You never understand man until you see Jesus Christ walking the earth.

From *The Christian Criticism of Life*, New York and Nashville, 1941, pp. 213-18, 242-45, 261-62. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.

Doubtless this is one aspect of a tremendous paradox. The other aspect has to do with the "otherness" of God, with the startled perception that His ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts. God's life is so far beyond our human life—His infinite thought so far beyond our finite thought, His eternal perfection so far beyond our partly comprehended human good—that when we attempt to understand the beatific splendor of His eternal life and character, and the effulgent beauty of His perfection, we are struck flat in sheer incompetence. If we may imitate Luther's famous paradox, we may say: Man is the one creature made to apprehend God, and yet by his very nature he is incapable of comprehending God. Only man can know God. Yet man can never know God. It is the second part of the paradox which Karl Barth has emphasized with such tremendous power. Either part of the paradox alone is dangerous and misleading. The one makes man over-confident and complacent. The other plunges man into a depth of debasement which easily leads to despair. The two together make a great Christian.

It must be said with unhesitating firmness, however, that the transcendence of God must never be so interpreted as to discredit the essential nature of man in its structural quality. When God made man, He made a limited being. But He did not make a lie. When God made the human mind, He made an instrument for the seeking and the finding of the truth. He did not make an instrument destined to the frustration of continually telling lies. If the divine image had been completely blotted out of human life, not only would the incarnation have been impossible, but religion itself would have become impossible. There would have been nothing left to which God could speak. Our debasement before the grandeur and the moral excellence of God must never lead us to deny the essential dignity of human life. It must never lead us to deny the structural qualities of human worth. We do not dare to turn from the insight which even Saint Augustine felt so deeply that he gave it immortal expression when he said, "O God, thou hast made us for thyself, and our souls are restless until they find rest in thee."

The Cambridge Platonists approached man on the side of his kinship with God. They declared that there was a divine light burning in every human life. The reason of man was the candle of the Lord. The incarnation was the fulfillment of all that for which man wistfully and vaguely longed. The whole story of the interpretation of the Christian religion which centers in the incarnation has been told with complete clarity and splendid and valid eloquence by Alexander V. G. Allen in his famous book *The Continuity of Christian Thought*.

This same sense that human life has so much dignity that God himself could enter into it is of such profound importance that it deserves our most careful scrutiny. It is pivotal for any theology which gives the incarnation its historic place. For it is this structural dignity of man which makes the incarnation possible. But the point at which this position calls for our most searching thought has to do with its relation to the deepest and the most characteristic insights of critical humanism. That free controlling in-

telligence which we find in man and which the critical humanist constantly emphasizes is just the point of his likeness to God. It is the capacity to choose among alternatives in the light of standards clearly seen and clearly held which makes it possible for God to work in and through man in a different sense from that in which he works in the subhuman world. Long ago Bishop Francis J. McConnell wrote a little book—the smallness of whose size is no indication of its importance—which he called *The Diviner Immanence,* to show how God could be present in saints in a different sense from that in which He was present in stones. He controlled the material. He found fellowship with the human beings who accepted His will.

The great power to confront alternatives consciously seeing them for what they are, to recognize, even to erect a standard by which alternatives can be judged, and to follow loyally that which conforms to the standard —this is what makes a man a man. This is the matter of central concern to the critical humanist. But this is also just that which makes it possible for man to be the organ of the will of God. It is what makes it possible for man to think God's thoughts after Him. But much more, it is just this which makes it possible for God to enter into human life directly. It is this which makes the incarnation credible and authentic. Indeed, it is this which makes the incarnation possible.

This, then, is the most important insight to which we now come. Every step a man takes in the direction of critical humanism is a step toward an intellectual position which by its very nature will tend to make the thought of the incarnation acceptable. Long before the man in the central stream of humanism himself knows that it is true, he is approaching a place where his characteristic beliefs make it possible for him also to believe in the incarnation. It is because man with his free controlling intelligence can become like God, the Perfect Intelligence freely controlling, that God can enter into human life. It is because man can become like God that God can become man.

We have already seen that the humanistic sanctions profoundly considered naturally lead to theism, and that without the theistic consummation humanism itself would at last fall apart. Now we see that the Christian position is the very flower of the humanistic insights. That man is like God in intelligence and freedom has become clear to the theist. That God Himself has become man is the glorious assertion of the Christian. . . . .

The humanist—the Christian humanist—does not discount the glory of goodness as the result of the use of freedom in right choice on the part of a living person. And by the same token he does not discount the tragic importance of evil as the result of the use of freedom in wrong choice on the part of a living person who knows perfectly well what he is about. There is an evil which is the result of ignorance. And it can be conquered by the forces of education and gracious unselfishness. There is an evil which is conscious and deliberate and deeply personal. You cannot conquer that evil by asserting the moral invincibility of the friendly smile.

The critical mind of the Christian humanist must of course deal frankly

and honestly with the attitude of our Lord toward these great matters. And here he will have no reason to falter or to hesitate. In all His teaching, both explicit and implicit, Jesus perpetually declared that only a willing and uncoerced allegiance was of value in the kingdom of God. So the incarnation with the life of the Church following the achievement of Jesus was first of all an adventure to secure voluntary loyalty. It was an adventure of revelation, clearing up ignorance by a glorious setting forth of knowledge of God. It was an adventure of loving unselfishness, showing how far love would go to secure the willing response even of those who were unworthy. Here there was no place for the use of physical force of any kind. Here there was the cloak given when the coat was asked. Here there was the left cheek turned when the right cheek had been struck. Here was the following of the path of unselfish love to the uttermost limit of the cross. So far love could go. So far divine love did go to secure the glad loyalty, the willing and uncoerced obedience of men. Here we have a great and powerful part of the Christian religion. Here we have the method of securing that brotherhood of unselfish good will which responds to the sacrificial and unselfish love of God. Here we have the justification of the creation of men by means of the creation of the beloved community.

But this is just half of the Christian religion. Jesus was always utterly realistic in confronting the dark nature of personal evil. He set that royal value on personality which we have found to be essential to the humanistic sanctions. He understood all the negative as well as all the positive nature of this royal form of decision. He knew that while men could accept Him, they could also reject Him. And implicitly—and again and again explicitly—He declared this in the most unhesitating fashion. He wanted to meet men as a friend. He offered to meet them as a friend. He went to the cross to prove His friendship. But if men in the awful strength of their personal power rejected His friendship, the men who refused to have Him as a friend *would have to meet Him as a judge.* And His picture of this ultimate judgment was completely realistic. There was no hesitation and there was no evasion. In the ultimate universe Almighty God would use the grimmest and the sternest force to deal with those recalcitrant persons who made evil their good and turned from every outreach of the love of God. There is such a thing as recalcitrant evil. And in the ultimate universe it will be dealt with by that righteous overlordship which will restrain its evil impulses by sheer omnipotent power.

Christianity is the religion of love on the cross. It is also the religion of judgment on the throne. To speak of the love alone—as so many sentimental Christians do today—is to emasculate Christianity and to leave it soft and morally impotent in the presence of recalcitrant evil. To speak of the judgment alone is to harden Christianity and to make it something grim and implacable. To speak of love on the cross and of judgment on the throne is to give the full Christian witness to the whole of Christian truth. But if there is personal evil in the ultimate universe—and this Jesus clearly taught—which can be restrained only by the sheer omnipotence of God, by the

same token there is evil in this present world which can be restrained only by a good will which is not afraid to use force where force is needed. To say that we can do by tenderness in time what God can do only by the use of force in eternity is—to put it mildly—greatly to overestimate human powers. Love on the cross and judgment on the throne must characterize man's moral life in time as well as the ultimate adjudication of eternity. Without this, evil would run amuck—without this, evil will run amuck—in a world where goodness constantly must hold its own against the grim assault of powerful evil.

But the Christian never forgets the love even in the exercise—the necessary exercise—of moral judgment. And he is kept perpetually humble by a knowledge of the awful responsibility of making even those ethical judgments without whose active support the world would fall into complete moral decay. On the other hand, he is saved from that ethical softness and that betrayal of the great spiritual and the great human values which come to those who make merely sentimental love unpurged by critical processes of analysis an absolute of such a character that moral judgments become impossible. Not even in the name of love do we dare to risk moral frustration.

But the love which judges and yet saves us is to inspire in us the love which judges and yet goes to great and glorious lengths to bring God's salvation to others. . . . .

As a member of the great community which is being formed by the grace of God, he [the Christian] will need a house of silence as well as a house of communication. It is easy to be socially friendly and to have very little to give to other men. There is nothing more empty than the chatter of endless words never enriched by something which comes from the depths of the individual spirit.

> "The man who idly sits and thinks
> May sow a nobler crop than corn,
> For thoughts are seeds of future deeds,
> And when God thought a world was born."

The house of silence will contain a library. Here in the silence of brooding understanding our Christian humanist will have fellowship with the best that has been thought, the best that has been said, and the best that has been done in the world. And in volume after volume of poetry he will touch the best that has been felt in the world. So he will come to action in the age with a certain aloof understanding which means that he brings to the problem of the hour the wisdom of the ages. So his house of silence will have become a house of understanding. And in this house of silence he will not only meet the great human past. Here he will live over again men's life with God in other centuries. The Old Testament scriptures will make real the religious experience of Israel, which in so many ways may become his own. Forever the gospels will tell him the tale of the great consummation, and forever the letters of Paul will tell him the tale of the great interpretation. These things will become the very breath of his spirit. Here in

his house of silence he will meet the vast and varied experiences of the Christian Church century after century. This is the story of his own family. Here is his own family tree. Saints and prophets and martyrs and Christian men of thought and Christian men of action will come out of the tomb to keep company with him in his house of silence. And here, in the greatest hours of all, the Jesus of history will become the living Christ of personal experience. We drop the curtains over that sacred hour, but we know why the Christian humanist comes out of the house of silence with a shining face.

THE FINALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Harris Franklin Rall

CAN WE REGARD Christianity as the final religion? The objections lie at hand: If Christianity as we actually have it in Scripture and creed and Church is always something relative to the historical and human, to man's apprehension in thought and realization in life, then must it not be partial and imperfect? If it be something here in time, must it not show constant change? Does not the history of Christianity reveal such change from the beginning, and is not such progress what we desire? Does not the final mean the static, and so mean death? Are not the open mind and loyalty to truth at the very heart of high religion, so that we must repudiate the claim to finality in the very name of religion? In answer we must examine more closely what is involved in the Christian position.

1. It has been a common mistake to seek finality for Christianity in the wrong place, that is, in its institutional forms of expression, in creeds, moral codes, organization, and ritual; this would, indeed, mean a static finality and a closed mind. But these are all interpretations and expressions of religion. For Christianity as a prophetic religion, however, the dominant category is personal and vital, not institutional. It knows how imperfect its life is, how faulty the empirical Church, how far its formulae are from expressing the truth of the infinite God. But its conviction is that the personal and living God, infinite and eternal, has spoken to men in Jesus Christ. Our knowledge about this God is not absolute, but we do know this absolute God. In Jesus Christ we have heard his word to us, have found the way of living fellowship with him, and have seen his will for our lives.

2. It is a mistake to think of development, whether in nature or history, as merely ceaseless change. The law of life is rather a double one, that of change on the one hand, of continuity and conservation on the other. An age-long movement reaches a definite achievement with a certain finality. There is still movement, but it is along other lines; the achievement becomes a permanent gain and the stage is set free for other needed work. Thus, as has been suggested by H. F. Osborn and others, man came to the end of his development as a psycho-physical organism with the Cro-Magnons, perhaps two score thousand years ago. In his natural endowment the man of today is no whit his superior; human advance since then has been in the cultural field through social heritage. In the apprehension and creation of beauty the Greeks reached certain goals that have not been passed. There

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From *Christianity*. New York, 1940, pp. 76-81. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

are insights in the field of ethics which, though age-old, retain their place; we still recognize the value and authority of truth and justice and mercy. Despite opposing forces the monogamic family, reached long since in human development, will remain an abiding social institution.

In like manner Christianity represents definite and final insights in religion. Jesus made religion through and through ethical and supplied to ethics the motive force of religion. "It is the distinction of Jesus," writes Havelock Ellis, "that he has, for us, permanently expanded the bounds of individuality. What a supreme work of art we already possess in the Gospels! So that now when I open and turn over with reverent joy the leaves of the Gospels, I feel that here is enshrined the highest achievement of Man the Artist, a creation to which nothing can be added, from which nothing can be taken away." So if we turn to his conception of God, his idea of man, or to the ideal of life as seen in his own spirit, we find again what seem final insights. "The finality of Christ and of what he imparts," says H. R. Mackintosh, "can justly be called in question only when a loftier fact than holy love has come into view." [1] When we look at the movement of thought of the last nineteen centuries in relation of these basic ideals, the trend is forward toward the position of Jesus rather than beyond him.

3. Such finality does not exclude growth but demands it. No religion can be final which is not a growing religion. The finality of Christianity lies in a life of fellowship with God by faith and with men in love. As such it is a great creative experience, and advance in knowledge and insight are of its very essence. Here quiet confidence and daring venture go together.

Historically the Christian religion has approved itself as final by this very capacity for growth. It has constantly taken over and assimilated new truth while at the same time maintaining its identity. The cynical saying, *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*, may be used here in tribute instead of criticism. As Archbishop Temple has said: "This is one of the distinctive characteristics of Christianity, that whereas all other religions have tended to stereotype the conditions in which they originated, because only in those conditions could their requirements be obeyed. Christianity has been a fermenting principle of change in every society into which it has come. This is primarily because it is centered not upon a formula but upon a Person, and its regulative principle is not a code but a Spirit." What is needed for progress, he says, is change with constancy of direction. "This is the constancy that the Gospel gives us. Our starting-point is fixed: it is the creative love of God. Our goal is fixed: it is the realized Kingdom of God. And our way is fixed: it is found in Him who said, 'I am the Way.'" [2] Christianity has always kept a forward look. It believes in an indwelling Spirit who is to guide into larger truth. Despite recurrent lapses, it has made loyalty to truth central in the religious attitude. It has believed in a living God, continually working in the world. And the truths that it has taken up have not only found room in the Christian faith but have gained in

[1] *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 215.

[2] *Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Conference*, Vol. I, pp. 378, 379.

that faith their richest expression. We may agree with Bishop F. J. McConnell that the uniqueness of Christianity includes a unique power to use everything that is usable. "Everything of the true and good and beautiful will get a better chance to show truth and goodness and beauty after it has been converted to Christianity than it ever had before." [3]

It is in this connection that we can best consider the problem that has been raised for many by the apocalyptic element in early Christianity. It is not so easy to determine the actual teaching of Jesus at this point. The longer apocalyptic discourses attributed to him furnish an outstanding illustration of the influence upon the gospel account of the thought and life of the later community out of which these writings came. But that he expected in the immediate future the end of the age and the saving deed of God by which his rule was to be established on earth, that this expectation was shared by the early Church, and that primitive Christian thought and life were profoundly influenced by this hope, this is hardly to be disputed. Can we then accept as valid and final a religion whose central hope was not fulfilled, and whose ethical teaching seems to have been an *ad interim* affair designed for the brief time before the end?

But here again we have an illustration of Christianity's unique significance. Within that apocalyptic framework was the belief in the one living God and his saving purpose of love, and the summons to repent of sin and live in the spirit of this God. "The ethical teaching of Jesus," says C. H. Dodd, "is 'interim ethics' for those who expect that the world will shortly come to an end, but it is absolute ethics for those who have experienced for themselves the end of the world and the coming of the Kingdom." It springs "from its roots in the very constitution of the Kingdom of God, as determined by the nature and character of God himself, the loving God and our Father. The one universal ethical principle is that which is revealed in God's free grace to undeserving men in offering them the blessings of his Kingdom." [4] The finality of Christianity is seen here once more in the validity of its central faith and its capacity to receive new truth and make the needed change in the form of its expression.

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[3] *Human Needs and World Christianity*, p. 217.

[4] In *A Companion to the Bible*, T. W. Manson, ed., p. 379.

Part IV

ESCHATOLOGY AND ETHICS

RELIGION AND MORALS

Thomas W. Manson

1. The "Ethics of Jesus"

The main strength of Jesus lay in his ethical teaching. If we omitted the miracles and a few mystical sayings which tend to deify the Son of Man, and preserved only the moral precepts and parables, the Gospels would count as one of the most wonderful collections of ethical teaching in the world.

This is the verdict of a distinguished Jewish scholar. The same writer also says that

> Jesus is, for the Jewish nation, a *great teacher of morality and an artist in parable.* . . . . In his ethical code there is a sublimity, distinctiveness and originality in form unparalleled in any other Hebrew ethical code. . . . . If ever the day should come and this ethical code be stripped of its wrappings of miracle and mysticism, the Book of the Ethics of Jesus will be one of the choicest treasures in the literature of Israel for all time.

These words doubtless reflect the opinion and the aspirations of many outside the Jewish fold. Many who are disgusted by ecclesiasticism, unmoved by ritual, and incredulous of dogma would gladly drop everything except the "Ethics of the Sermon on the Mount."

It is therefore the more necessary to lay down at the outset that the "Ethics of Jesus," in the sense in which Dr. Klausner speaks of them and many others think of them, do not exist and never have existed. Nor will such a book ever exist save by the process of tearing some of the moral aphorisms of Jesus out of their true context and fitting them into another and probably alien context. As we shall see in the sequel the moral teaching of Jesus is part and parcel of his religion and is not separable from it except by violence. The notion that we can wander at will through the teaching of Jesus as through a garden, plucking here and there an ethical flower to weave a chaplet for the adornment of our own philosophy of life, is an idea that is doomed to disappointment, for the nature of plucked flowers is to wither. The ethical maxims of Jesus, abstracted from the religion out of which they grow, become mere counsels of perfection which we may indeed respectfully admire, but which have no immediate reference to the affairs of our ordinary life.

To divorce the moral teaching of Jesus from his teaching as a whole is thus to make it practically useless: it is also to make it theoretically unintelligible. For all the moral precepts of Jesus, in the last resort, flow from a

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From *The Teachings of Jesus*, New York, 1935, pp. 285-308. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company.

single principle which is not itself moral but religious; and the understanding of any part of the ethical teaching demands a grasp of the whole religious context in which it has its place. In other words, the ideal picture of human life which Jesus draws in what he has to say about morals, is a picture of life in the Kingdom of God on earth, life as it may be lived by men who acknowledge one supreme loyalty, in whose hearts one supreme passion burns; and it is only as we hear the call to that loyalty and feel that passion that the moral teaching of Jesus grows luminous.

To say that in the teaching of Jesus morality is inseparably bound up with religion is simply to say that he stands in the direct line of succession to all the prophets and psalmists and sages of Israel. The idea of ethics as an independent discipline, which might be studied for its own sake independently of other disciplines, simply did not present itself to the Hebrew mind. We cannot divide the study of the prophetic literature into prophetic theology and prophetic ethics without making an artificial separation of things which are in their inmost nature one.

An interesting parallel to this may be found in a very different sphere. The Golden Age of Greek philosophy knows nothing of ethics as an independent discipline. The connection there is not indeed with Greek religion, for "by the time of Plato the traditional religion of the Greek states was, if taken at its face value, a bankrupt concern." The place which in Hebrew prophecy is occupied by religion is taken in Greek philosophy by the idea of the city-state. Thus it comes about that in the *Republic* the answer to the question: What is justice? has to be sought by enquiring what is the constitution of an ideal city. And again, we find Aristotle apologising for appearing to separate ethics from politics.

It is quite wrong to say the Ethics studies the Good for Man from the point of view of the individual, while the Politics deals with the realization of that good by the agency of the state. The subject of both works is equally "Politics," and there is not a single word in either of them or anywhere else which could be interpreted as setting up any such science as ἠθική in distinction to πολιτική. . . . . The Ethics asks the question "How is the Good for Man realised?" and the answer it gives is that legislation is the means of producing character, and that upon character depends the possibility of that activity which constitutes Happiness or the Good for Man. The Politics takes up the inquiry at this point and discusses everything connected with legislation and the constitution of the state. The whole forms one πραγματεία or μέθοδος and there is no word anywhere of ἠθική as a separate branch of study.

This is to say that, while for the Hebrew prophet the achievement of man's highest good is inseparably bound up with true religion, for the great philosophers of Greece it is inseparably bound up with citizenship in an ideal city. Both alike find man's highest good as something realisable only in a social order—the people of God or the ideal city. The point at which they differ is in their approach to the question: What is man's true life? Where the Greek philosopher counsels man: "Know thyself," the Hebrew prophet, speaking in the name of Jehovah, says: "Seek me that ye may live," or "Man

shall not live by bread alone: but by every (word) that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live."

Hence it comes about that the Hebrew Rule of Faith and Rule of Life are together embodied in the *torah*, which we usually render by the English word "Law" though it is something very different from what we mean by law. *Torah* is properly the revealed will of God: a corpus of divine instructions to man. In three important respects it differs from what we call law.

(a) Its scope is far wider. It does not merely include what we take in under the heads of Civil, Criminal, and Canon Law. It covers also what we should put into doctrinal statements, prayer-book rubrics, text-books on public health and sanitation, and treatises on morality. In short it deals with the whole life of the Israelite from the cradle to the grave.

(b) *The manner of its promulgation is different. Being a God-given* code it is oracular rather than statutory. It is transmitted through the medium of God's representatives, the priests or the prophets. The congregation of Israel is not called in to ratify the decrees but only to accept them.

(c) It follows from the way in which the *torah* comes into operation that its provisions are in their nature irreformable and incapable of repeal. The written codes embodied in the Pentateuch might be added to—they themselves are the product of a long process of development by successive additions—but they could not be subtracted from. Not a jot or a tittle could pass away from them. Thus it comes about that in the Rabbinical schools, matters, such as the Temple ritual, which had no longer any but an antiquarian interest were treated with the same serious deliberation as matters of permanent religious and ethical importance. They were all in the same divine corpus and therefore it was not for man to say that one was worthy of study and another not. Again, when the laws concerning the Sabbath or the periodical remission of debts produced inconveniences, which threatened to dislocate entirely the social and economic life of the people, the remedy was sought not by way of repealing the ordinances in question but by way of legal fictions, the "*Erub* and the *Prosbul*." In this way the letter of the Law might be preserved while its operation in practice was greatly softened, if not entirely nullified.

These things are best understood when they are viewed against the background supplied by the idea of the Kingdom of God. The Law in Jewish eyes was nothing less than the revealed will of God as Israel's King. The Law is perfect and unchangeable to all eternity because it is the work of the perfect and unchangeable Lawgiver. It is the proof that there is a King over Israel; as it is the charter of Israel's existence as God's people. The obedience of Israel to the Law is the chief mark of their loyalty to their heavenly King.

The moral requirements embodied in the Law may therefore be regarded under three aspects.

(a) They are prescribed by God. By far the commonest description of the Law in the Old Testament is "the Law of Jehovah" or the "Law of Jehovah our God" or the like. The moral precepts are the revelation of the

character of God and of the character which he demands in man. All is summed up in the words: "Ye shall be holy as I am holy."

(b) They are revealed through God's servants. So in the Old Testament we find frequent references to "the Law of Moses," Moses being in Hebrew and Jewish eyes the typical agent of the divine revelations. In the work of making known the will of God, priests, prophets, and sages, all have their part. In the days of Jesus the written *torah* was, and had been for long, a fixed corpus enjoying canonical dignity; but alongside the written Law was a great mass of oral traditions, many of them of great antiquity, as well as a continually growing body of rules deduced by the Rabbis from the sacred text itself. And a properly authenticated oral tradition, or a deduction from the written Law properly arrived at, enjoyed an authority equal to that of the Pentateuch itself. Rules for the exegesis of the written Law (*the Seven Middoth*) were in existence at least as early as the time of Hillel, that is, before the close of the first century B.C.

(c) They are laid upon God's people as an unconditional obligation, as a distinctive mark whereby they are separated from all other people, and as a means whereby they may attain to their true blessedness.

These things are fundamental to the Hebrew and Jewish view of moral obligation; and they are fundamental to the teaching of Jesus in general and to that part of it which we call ethical in particular. The moral demands which he makes are conceived throughout as proceeding from God through himself to the community of his disciples.

(a) The divine origin of the teaching is involved in the fact that the life of Jesus is one of unreserved obedience to God's will and that his teaching is the echo of his life. The maxim which governs his own conduct is: "Thy will be done"; and the moral demands which he makes are those which he himself obeys, that is, they are what he himself sees to be the will of God. When Jesus says: "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away," he is claiming for his teaching the same status and validity which is elsewhere claimed for the canonical Scriptures. When he says, "Behold my mother and my brethren; whoever does the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister and my mother," he is referring to those who give ear to his own teaching and respond to its ethical and religious demands.

(b) The sense of being the agent of God's revelation of his will is the secret of the authority with which Jesus speaks. His "I say unto you" is to be paralleled by the "Thus saith the Lord" of the great prophets. This authority was noticed by the people who heard him speak and the tone of his teaching struck them as being very different from that of the scribes. Here we have to do with a difference of method in dealing with moral problems. The scribal method of definitions of terms and deduction from already established rules and decisions could not but compare unfavourably with Jesus' way of piercing by prophetic insight to the heart of any moral problem. In his method of dealing with moral questions as in his manner of delivering his decisions Jesus is akin to the prophets. . . . .

As the expositor of God's will Jesus (thus) occupies a position in the

new community of his followers analogous to that held by Moses in Israel; and his way of life as shown by his example and his precepts becomes the norm for Christians. Hence Paul can speak of the Law of Christ just as the Old Testament speaks of the Law of Moses.

(c) While the moral demands of Jesus, conceived as the requirements of God, are of universal application and validity, their primary application is to the community of those who accept the teaching as a whole, that is, of those who "enter into the Kingdom of God" embracing its privileges and responsibilities, and attaching themselves as disciples to Jesus. Together they form a community—the Kingdom of God—which stands in contrast to the kingdoms of the world: and the contrast lies just in the difference of moral standard and behaviour. "You know that thus and thus they behave among the Gentiles; but *it is not so among you.*" To accept the moral standard of Jesus is to be not far from the Kingdom of God. And, on the other hand the things which Jesus condemns as contrary to his way of life are not described as shameful or disgraceful but as hindrances to a man's entering the Kingdom.

The moral standard set up by Jesus is therefore to be conceived as given to the New Israel—the community of his followers—as the old Law was given to the Chosen People, to be the charter of their existence as a people of God. Entrance into the Kingdom or discipleship—they come to much the same thing—involves acceptance of the way of life which Jesus teaches and exemplifies.

In the result the moral teaching of Jesus appears not as an independent ethic—either "interim" or any other sort—but as an integral part of his conception of the Kingdom of God. It is the way of the Kingdom, the way in which God's will may be done on earth as it is done in heaven, the way in which the subjects of the heavenly King may show their loyalty to him through their obedience to his will.

2. Jesus and the Jewish Law

The frequent conflicts between Jesus and the Scribes and Pharisees are really conflicts between the prophetic spirit and the legal, between two ways of approaching the problem of conduct. The broad distinction between these two attitudes is that the prophetic is concerned primarily with persons, the legal with acts.

The prophetic ideal is that right actions should be the spontaneous expression of a right disposition in man, the good fruit that grows on the good tree. Consequently the first essential is the radical transformation of the human heart; and, therefore, the prophetic call is at bottom a call to repentance, that is, to a complete change of a man's disposition towards God and his neighbour. Once this change is affected the man can be trusted to do the right thing, one might almost say, instinctively. All that he requires for his guidance is some simple rule like: "Do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with thy God."

The legal method rests on the proposition that character is, in the long run, determined by conduct: and that if only a correct standard of con-

duct can be set up and enforced, men will be habituated to virtue. By the doing of good acts the character of the doer becomes good. The first essential therefore is an authoritative code of morals declaring what is the right course of conduct in any given circumstances: and as circumstances may vary indefinitely the tendency is for the code to become more and more complicated, until the determination of what is to be done, or not to be done, becomes the business of experts. The foundation of the Jewish code is the body of 613 precepts contained in the Pentateuch, together with a number of oral traditions of unknown antiquity believed to have been given to Moses at the same time as the written Law. The business of the lawyers was to construe these precepts, to define their terms, and to apply them to cases as might be necessary from time to time. For example the Law forbade the doing of work on the Sabbath. That seemed simple enough. But opinions might differ about the meaning of the term "doing work." The obvious way out of the difficulty, and the way which the Rabbis took, was to append a schedule to the statute in question specifying clearly and definitely what actions fell under the description "work." This schedule, containing a list of 39 sorts of work, is preserved in the Mishnah. As time went on this list was still further elaborated, each of the 39 classes of action being further defined and subdivided.

It is easy to dismiss all this learned activity with the contemptuous epithet "pettifogging," just as it is easy to forget that an exactly similar process is going on continually in the law courts of any civilised country, and that matters and methods not so very unlike the Rabbinic may be found in Christian text-books of moral theology. It is, in fact, much easier to denounce the scribal system than to do without it: and so long as we entrust our business to our lawyer and our chartered accountant, and our conscience to our father-confessor, any criticisms we may pass upon Jewish legalism will be perilously like the rebukes which Satan administers to Sin.

It is therefore the more necessary to keep before our minds what is the fundamental difference between Jesus and the Jewish lawyers, and the key to all the differences between them. It is that Jesus is primarily concerned with the individual as a soul to be saved or lost. He sees men standing at the cross-roads; and the concern of all concerns is whether they will take the way of life or the way of destruction, whether they will give their whole allegiance to God or not. In other words the programme of Jesus—if one may so call it—is not in the first instance a plan of social reform, but a call for a religious revival. The Law, on the other hand, is not primarily concerned with the individual, but with the community as a whole. Even when the Rabbis are dealing with the case of a particular person, the principles upon which they act and the conclusions to which they come are such as are applicable throughout the society. Any changes which can be brought about by legal means are changes in the Law and not changes in the human heart. It may well be the case that judicious legal and social reforms may have as their result an improvement in the general standard of behaviour in the community, just as a genuine religious conversion will have

results in the life of the person who experiences it. But these results, though outwardly similar, are not the same thing. . . . .

The moral demands of Jesus presuppose a changed nature and disposition in man: they imply a previous conversion. The kind of goodness that Jesus expects is the fruit of a religious transformation, the shining of a light that has been kindled in the heart. It follows that, of all the objections that can be urged against the moral teaching of Jesus, the objection that it is impracticable "because you can't change human nature" is the most inept. Jesus was not so foolish as to imagine that moral demands such as his could be fulfilled without some radical change in men's dispositions, nor was he so devoid of faith in God and man as to despair of the possibility of such a change.

The fact that Jesus is chiefly concerned with the heart of man as the spring of conduct rather than with the Law as the regulative force in society is brought out quite clearly in the argument with the Scribes and Pharisees and subsequent discussion with the disciples, recorded in Mk. vii. 1-23. The question of eating without a preliminary washing of the hands is raised by the Scribes and Pharisees. This attack is met by Jesus with a counter-attack on the whole oral tradition followed by the statement that it is not the things that come from outside, but the things that spring up within that defile a man. These things are described generally as "evil thoughts" (*οἱ διαλογισμοὶ οἱ κακοί*). Evil conduct springs from an unregenerate heart just as evil fruit grows on a corrupt tree. And what holds of evil holds similarly of good. Both sides of the matter are expressed in the saying preserved in Q (Lk. vi. 45—Mt. xii. 35):

> The good man out of the good treasury of his heart produces good:
> And the evil man out of evil produces evil;
> For out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaks.

To anyone who held such a view as firmly as Jesus held it the multiplication of rules of conduct, and even the observance of them, could only appear as the cleansing of the outside of the dish and the platter. And when, as happened often enough in Judaism—and often enough in the Church also—a punctilious regard for the *minutiae* of ritual and behaviour usurped the place that should be taken by the fruits of the spirit, mercy and faithfulness, there was only one name for that—hypocrisy.

The opposition between Jesus and the Scribes and Pharisees is thus a fundamental difference of principle. It is the opposition of two conceptions of virtue. For Jesus good living is the spontaneous activity of a transformed character; for the Scribes and Pharisees it is obedience to a discipline imposed from without. The Scribes and Pharisees rightly perceived that these two ideals were incompatible and that if the ideal of Jesus prevailed, it meant, not a reform of the Law, but the substitution of something else for it. They therefore opposed the new teaching with all their might, just as at a later date they opposed the Pauline restatement of it. For Pharisaism the question whether the ideal of Jesus should win the allegiance of the people was a matter of life and death. The Scribes and Pharisees perceived, as

Paul did later, that Christ would be the end of the Law. They saw that the teaching of Jesus meant revolution not reform in Judaism: and any measure, however drastic, that would avert such a calamity was justified in their eyes. Whatever may be thought of the priestly caste or the Roman governor, it can at least be said for the Scribes and Pharisees that, in their opposition to Jesus, and in whatever part they had in compassing his death, they at any rate were conscientious and acted in what they believed to be the highest interests of the Jewish people and the Jewish faith.

Once this basic difference between Jesus and the exponents of the Jewish Law is grasped, the corollary follows that it is a mistake to regard the ethical teaching of Jesus as a "New Law" in the sense of a reformed and simplified exposition of the Old, or as a code of rules to take the place of the code of Moses and his successors. What Jesus offers in his ethical teaching is not a set of rules of conduct, but a number of illustrations of the way in which a transformed character will express itself in conduct. This distinction is clearly brought out in the discussion between Jesus and "a certain lawyer" recorded in Lk. x. 25-37. The question of the interpretation of the commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" arises. The lawyer desires a definition of "neighbour." Jesus replies with the parable of the Good Samaritan: and by the time the parable is finished, he has brought the matter round from a discussion of the meaning of "neighbour" to a concrete example of "neighbourliness." The lawyer's question is never answered. In place of a rule of conduct to obey he is given a type of character to imitate. This is typical of the method of Jesus in dealing with moral questions. He refuses to legislate, because he is concerned with the springs of conduct rather than with the outward acts.

It is further to be observed that just as he declines to be drawn into the academic discussion of legal terms, so in practice he refuses to decide concrete cases. When he is approached by one of the parties in a dispute about an inheritance, he refuses to arbitrate. He does not, however, stop there. He goes on to call everyone concerned to a different way of approaching the question. He makes it plain that were it not for the vice of covetousness, there would be no dispute and, therefore, no need for an arbitrator.

Throughout it is clear that for Jesus all legal questions, all questions of behaviour, all questions about the relations of man to man, are questions of character, questions affecting, not merely the life and property, but the souls of the persons concerned; and therefore they are at bottom religious questions in the strictest sense, questions concerning the relation of the individual soul to God and to God's Kingdom and righteousness. The result is that whereas the Law becomes increasingly more elaborate and complicated by the continual promulgation of new decisions, so that in every new case that arises it is necessary for experts to review all the previous rulings which may have a bearing upon it; in the method of Jesus every case is brought back to be dealt with by the individual concerned in the light of one or two perfectly simple principles of a religious nature. Moral questions, that is all questions concerning man's life, are taken out of the juris-

diction of all other parties, including even Jesus himself, and brought before the bar of the conscience of the responsible person. He must decide for himself: and he must decide in the light of simple principles which any man can apply for himself if he accepts them. To these principles we now turn.

3. The Ground-Principles of the Moral Teaching of Jesus

It has already been suggested that the moral standard set up by Jesus is a standard of example rather than precept. That standard is given in part by the parabolic teaching in such figures, for example, as that of the Good Samaritan; and in part by the life of Jesus himself. It is, however, possible to discover what are the governing principles lying behind these examples: and we have evidence in our records that Jesus had these principles clearly before his own mind. They are elicited in a discussion with one of the Scribes which has come down to us in two slightly different versions. The Marcan account is to this effect.

Jesus is engaged in dispute with various parties, and the aptness of his replies attracts the attention and admiration of one of the Scribes, who, apparently desiring to have the opinion of so wise a teacher on an interesting question, asks him: "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answers: "The first is: Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength. The second is this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is not another commandment greater than these." The scribe receives this reply with enthusiasm: "Well said, Master, you say truly that (God) is one and that there is not another beside him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbour as oneself, is more than all the burnt-offerings and sacrifices." Jesus, in turn, appreciates the spirit shown in the scribe's response and closes the conversation with the remark: "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

The question put by the Scribe was, we know, one that was raised from time to time in the Rabbinical schools, and one to which various answers were given by different authorities. But it was as Haggadah, material for edification, that the question was raised and answered. The answers did not rank as legal decisions; they were not binding, as rules of faith or conduct. This or that Rabbi might give it as his opinion that a particular commandment was the most important of all but his opinion did not abate in the least degree the importance of every other commandment, nor did it release him or anyone else from the absolute obligation to obey every other commandment. The importance assigned to this or that commandment was entirely relative. It might mean logical priority, that all other commandments might be deducted from the selected one, or it might merely mean that the Rabbi concerned set great store by this commandment and took particular pleasure in obeying it.

With Jesus it is different. The priority which he assigns to the two great

commandments is absolute. It is not that they are the general principle (כלל) from which all other precepts may be deduced; nor is it that they are commandments with a strong personal appeal to himself. They are the result neither of logical analysis of the *torah* nor of a process of selection by personal preference. They are commandments which actually take precedence of every other. For Jesus these two stand in a class by themselves. There is no other commandment that can come before them to claim man's obedience. They enjoy priority, not logical or relative, but absolute.

The difference may be illustrated by a comparison. There is a well-known story which relates how a Gentile came to Hillel offering to become a proselyte on condition that Hillel should teach him the whole Law while he stood on one foot. Hillel accepted his offer and said: "What is hateful to thee do not to anyone else; this is the whole Law and the rest is commentary; go and study." In the Lucan account (x. 25-28) of the discussion of Jesus with the lawyer we are told that when the lawyer gave the two great commandments as the teaching of the Law, Jesus answered: "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." For Hillel the commentary is every whit as essential as the Golden Rule. For Jesus the two commandments are in themselves sufficient, without any supplement whatever, as a complete guide to anyone who wishes to live. . . . .

The relation of the great commandments to one another is a perfectly simple one. The first presupposes that man has discovered God as his Father. The vision of the Lord sitting upon his throne high and lifted up may inspire awe and terror; the heavenly King may demand loyalty and obedience; only the Father who cares for his children can be loved in the way that is thought of here.

But the discovery of God as Father carries along with it the discovery of neighbours as brethren. The experience of God's love brings with it the knowledge that that love is for all men. In the light of God's love to himself a man sees other men, as it were, through God's eyes: and to see them in this way is to love them. The kind of love that is meant here is not to be watered down to a mere general benevolence. "If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor . . . . but have not love, it profiteth me nothing." Nor is the commandment to be evaded by saying that we cannot control our likes and dislikes. "If a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar." The love of neighbours is something which overrides likes and dislikes. It is something more than acts of kindness, for it is the root from which they spring. It is a new relation towards men, created by a new relation to God.

THE PROBLEM OF ETHICS

Emil Brunner

THE STOIC or the modern theologian, who wholly misunderstands the Sermon on the Mount, believing it a collection of ethical precepts, an ethical programme which Jesus as the supreme teacher of morality laid down for all times, is merely concerned about *what* is to be done. He does not ask, *Who* can do it? He thinks that the law or the ideal is a sufficient dynamic for morality. This is what I must call the mistaken ideology of the modern theologian, his lack of realism, his failure to understand the actual ethical situation. Stoics, ancient and modern, are bent upon working out ethical programmes, appeals, postulates; but they never ask whether or not there is a will to accept and obey them. They do not see the main factor, the human will, as it is: sin-bound and egoistic. They are blind to the real enemy who must be fought. Nay, this failure to recognize the enemy *is* the real enemy, the fontal source of evil in the world: from it flow self-reliance, self-confidence, the illusion of freedom and good-will upon which all idealism is based—the inability to realize the helpless condition of man.

Why do not men see their own helplessness and need? Because they do not measure man's status and capacity against the standard of God; they fix their eyes on man, his personality and culture, not on God. They do not really come into the presence of God, the Almighty and Holy One, before whom man can stand only as a sinner. They know only the God who is in their hearts, in the depth of their own souls. The most cogent motive of their ethics is, accordingly, self-esteem, and its leading purpose is self-realization. It is buttressed by the optimistic self-valuation of which we spoke in our previous lectures and which is based upon the conception of the immanence of God in man, of man's intrinsic goodness and of his autonomy, which does not distinguish between God's will or law and the will or law of his own self. God is not regarded as Lord but rather, in the appropriate modern phrase, as the "ideal companion."

When we know God as Lord, we know ourselves as sinners who are incapable of doing good. Only when we confess our helplessness are we prepared to accept God as Lord; and only then is the power of our self-satisfied pride, our self-sufficiency, broken. Until such a confession is made human arrogance must still prevail, in spite of all moral aspiration. Man's moral idealism and moral activity do not remove the source of evil, the arrogant assumption that man's will and volition are not dependent upon God. The enemy of God and the good has not been vanquished, but has retreated and entrenched himself at the centre of man's being; the decisive battle has

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not yet been fought, the battle which was fought between Jesus and the Pharisees, between Paul and the Judaizers, between Luther and the Romanists—the battle between God and the selfish will of man, between grace and self-righteousness.

The first step, then, toward true righteousness is the sincere confession that we are sinners, not merely now and then but, so far as we are concerned, sinners always, hopeless sinners. This confession of absolute helplessness and despair in the presence of the Holy God is hard for us to make, as we may feel at this very moment. We cannot help but powerfully revolt against it. This feeling of revolt is clear evidence that we are approaching the centre of the question, the truth which Paul called a stumbling-block to the Jew, that is, to the religious moralist. It amounts to saying that God alone is good, that the good will does not dwell in us but comes from him only. The capitulation of our proud Ego in the presence of the majestic God is the victory of the divine truth, of the word of God, over our own hearts and wills, over the lie of our life, that holds us all spellbound and is the root of all evil. It is the lie of self-reliance, of the refusal to depend upon the grace of God.

This capitulation of the stronghold of the Ego can only be effected, as I pointed out yesterday, by the action of God himself when he breaks through the inmost bulwarks and takes captive the human will, not by force, but by his sovereign forgiveness and the revelation of his incredible love. We cannot attain his righteousness by dint of will, but he apprehends us by his grace. He calls us his children before we have done anything to merit it. He gives us the new standard of value which by nature we neither have nor can acquire. He marks us as his own possession and gives us his holiness. He does it by his word alone, and we are in the new life because he says we are and we believe his assurances. If you *believe*, you *are* and you *have* what God says. The acceptance of God's gift through faith *is* the creation of the new man, the second birth. This miracle Paul calls justification by faith. Christ is the stamp by which we are marked as God's own possession. Through his redemption man ceases to be a being of no value and becomes a being of infinite worth. By the cross he is adopted as a son of God.

Through the act of redemption God actually becomes Lord of man. The barrier between God and man, guilt and self-will, is broken down, and thus God-will or good will is realized in man's will. This is accomplished not by human volition but by God's act. It is of utmost importance that we remember that what appears on the one side as God's act, is, on the other side, man's decision. The very act by which God reveals himself to a man is the birth of a new will in man. For will is the material factor of faith. When man accepts God's grace the meaning of creation is restored, so that the relationship between God and man is one of dependence upon grace and not one of self-reliance and independence of God. Only when one lives by grave is the prayer fulfilled, "Thy will be done." Then only is good will, which is the same as God-will, actualized in men. Good will is identical with the surrender of self-will, an act of which we are not

capable, but which is done by God for us and in us, and which we accept in faith as having been done.

This is the foundation of ethics in the gospel. If one grasps this, he will not again repeat the false statement, which is so often heard, that the Pauline doctrine of grace lacks ethical power. In fact it is the only conception that goes to the root of the ethical problem. For it is the only one that is not satisfied with a mere ethical ideal and programme or with an outward manifestation of a moral attitude and disposition; it penetrates to the source of good will and is concerned not primarily with the object but with the subject of morality. For morality is a matter of inner life and not of outward behavior. All non-Christian ethics viewed from this central point is a sort of behaviorism, since it is more concerned with the action than the actor. To quote again a word of Luther: "It is not good works that make a good man, but a good man who does good works"; that is, first the man and then his works; first the stand and power and then the leap; first the pure blood and then the healthy body; first the heart and then the acts. The change of heart, which takes place through faith—I repeat, through real faith and not a counterfeit—is the supreme ethical fact without which one can hardly think or speak of ethics, goodness, or good will.

I should like to explain this with the aid of two other conceptions. To be good, a will must have two properties; it must be pure and it must be strong. Purity comes first, for it is the bent of the will. Purity of will can be had only at the cost of self-will. Self-will is will bent in the wrong direction; it is centripetal instead of centrifugal. The direction is changed by repentance and faith. Only when self-will abdicates can God's will be enthroned alone. His will however is directed from above downward, not from below upward. It is directed toward the world, not from the world. So far as my will is concerned, it is wrong. My will, though wrong, does not cease to act when I become a Christian; the sinner when he is justified does not cease to be a sinner. But God's will overcomes my self-will so far as I in faith depend upon God's act and so far as I confess that I am wrong and God is right. Then I have the will to serve instead of the will to be served. This is purity of heart.

The second point is really not a second but the first viewed from another side. Morality apart from Christ, ethical religious idealism, is an aspiration to the ideal, an attempt at self-realization, a movement toward a right position. Moral life is represented as a ladder on which one must ascend to reach the top rung. In this upward movement the will is cross-eyed. It seems to be the will of God, that is, the ideal; in reality it is the will of man striving for self-realization. With all his striving man will never attain. This is the tragedy of the ethics of self-righteousness. In the life of faith, however, this aspiration does not appear. As a believer I need not strive to get a place, to reach a point, or to realize myself. By the gracious word of God in Christ I *am* placed; I *have* obtained my "standard"; my self *is* realized. The motive of my will is no longer an ideal that lures, but an act of God that constrains, me. The will is no longer on its way *toward* but on its way *from*. The motor power is no longer an ideal which draws but God who

pushes me. The will is no longer divided but unified. The will of God is no more an ideal but a reality. Faith does not work in order to, but because of; not in order to get righteousness but because it has got it. Its motive is thankfulness for what has been given, not aspiration toward what ought to be. It is no more an attempt to bridge the abyss between the ideality of God and the reality of man, but the joyful acknowledgment that the abyss is bridged by God himself in Christ. Faith is the God-given participation of man in God's activity. Then only is God's will an actuality in life and no longer an ideal or law. Love is the new motive of action which is not known in non-Christian ethics; love in the non-sentimental, paradoxical, eschatological meaning of the term in the New Testament, the love that we have because He first loved us. The effort and pride of self-realization give way to the humble and joyful participation in God's own work. The heart then is no longer set against the moral law, because God has taken possession of the whole personality, of its centre.

I say this takes place *in so far* as faith is begotten in us. This change is always to be regarded as the miracle that God may work in us and as something that we cannot achieve of ourselves. This proviso must be kept in mind when I go on to demonstrate that faith overcomes the contradictions of non-Christian ethics. I beg of you to observe that I am speaking of faith, and not of the Christian individual, because every so-called Christian—and who is not a so-called Christian?—is a man who has faith and does not have faith; who, when he confesses his faith must cry: "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief."

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ESCHATOLOGICAL SANCTION

Amos Niven Wilder

WE ARE NOW in a position to draw our conclusions as to the nature of the sanctions invoked by Jesus for his ethical summons, whether in his call to repentance generally or in his particular precepts.

The nearness of the Kingdom of Heaven, viewed both as promise and as menace, is the dominant sanction for righteousness.

This dominant eschatological sanction is, however, a formal sanction only, secondary to, if closely related to, the essential sanction.

The essential sanction for righteousness is the nature of God.

The essential sanction represents an appeal simply to the reason and discernment, to the God-conscious moral nature of men, assisted by the witness of Scripture and the example and authority of Jesus.

The formal sanction represents an appeal to self-interest in view of the rewards and punishments that are to follow on the Judgment; and, incidentally, that are to be present in a degree in the present interim, which is a phase of the messianic times, in which the Kingdom of God is already present in a sense.

We have in several connections above anticipated the discussion of these conclusions. What has been said in the Introduction as to the nature of Jewish eschatology bears especially upon it. It was there emphasized that in the eschatological tableau the Jewish mind was—in a way most suitable to its Weltanschauung—dramatizing its conviction of the holiness of God in its dealing with men. This tableau therefore partakes of the nature of myth or symbol, and while the anticipations were real to them and represented indubitable actualities of the divine action, they should never be taken in a crass sense. The apocalyptic ideas are "fictions." They are fictions naively held; that is, they are not conscious symbol and deliberate metaphor. As fictions, it follows that, however vividly they might compel the imagination of the eschatologist, they could never serve as a final and determinative sanction. A fiction however vivid and compelling has not the substance to serve this purpose. The only exception here is when it has grown so impoverished and conventionalized that men begin to take it with a crass literalism. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that the eschatological sanction, in the vital and creative stage in which it appears in our gospels, is always in the form of a fictional or formal sanction. But what real force there is in this sanction, properly enough, springs out of its immediate re-

From *Eschatology and Ethics in the Teaching of Jesus*, New York, 1939, pp. 153-66. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Harper & Brothers.

lation to that from which the fiction springs, that is, the experience of the holiness and power of God. For our gospels, indeed, it must be recognized that the eschatology falls sometimes below this level of creative power. The original creative symbol or "fiction," the true heart of all apocalyptic, here as elsewhere has advanced some steps on the way of literary crystallization. It is by way of becoming dogmatic and crass. The lengths to which this can go we can see in contemporary millenarianism or in some of the Jewish writings or later Christian writings. In the gospels both the original and the conventionalized or impoverished stages of conception are found, and these in varying degrees. The former are pervasive enough to save the whole from misrepresenting the teaching of Jesus. Behind Mt.'s elaborations of the judgment motif and his constant invocation of penalty, for instance, we feel the fresh religious experience of the early church animating and validating these.

Discussion of our conclusions has also been anticipated above during our analysis of the sanctions when we have had occasion to show how intimately related are the two kinds of sanctions which we have called formal and essential. For vivid evocation of the glory and power of the Father has been seen to lead insensibly and inevitably into reflection upon that power asserting itself in redemption and judgment, and into the impulse to anticipate or forestall such action. Again, we have shown in another connection how inevitable and how pardonable is the tendency to deal in the sphere of consequences when questions of ethics are being handled. The evocation of a tableau of consequences is a most natural and human impulse in such exhortation; and, similarly, the dramatization and stylization of such a tableau is an inevitable result given the human mind and imagination as they are.

The double aspect of sanction is recognized by Windisch from another point of view in speaking of the reward aspect of the sayings concerning almsgiving, etc.: "Meanwhile it must be recognized that alongside the thought of reward a purely religious principle determines the content of the teaching: the content, namely, of the right and fitting performance of the various religious practices. Jesus would extricate the worshipper from all human concerns in which he may be entangled, and throw him entirely upon God. That God holds ready a reward for such a right attitude to him *also*, is unquestioned, but this consideration is secondary." [1]

Examination of Jesus' teaching permits us to catch in the moment of transition this tendency we have indicated to pass from one type of sanction to the other. Jesus says: do so and so because such and such is the evident nature of man, the world and God. But such a grounding of ethical choice and conduct, if in the least developed, seems immediately to involve a reflection upon consequences of conduct in a world where the realities are such as Jesus describes. But *consequences are most naturally conceived in the light of rewards and punishments among those for whom*

[1] Hans Windisch, *Der Sinn der Bergpredigt, Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Richtigen Exegese* (Leipzig, 1929), p. 17.

the personal rule of God is so much an axiom. By these stages we thus pass from the sphere of essential sanction to that of retributive sanction, and from disinterested or impulsive virtue to calculative virtue. Jesus himself and the people to whom he talked were not dialectical enough to raise the issue discussed in the *Republic* as to disinterested virtue. The rabbis indeed warned against obedience for the sake of reward. But the Jewish mind as we have seen conceived of right conduct as obedience to the will of a gracious Jahweh, and intrinsic and extrinsic sanctions were confused and mingled.

Jesus' essential appeal to the nature of God and man and their relation as the ground of his ethical demands led, then, immediately to the envisagement of consequences as a further sanction. We find an illustration of how inevitable this transition was in the following parable: "The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!" (Mt. 6:22-25.)

By means of the illustration of the eye Jesus appeals to the hearer to assent to the all-importance for one's life of the condition of the will (which is the lamp of the life as the eye is the lamp of the body). If the will and disposition are corrupted, then the life is in utter confusion ("how great is that darkness"). But with this realization the consequences immediately loom, and therewith the sanction for single-mindedness drawn from the fear of consequences.

In fact, any appeal to reason and conscience like that of Jesus necessarily evokes a moral order in which consequences are patent and inescapable. It was a reminder that the nature of man, the world and God and their relation were such and such, and that this nature demanded such and such attitudes and actions, and penalized the actions of folly and blindness. Such insight into moral consequences is found in the Old Testament in various forms. Sometimes we find it, here in the least developed stage, in the form of a wise aphorism, like the many found in the Wisdom Literature, where merely the natural this-worldly consequences of conduct are pointed out. Jesus' saying concerning those that take the sword falls in this class. Not far from it are such sayings as, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy," and "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Similarly with the parable of the two builders. In such ethical teaching, the appeal to the moral sense and moral insight has compelled recognition of the moral order conditioning conduct. Then, at a deeper stage of insight, this merely sapiential sanction, a discernment of natural and social consequences, begins to pass over into a truly religious sanction, a discernment of divine retributions. The important reality conditioning conduct is now the majestic God of righteousness. The further step is when this sanction becomes dramatized and perhaps eventually dogmatized in a scheme of eschatological rewards and punishments.

We see therefore the natural connection between the essential sanctions of Jesus, his appeal to moral and spiritual realities, and his eschatological

sanctions. The former is not merely an appeal to the reason. It is an appeal to the whole man, to his God-conscious moral nature. As such it has in it implicitly all possible divine sanctions. Once one recognizes and vividly apprehends the will of the Father determining all destinies and the destiny of the world, wide vistas of his favor or disfavor are immediately opened up. As someone has said, "When I pass in review the appalling injustices that continue in the world, I tremble to recall that God is just." The portrayal of divine reward and punishment is, therefore, inevitable for the religious consciousness when it is in any degree ethicized. And it follows that the eschatological sanctions in the gospel may not be impeached as a type of motivation. While they are formal and while they partake of the nature of dramatization, they are not adventitious. The appeal to realities demands them or their equivalent. They are not merely arbitrary lures and menaces, arbitrary incentives. They stand for inevitable consequences.

The prominence of the reward feature in the gospel can then be understood. Jesus, with the instinct of the consummate teacher, speaking as he is to simple people, casts his vision of moral consequences into concrete pictures of compensation, "hire," reward and punishment. The eschatological conception itself—the Judgment and its retributions—rises from the same dramatizing necessity. The mind of Jesus senses the terrible and glorious issues of human choice, and the eschatological drama is the only adequate representation that could then be given of such a range of spiritual fact. But this resort to the concrete and dramatic is not a consciously artistic or deliberate move; it is the natural action of the imagination. The "fictions" involved in the eschatological picture and sanction is of the very stuff of the mind here; it is an *als ob* inherent in the conditions of thinking.

Windisch has isolated a considerable body of units in the Sermon on the Mount which he thinks can easily be detached from the eschatological sphere because the teaching grew for a great part in a non-dualistic sphere, or because the eschatological motive present in it is not original. He thus analyzes the Sermon into two main streams: radicalized wisdom teaching, and eschatological announcement of judgment. He traces both back to Jesus' conception of God and his consequent radical deepening of both heritages. Where we have tried to go a step farther is in showing the logical relation of these two elements. When this relation is realized, whereby wisdom teaching and prophetic teaching pass over insensibly into envisagement of consequences, and these take on conventional forms, we are prepared to see that the two types and moods of preaching are not to be so sharply distinguished as Windisch does without danger. Part and parcel of the solution, however, is recognition of the imaginative quality of the eschatological conceptions.

Bultmann holds well that the authority of the demands lies in their sheer convincing power; he writes of the "*Einsichtigkeit der Forderung*." He recognizes two aspects of Jesus' teaching, moreover: first, Jesus as scribe (where the teaching is sapiential, a radicalized obedience-ethics), and second, Jesus as prophet (where the teaching is radicalized eschatology). But his main point with regard to the intuitional nature of the ethics is that

they are not based on any accepted conception or ideal of human nature and its virtues or values. Jesus' precepts win the assent of the hearer through their own validity, but he denies that this validity grows out of any observation of or congruity with the human situation. Rather, they are valid to the native discernment as the only proper response and as the necessary total obedience of the will over against the recognized presence of God calling for immediate choice. "They arise simply enough out of that situation of choice over against God in which man is placed." [2] But what does this mean? He goes on very properly to say that this answer is meaningless except to him who sees men and himself placed in this situation. But the conception is too simple or too abstract. "He who sees man placed continually in the act of choice, and he who regards this as the true angle from which to understand human existence, he recognizes that man is capable of knowing *now* what is good and what is evil; knowing, that is, not on the basis of any experiences or rational considerations whatever, but out of the very situation of the moment." [3] This is unreal. Bultmann is right in his point that the source of Jesus' ethics is not to be sought in the field of human precedents, relativities and theories of ethics. And he is right in assigning to the assisted human discernment power to recognize and choose the good. But that good must be given some content and reality.

Suppose as Bultmann has it that in Jesus' summons all antecedents and circumstances and thought of consequences are banished for the moment, and that the hearer is raised to a moment of moral freedom and choice over against the summons of God outside of time, as it were. His reaction then will be one of obedience, indeed. And the justice of this author's position appears when we limit our consideration of Jesus' sayings to those drastic sayings which present the duty of his hearers in the form of a choice or a call to complete obedience. But that obedience must then be conceived in terms of a human situation and human relations. And our recognition of the validity of the ethical teaching will be based on our understanding of such human circumstances. Bultmann is anxious to deny any fixedness of human nature and ethics so as to magnify the creative factor in God's action and in Christ's work, but even the creative freedom of God with our wills requires some human and social "character." Bultmann is going all lengths to simplify Jesus' ethics by reading it as absolute, and treating it in a metaphysical way. But Jesus' various instruction cannot be all assimilated to the one ultra-drastic mood here selected. And the second and even greater drawback in this analysis is the forbidding nature of the Deity over against whom he sees men placed in the moment of choice. The fact is that what Bultmann means by the *Einsichtigkeit* of the ethics is not so much the consent of the individual to a range of moral duties as the capitulation of the individual to the divine authority. This emphasis on obedience as the key-note of Christian ethics is disturbing.

We accept therefore only with reserves Bultmann's view of the self-

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[2] R. Bultmann, *Jesus* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 82-83.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

convincing nature of the teaching of Jesus. The distinction that he like Windisch draws between Jesus as wisdom teacher and as eschatological prophet is again too unnatural, and the unity of these two aspects of teaching and sanction we have tried to make clear.

We conclude this first part, then, with the statement that as regards the sanction of the ethics Jesus' teaching concerning the future is by no means of first importance. The announcements of rewards and punishments may be ubiquitous and highly colored; certainly Mt. has lent this motive to righteousness more weight than the other gospels. Yet this should not blind us to the fact that even in this gospel the fundamental motives are religious-prophetic. What Sevenster says of the synoptic gospels generally is true here: "We can conclude then that by far the larger portion of the synoptic ethics brings no interim ethics, not even eschatologically conditioned ethics, but common religious ethics." [4] What we have pointed out as to the stylistic and imaginative quality of the eschatological imagery, as to Jesus' depreciation of merit-considerations and calculations of reward, as to the more essential sanctions of gratitude, obedience, discernment of the truth, etc., as to the Kingdom as freely given—these justify us in seeing the eschatological sanction as derivative and formal. We do not wish to rule out entirely the place of such sanction in the teaching. He would be foolish who would try to do so in the face of the Judgment parables and pointed summons to vigilance. Even read as dramatizations such passages definitely bring into play, and legitimately, the self-regarding motives as over against the future. But these formal sanctions should be looked upon as supplementary rather than as compromising the fundamental sanctions. And for him who wants to lay hold on the essential appeal made by Jesus for repentance and obedience and righteousness, it will remain unquestionable that these vistas of reward and penalty are definitely subordinate to the call upon men to act worthily of those who are the sons of the Father in heaven, and in ways consonant with his glory.

[4] Gerhard Sevenster, *Ethiek en Eschatologie* (Leiden, 1929), p. 195.

REALIZED ESCHATOLOGY

Charles H. Dodd

IT APPEARS THAT while Jesus employed the traditional symbolism of apocalypse to indicate the "other-worldly" or absolute character of the Kingdom of God, He used parables to enforce and illustrate the idea that the kingdom of God had come upon men there and then. The inconceivable had happened: history had become the vehicle of the eternal; the absolute was clothed with flesh and blood. Admittedly, it was a "mystery," to be understood by those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, by those to whom it is revealed "not by flesh and blood, but by My Father in heaven." It is in this context that the parables of the Kingdom of God must be placed. They use all the resources of dramatic illustration to help men to see that in the events before their eyes—in the miracles of Jesus, His appeal to men and its results, the blessedness that comes to those who follow Him, and the hardening of those who reject Him; in the tragic conflict of the Cross, and the tribulation of the disciples; in the fateful choice before the Jewish people, and the disasters that threaten—God is confronting them in His kingdom, power and glory. This world has become the scene of a divine drama, in which the eternal issues are laid bare. It is the hour of decision. It is realized eschatology.

This is the implication of all the parables we have considered. We may now pass them in review, and observe the various aspects of the situation which they emphasize and illustrate.

First, this is the hour of fulfilment. For many generations the faith of the Jewish people had buoyed itself upon the hope that at long last God would assert His sovereignty in His world, while it sadly confessed that in the present age the powers of evil were strong. In a succession of pictures Jesus declares that the hour has struck and God has acted. The strong man is despoiled; the powers of evil are disarmed. The hidden power of God has manifested itself, as the productive energies of the earth bring the harvest in its time. This is not the work of man, any more than man can cause the seed to grow and the grain to ripen. It is the divine initiative. For man, there is the joy of harvest.

Not indeed that there is any spectacular exhibition of divine power. There is no *coup d'état*, and no summoning of legions of angels. There is only a Galilean Carpenter preaching in the streets and healing the sick. The careless scoff: "Only one more of these religious enthusiasts. We know them: there was John, but he was mad; and now there is Jesus, and he is not even respectable"—like peevish children, said Jesus; but all the same,

From *The Parables of the Kingdom*, New York, 1936, pp. 197-206. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"the Kingdom of God has come upon you." For there is a power which works from within, like leaven in dough, and nothing can stop it.

Jesus has not come as a religious reformer, to patch up the ragged robe of Pharisaic Judaism (foolish idea! patching would only hasten the end of the old coat). This is a new departure in the relations of God and man; and new especially in that His grace is exhibited to the undeserving. "The Lord loveth the righteous, and His ear is open to their cry," said the old religion. But this is not now the whole story. To whom should the doctor come, if not to the sick? And so the Son of Man, in whom the Kingdom of God comes, is content to be known as "the friend of publicans and sinners." The strayed sheep is the especial object of the shepherd's care, and a frugal housewife will count no trouble too great to recover one lost coin out of her store. So Jesus went about the towns and villages of Galilee, seeking the lost; and that was how the Kingdom of God came. He launched out into the deep, and all was fish that came to His net. Nor was His appeal without results. The outcasts could be seen flocking into the Kingdom of God, as the birds fly to roost in the branches of a stalwart tree (which not long ago was an almost invisible seed). And for those who accepted the Kingdom of God there was pure happiness, like the joy of a wedding-feast.

The appeal and its success caused scandal. Could this be the coming of the Kingdom of God, when all the moral safeguards laboriously built up by the teachers of the Law were cast aside, and the lawless were welcomed into fellowship? To those who raised such objections Jesus appealed in parables with an ironical point. If invited guests do not come to a feast, something must be done to fill the vacant seats. And if a son who made fair promises fails to fulfil them, credit is surely due to the other son who atones for his first rudeness by a tardy obedience. Even if the younger son of a family has dragged his father's name in the mud, it is not for his elder brother to cut him off, if the father is glad to receive him when at last he comes home. But, in fact, there is no such thing as merit in the sight of God. If He bestows His gifts upon men who have done nothing to deserve them, He is like a magnificently generous employer who pays a full day's wage for an hour's work. The Kingdom of God is like that.

Yet the Kingdom of God does come with judgment. The religious leaders, who censured Jesus for His work and teaching, were at that very moment pronouncing judgment upon themselves, by the attitude they displayed, by their self-centered caution, their exclusiveness, their neglect of responsibilities, and their blindness to the purpose of God. In their hands the salt of the religion of Israel had lost its savour, its light was under a bushel. They were like an unprofitable servant who hid his master's money rather than risk it in investment, like an unfaithful steward who abused his trust, like defaulting tenants. This was the moral situation which found dramatic expression in the tragic forebodings of the ruin of the Jewish community and the destruction of the Temple.

In His individual appeals Jesus struck the same sterner note. The very fact that the supreme gift of God is offered to men lends an especial significance to the response that they make. The act of acceptance or the re-

jection determines the whole direction of a man's life, and so of his destiny. The course of events in which the Kingdom of God comes upon men

> "Tends to one moment's product, thus,
> When a soul declares itself, to wit,
> By its fruit, the thing it does."

Now that the offer is made, it is impossible to shirk the decision, just as a debtor who is being hauled off to court, or an employee under notice of dismissal, must make up his mind there and then to do something about it, before all opportunity for action is at an end.

As the course of events developed, it became more and more clear that those who responded to the call of Jesus must "count the cost," and the situation itself defined the momentous character of the decision. He had to say to would-be followers, The treasure is within your reach; but what will you pay for it? Not that the blessings of the Kingdom of God can be bought, at any price: they are the gifts of God. But because the situation called for sacrifice, it raised the question at issue to the point at which nothing short of absolute sincerity would count. "Will you accept the Kingdom of God?" meant, in view of the facts, "Will you stake your life upon it?"

Thus the coming of the Kingdom of God displayed its character as judgment, that is to say, as the testing and sifting of men. Though a drag-net may bring all kinds of fish to shore, they must be picked over before they can be marketed (as the fishermen-disciples knew well). Harvest is both the ingathering of the crop *and* the separation of wheat and tares. So the multitudes who were brought by the preaching of Jesus within the scope of the Kingdom of God were sifted by the way in which things went. They passed judgment upon themselves, not by introspective self-examination, but by their reaction to the developing situation. For it presently became clear that the opposition to Jesus was irreconcilable. A clash must come. When and how it would come, who could say? Does a householder know when his premises are to be broken into? It is the unexpected that happens. So Jesus was concerned to prepare His hearers for the unexpected. They must be like servants sitting up all night for their master, without knowing when he will come; like bridesmaids whose lamps must be alight whenever the procession starts.

At this point the curtain falls upon the scene illuminated by the parables. For the clash came, with tragic suddenness, and in what followed Jesus no longer taught, but acted and suffered. He died, to rise again. The disciples, taken after all by surprise, forsook Him and fled; but afterwards, they rose out of failure into a new life, and understood how the mystery of the Kingdom of God had been finally revealed in His death and resurrection.

The conviction remains central to the Christian faith, that at a particular point in time and space, the eternal entered decisively into history. An historic crisis occurred by which the whole world of man's spiritual experience is controlled. To that moment in history our faith always looks back. The Gospel is not a statement of general truths of religion, but an interpretation of that which once happened. The Creeds are anchored in

history by the clause "under Pontius Pilate." Above all, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist the Church recapitulates the historic crisis in which Christ came, lived, died and rose again, and finds in it the "efficacious sign" of eternal life in the Kingdom of God. In its origin and in its governing ideas it may be described as a sacrament of realized eschatology. The Church prays, "Thy Kingdom come"; "Come, Lord Jesus." As it prays, it remembers that the Lord did come, and with Him came the Kingdom of God. Uniting memory with aspiration, it discovers that He comes. He comes in His Cross and Passion; He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. Each Communion is not a stage in a process by which His coming draws gradually nearer, or a milestone on the road by which we slowly approach the distant goal of the Kingdom of God on earth. It is reliving of the decisive moment at which He came.

The preaching of the Church is directed towards reconstituting in the experience of individuals the hour of decision which Jesus brought. Its underlying theme is always: "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God has come. Repent, and believe the Gospel." It assumes that history in the individual life is of the same stuff as history at large; that is, it is significant in so far as it serves to bring men face to face with God in His kingdom, power and glory. We are blind and deaf, and half a lifetime of our history may pass us by without our discerning any eternal significance in it. Then the moment may come when the eyes of the blind are opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. The invitations to the feast are out: "Come, for all is ready!" The bridegroom is home from the wedding, the master from his journey: we must give account of our talents; we must render the produce of our vineyard. Blessed is that servant who is found awake; he enters into the joy of his Lord. The Kingdom of God has come, and he who receives it as a little child shall enter in.

In the same way, in that larger history which is the experience of human society, there may be long periods in which the divine significance of events is hidden from our eyes. We sleep and wake, night and day, while the seed grows, we know not how. Then comes the harvest. From time to time history reveals its momentous meaning, in a crisis which brings a challenge to men. The judgments of the Lord are in the earth. It is the business of the Church, to which is committed the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, to interpret the crisis by the light of that supreme crisis of the past, which is continually made present in Christian experience and worship. In that crisis there was judgment, and conflict, and a cross. The Gospel of the Kingdom of God is not an assurance of peace and happiness on easy terms. It may be God's "No!" pronounced upon things that we have valued. But in the end it runs, "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God."

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT AND CHRIST'S MISSION

Martin Dibelius

. . . . A CHRISTOLOGICAL QUESTION—can such a question really arise from a consideration of the Sermon on the Mount? Perhaps some theologians of the older generation would reply that the Sermon on the Mount raises no christological issue whatsoever. They might contend that it contains only some sayings and words of wisdom, of divine wisdom of course, spoken by a rabbi in Galilee. This rabbi was an ambassador of God, they might continue, perhaps the definitive ambassador, and for this reason he speaks with great authority. But his manner of expressing his opinion does not in any way reveal a claim to authority higher than this. The Sermon on the Mount implies that Jesus has the right to speak thus; but there is no hint that he wants to be something more than an inspired teacher of wisdom. . . . .

Many of the words spoken by Jesus have parallels in the older Jewish literature or in the writings of the Jewish rabbis. Perhaps we may venture to say that if we knew more of these Jewish sayings, we should have still more parallels. Perhaps only the most radical of the sayings of the Sermon on the Mount would remain absolutely unique. On the other hand no rabbinic pronouncement ever became authoritative for the world outside Judaism. Only the relatively small group of sayings collected in the Sermon on the Mount has won authority for millions of men. This has happened only because it was Jesus who proclaimed these sayings. The Sermon on the Mount is not an arbitrary collection of sayings, but it is Christ's own Gospel, and only as such has it achieved and does it maintain its authority for the Christians. Therefore we must confess that there *is* a christological question in the Sermon on the Mount.

To solve the problem thus raised I propose to make a distinction between the time in which Jesus lived and the time when the sayings were collected, *i.e.*, between the situation *before Easter* and the situation *after Easter*. . . . .

It is the supposition of Form-Criticism that the tradition handed down in the Synoptic Gospels was formulated in terms of the Christian faith and for the requirements of this faith. Therefore it is quite natural that all allusions of our Lord to his Messiahship were transformed by the Evangelists into Christian confessions in the time after Easter. Hence we have no real reason to draw a sceptical conclusion from the fact that the relevant passages express Christian convictions, and it is not necessary to take for granted that Jesus did not make any allusions to his Messiahship at all. It is probable,

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From *The Sermon on the Mount*, New York, 1940, pp. 79-103. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

rather, that the question who would be the King of the coming Kingdom was before his followers during his lifetime and that his listeners had at least a vague impression of their Master's higher authority.

At any rate, his disciples "forsook all and followed him," not because he uttered impressive sayings, like a wise rabbi, but because they believed that in connection with his work the Kingdom of God would appear on earth. We do not know how many of his followers used the word "Messiah" to express their hope of the coming of the Kingdom. But the execution of Jesus as King of the Jews seems to prove that a rumour about his Messiahship influenced the procedure of his enemies. It is difficult to imagine that incidents like the entry into Jerusalem or the cleansing of the temple could have occurred without awakening, either among friends or enemies, the presentiment of his Messiahship. In the opinion of his disciples Jesus was the warrant of the Kingdom; his healings and his sayings were the *signs* that the Kingdom was at hand. . . . .

His exhortations and decisions did not cover the whole field of human activity. He did not solve all problems of this life and did not arbitrate all conflicts of the world. We remember his word in Luke (12:14): "Man, who made me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" Finally, he did not try to win the whole population of his country. He spoke to the people who came to listen; according to our sources he abstained from all manner of public propaganda. It would be quite in harmony with our findings to construe even the sayings of Jesus as signs of the coming Kingdom. We saw in the last chapters that his commandments did not form a law adapted to the conditions in this world, but a law of God's Kingdom, a proclamation of the divine will without any regard for the earthly circumstances and the daily life of men. This proclamation nonetheless gives to the listeners the presentiment of the imminent coming of God. Therefore we may actually call the sayings of Jesus signs of the Kingdom. . . . .

The preaching of Jesus was really intended to awaken men by a sign from heaven, but not in the usual sense of a miraculous sign. Thus, these sayings of Jesus had a different influence upon his listeners than the wise words of the teachers, philosophers or prophets. Similarly, the sayings which we read in the Sermon on the Mount had a higher validity for the disciples than the word of the Scribes, for Jesus spoke with a higher authority than did the Scribes. He spoke as "one having authority." In summarizing all these considerations we may say that his personal conduct on the whole seemed to be a warrant of the Kingdom. . . . .

We are not allowed to interpret the Sermon on the Mount according to any incidents or circumstances of the life of Jesus, as is often done. We cannot solve the christological problem of the Sermon on the Mount by saying that Jesus, and Jesus alone, personally fulfilled the commandments of this sermon in his life. At least, this point of view is in no way emphasized by the New Testament texts. The Sermon on the Mount makes demands too exacting to be fulfilled in life on this earth, even in the life of the Saviour himself, for his life was bound by earthly circumstances too. The impression we have from the New Testament is rather this: whatever may

have happened during Jesus' life, he was for his followers the personal embodiment of the coming Kingdom; he proclaimed its law by words, he gave a fore-taste of its power by his healings, he inaugurated the new age.

Let us now consider the other situation, the situation *after Easter*, in which the state of affairs was completely changed. The origin of the Christian community is the conviction that Jesus did not remain in the grave, that God raised him from the dead, and that the risen and exalted Christ will return and bring from Heaven the divine Kingdom. For this reason, from the point of view of the first Christians the last great time of crisis has already begun. The Christians are waiting for the coming of their Lord. Consequently, all commandments of Jesus handed down to the communities assume the character of a testament. The Christians feel that Christ has instructed them to live in accordance with these sayings. They are not any longer proclamations of the will of God in all its radicalism; they become rules of conduct for the life within the communities and are adapted to the conditions of this life. They are no longer single sayings spoken at different occasions and to different people. They are brought together and codified to form systems of ordinances like the new law laid down in the Sermon on the Mount. This was possible only because the words of the Sermon on the Mount had been spoken by the Messiah, the Christ, the Lord, the Son of God.

What the early Christian communities wanted was not a collection of maxims—even though they might be very valuable maxims—and not in the first instance an impressive preaching; they needed a testament of their Lord, the revelation of the living Christ in their own midst. The tradition of the sayings takes a recognized place in the communities alongside the manifestations of the Holy Spirit; both are indications of the exalted Christ and of the coming Kingdom. Whoever doubted whether the new age had actually begun was to be convinced by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, such as the gifts of speaking, of teaching, of prophesying, of healing, and the miraculous capacity of searching one's heart. Whoever did not know how to live in this world was to be informed by the words of the Lord, by their radicalism and by their authority. . . . .

We must seek another solution of the problem. To find it we must go back once more and give full value to the eschatological situation, to the position of the first Christian communities between the two ages. For the first Christians the old age is practically at an end, thanks to God's interference; the new age is coming and the signs of its coming on earth are the manifestations of the Holy Spirit and the existence of the Christian community. This eschatological faith, the main element in the consciousness of the Christian community, lives on and is strengthened by the knowledge, that God has spoken His definitive word, has done His decisive deed, has given His only-begotten Son. The historical fact that the Christ had lived on earth in the immediate past established the conviction that God has already begun the great transformation of the world. It guaranteed the hope that the same Christ, who had lived as a man in a Galilean family and

then moved in a wider circle in intercourse with his disciples and other people, would shortly come back as the Lord.

The historical Jesus is thus also the Lord of the Christian faith. The eschatological preaching of the Epistles is founded in the Gospels, which tell of the happenings inaugurating the eschatological era. Thus eschatology provides the connection between the two halves of the New Testament. For this reason we are able to quote, as I did, words from various parts of the New Testament to characterize the christological authority of the Sermon on the Mount. Whatever the messianic presentiment of the people was who listened to the sayings of Jesus during his life, for those who collected these sayings the preacher on the Mount was obviously the Messiah, in whom all Christians believed. And it was thought evident that the content of the earthly life of the Messiah could only be the standard of Christian conduct till his return. . . . .

To understand this whole method of adapting Jesus' words we must bear in mind two things. The first is that in the opinion of the Christian it involved no falsification. These sayings were the expression of the will of God, and if a man understood the will of God better than others had before him, so that he was able to adapt this expression to the requirements of a work-aday life, then with God's help by the Holy Spirit it was permitted him to do anything which might make the saying useful for a better understanding of God's will.

The second thing to bear in mind, a thing which I should like to emphasize more than it is usually emphasized today, is that the Christians of those days expected the end of the world in the near future. For this reason such alterations as they undertook had only a limited validity. The end of the world would soon come, and then in the new world the will of God alone would be of value. Whatever has been altered for the short span of the present life will be forgotten. Hence it is not a sin to adapt the words of Jesus to the circumstances of the present day. The shortness of the time limits the validity of the change, and the word is thus made subject to the conditions which determine the life of the Christian in this world generally. Christian people stand between two ages. On the one hand they are still subject to the conditions of this life and on the other hand they know the pure will of God and are waiting for the time when this will shall be fully realized. This position of the Christians between the two ages in a way legitimizes the transformation of the Sermon on the Mount into a practical law for the Christian conduct on earth.

Now we are in a position to give a summary of what we may call the theological character of the Sermon on the Mount.

(1) Let us start with the question of its practicability. The sayings of the Sermon on the Mount reveal the pure will of God and therefore must be fulfilled. There are certain exceptions to this; namely those sayings which are given in the form of hyperbole. Such hyperbolic sayings are to guide men in the direction of the coming Kingdom. They are not adequate descriptions of human conduct, but for the members of the first Christian communities there was no danger of any mistake in this point. People of

the ancient Orient were accustomed to that manner of speaking in hyperbolic expressions. They felt the right meaning behind the wording and did not need any explanation. With this exception the sayings are to be regarded as practicable, just as the pure will of God must be considered practicable. Only it must be remembered that the application of these sayings is limited so far as the present age is concerned. The performance of the pure will of God is in the present world, consequently hindered. The real fulfilment of this great Christian law is possible only in the Kingdom of God.

(2) We consider next the question of eschatology. Because they are a revelation of the divine will, the sayings of the Sermon on the Mount have an eschatological significance. They are the law of the Kingdom. But much as we owe to Albert Schweitzer for his eschatological interpretations of the Gospels, we dare not follow him in construing them as the expression of an "interim-ethic." These commandments were given not for the short time intervening between the present and the end of the world. They were given for eternity, because they represent the will of the eternal God. Therefore we may call all of them eschatological sayings, not only those which speak expressly of the coming world, but all the commandments in the Gospel, for their starting point is the will of God, not human ability. Their standard is the existence of the coming world, not our human life within earthly circumstances. Those who want to be children of the Kingdom even now, during this age, are obliged to live their lives in obedience to the will of God. This is the practical implication of what Paul means when he speaks of being "in Christ." To be "in Christ" and to possess his Holy Spirit means to participate in the coming world and internally to be free from the earthly circumstances. Thus, the eschatological supposition enables the preacher on the Mount to speak as he does without any consideration of the conditions of this age.

(3) If we take the Sermon on the Mount as the representation of God's will we must recognize that full obedience here and now is impossible. We ought to be honest enough to confess our inability in this matter. The first communities felt these difficulties too, for they moderated and accommodated the radical commandments of the Sermon on the Mount to the needs of daily life, as we have seen. Modern theologians have often tried to achieve the same purpose by scientific interpretations, but we have no right to let ourselves be deceived by certain methods of interpretation. Only a superficial interpretation can so overestimate the eschatological character of the Sermon on the Mount as to suppose that the fulfilment of its commandments must be postponed until the coming age. For Jesus spoke to me of this present age. If we realize as we should that he addressed the sayings of the Sermon on the Mount to different people on various occasions, it seems impossible to imagine that his commandments did not concern the present in which he lived. Actually they were spoken to awaken his listeners, to thrill them, to stimulate them and, I venture to say, to offend them.

It would be superficial, too, to exaggerate the hyperbolic character of the

Oriental style, thereby to limit the validity of the Sermon on the Mount in its main points and to transform it into a set of rules expressing a very moderate ideal. The Oriental hyperbole is only a method of sharpening certain sayings; their rigidness must not be put aside by the statement that they are hyperbolic. No, the method of interpretation to which we must give preference is that which will grieve and offend our natural feelings. Jesus came not to bring peace but a sword, and to set a man at variance with his father and mother.

Thus, we come face to face with our last question in this field, the question what the Sermon on the Mount meant to those who heard it, standing as they believed in the period immediately preceding the end of the world. I am not speaking here of the significance of the Sermon on the Mount for the modern world. This will be the subject of the last chapter. My concern here is with Jesus' hearers and disciples.

The Sermon on the Mount is not a system either of ethics or of dogmatics. It does not cover the whole field of human conduct, either in the present or in the past. The sayings proclaimed the declared will of God only with respect to certain matters. If we were to extend the content of the Sermon on the Mount so as to cover the whole of life, and imagine a set of sayings equally radical in character, governing all occasions, we would construct a revolutionary law, the fulfilment of which would throw the whole world into turmoil. But it was not Jesus' purpose to give such a law to the world of his day. His task was another. We must look at his own attitude to understand what he regarded as his mission.

We have seen already that Jesus did not act as one who is an agitator for his own cause and who is obliged to win as many followers as he can. He chose a small number of disciples, a nucleus of the coming Kingdom, and a circle of faithful adherents who were waiting for this Kingdom. When he left his native country Galilee to go to Jerusalem, he did not go as a successful missionary and he did not have followers or friends at his disposal in all Galilean cities and among all classes of the people.

This is in accordance with the general impression we have drawn already from our sources, that the deeds and words of Jesus were *signs of the Kingdom of God*, nothing more and nothing less. Nothing more, for they do not introduce the Kingdom of Heaven on earth; and nothing less, for they are far more than advice and prescriptions for life during this age. In this statement we may find the key to the understanding of Jesus' entire mission. His miracles are a revelation of heavenly forces and a proclamation of what God is going to do. His decisions and commandments are meant to give evidence of the pure will of God. His entire personage is like a signal from heaven announcing that there is another world and that the other world is already moving toward this earthly world.

Regarding the Sermon on the Mount in the light of this conclusion, we have before us the solution of all the problems which we have faced up to this point. Our theory was that the commandments and the prophecies of the Sermon on the Mount are signs of the Heavenly Kingdom. Now we find a confirmation of this theory. When we interpret the sayings as signs

we can understand and in some way reconcile the apparent contradiction which was till now implied in our consideration. On the one side we found that the Sermon on the Mount must be taken seriously as an expression of the divine will—even in this world. On the other side we recognized that the commandments of the Sermon on the Mount cannot be fully performed in this age. The existence of God's demands within this world as they are proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount is a sign of the Kingdom of Heaven, judging us as well as blessing us. The radicalism of the Sermon on the Mount is our judgment, its announcement of another world is our hope.

In the light of this conclusion we are able also to understand the difference between the two halves of the New Testament. What happened before Easter was a series of occurrences on earth, which for faithful men were signs of the coming Kingdom of Heaven. After Easter all these events were interpreted as beginnings of the new world. For this reason, the Christian community preserved the tradition of the events; but when Christians expressed their faith, they spoke more of what the Lord was doing in their own midst than of what he had been doing in the villages and fields of Galilee. This is the reason for the difference between the two halves of the New Testament.

As regards the sayings of the Sermon on the Mount we may state that before Easter they were words of Jesus spoken to reveal God's will, and that after Easter these sayings were collected to be a rule of conduct for the Christian communities. During his lifetime the sayings of Jesus were intended to serve as signs of the Kingdom of Heaven. Collected and brought together in a slightly elaborated form in the summary called the Sermon on the Mount, the sayings became rules by which the Christians were to prepare themselves for the membership in that Kingdom and for a life "in Christ" meanwhile. Before Easter the simple words which we read in the Sermon on the Mount had more value than precepts of the sages, because the man who uttered them was a warrant of the Kingdom of Heaven, the personal embodiment of all faith and hope. His sayings were for his listeners judgment and a promise in the name of God. After Easter they became the law which the heavenly Lord has given. Now, however, the Lord has also given his Holy Spirit in order to strengthen his disciples and to fit them for a life according to the will of God, but within the limitations of an earthly existence.

This was the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount in the old days. For us who claim to be Christians in the present there is another question: what shall we do as Christians of today, if we want to be obedient to the Sermon on the Mount?

THE ETHICAL TEACHING OF JESUS

Benjamin W. Robinson

. . . . THE SO-CALLED "Sermon on the Mount" reflects the common daily life of the people, where poverty and sorrow have constantly to be faced. When Jesus began "Happy are you poor folks," one and another would say to themselves with incredulous surprise, "He is talking to me!" Anyone who started out with words like those would be sure of a hearing. Jesus was no scribe sitting on Moses' seat. He had a sympathetic feeling for all human difficulties and handicaps. He was a messenger of hope to everyone who was poor or hungry or in sorrow, or friendless and persecuted.

"Love your enemies." The words were startling. They commanded attention and thought. They challenged discussion. "Say a prayer for those who abuse you." Here was a strange new idea. Could the teacher mean what he was saying? "If some one strikes you on the cheek, turn to him the other." Such a bit of advice the listener would find utterly impracticable. He would dismiss it from his mind. But it would not stay dismissed; it persisted in coming back.

What is the new teacher saying next? He is asserting that God lets his sun shine on both the good and the evil. He is kind to the unthankful and the bad. Jesus is urging his listeners to live like God in this matter of being full of loving-kindness toward all.

Those who heard Jesus went home full of doubts and objections. Yet something in their hearts responded to this ideal of brotherliness. It was something which they could easily put to the test. It required no investment of money, no political connection, no rabbinic education. It was too high for them to reach, yet the words were plain. One after another they tried it out. They began to substitute love for hate, kindness for violence. They felt themselves growing and coming nearer to God. The number increased until within a few months there were thousands who were finding new happiness and satisfaction in testing the religion of Jesus.

THE NATURE OF JESUS' RELIGION

Alas for you Pharisees who pay your tithes of mint and rue and every little herb and yet neglect justice and kindness. These are the things you ought to do without neglecting those lesser things (Lk. 11:42; Matt. 23:23).

You neglect the will of God and keep the traditions of men (Mk. 7:9).

How shall I come before Jehovah and bow myself before him? Shall I come with burnt offerings? . . . . What doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly and to love kindness and to walk humbly with thy God (Mic. 6:6-8).

From *The Sayings of Jesus*, New York, 1930, pp. 150-71. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Harper & Brothers.

They watched Jesus to see whether he would cure the man on the Sabbath day so that they might have a ground of accusation against him (Mk. 3:2).

No food which enters a man can defile him. . . . . It is what proceeds out of the heart of a man which makes bad;—evil thoughts, immorality, stealing . . . . greed, arrogance (Mk. 7:19-22).

One of the scribes came . . . . and asked him, "What commandment is chief of all?" Jesus replied " 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God' . . . . and 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' " (Lev. 19:18; Mk. 12:28-31).

Love your enemies and be constantly helpful and your reward will be great. You will in this way be sons of the Most High; he is kind to the unthankful and the bad. Be full of loving kindness as your Father above is loving and kind (Lk. 6:35, 36; Matt. 5:44, 45, 48).

The reading of the sayings of Jesus will give a comprehensive view of Jesus' religion. The sayings should be studied carefully and reviewed many times. No amount of commentary can take the place of these utterances. The knowledge of the historical background and an intelligent reading of the sayings of Jesus in relation to that background should be complete in themselves.

So few of the sayings of Jesus have been preserved in our gospels that there is a strong tendency to scrutinize these sayings individually. But the utterances of Jesus themselves warn against any literalism in interpretation. They should be read in large sections and understood as vehicles for the new spirit of the time. They embody general principles and do not constitute a new law nor a revision of the Mosaic Law.

When the Jewish Christians first began to formulate the new religion which they set out to preach, they were naturally asked to state the difference between the new religion and the old. This accounts for the sharp distinction drawn in our Gospels between the law of Moses and the new Christian law. Jesus himself did not say that the old law was outworn, as Paul later said. Jesus did not denounce the Pharisees as a class, but did denounce those among them who were insincere or hypocritical or in some other way failed to live up to the spirit of the law. . . . .

The records of Jesus' religion do not present any complete system. So far as we know, Jesus never attempted to gather together his various words of advice into any book of precepts. It might even be said that his sayings are illustrations rather than directions, and that these illustrations fit the life of his time rather than any other period. But in these utterances the historical student can clearly see the greatness of Jesus' personality, can discern the stupendous grandeur of his idealism, can feel the unattainable heights of his communion with God, can appreciate the simple, direct way in which Jesus brought men and God nearer to one another.

All Jesus' ethical teaching was profoundly religious. There have been great ethical teachers, both ancient and modern, who have built up an ethical philosophy and program upon a purely human basis. They have demonstrated that man is a social being and that the best social life is attainable through certain rules of coöperation and brotherhood. Or they have demonstrated that the cultivation of the highest type of personal character is essential to the good social order. For Jesus, however, ethical prac-

tices were rooted in a religious experience. The religion of Jesus begins and ends in a personal sense of kinship to the eternal Spirit. When Jesus urged his listeners to do a kind act to the brother in need, he reminded them that the brother was one of the children of the great Father.

Jesus asked his followers to be worthy of their place as children of the heavenly Father. By this he meant that they should purify their hearts and minds and express themselves as the Father above expresses himself in the showering of countless blessings upon the great family of mankind. It is through this inner purity of soul and this outward expression of good that we enter into ever closer fellowship with that Spirit in the never-ending work of blessing humanity and bringing happiness to all, both good and bad, both near and far.

There is a modern tendency to say that the social gospel is all that man needs. Many a young person is unconsciously led into the attitude that religion is an aid to social morality, that the chief vindication of religion is in a better social order which it advocates. Some men even find their greatest inspiration in the patient courage of some other individual and so feel that there is no ultimate need of God. Surely, however, such men find sooner or later that the individual who gives the inspiration is in frequent communion with an unseen power.

In any case the religion of Jesus is not a social program, assisted by ritual and worship. It is a way to find God. Through forgiveness of injury the soul may rise; through purity of heart, character may be strengthened; through brotherliness and helpfulness, qualities of personality are developed which grow upward toward the ideal and the eternal.

Self-Denial

Your Father above knows that you need these things. But seek first his kingdom and these other things will be yours besides (Lk. 12:30, 31; Matt. 6:32, 33).

May thy kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread (Lk. 11:3; Matt. 6:11).

What would it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul (Mk. 8:36).

Anyone who aims to preserve his own self will lose his soul; but anyone who loses himself in the cause of the kingdom will find himself (Mk. 8:35).

There is a widespread idea that the religion of Jesus is first and foremost a call to renounce the world and to deny oneself the natural ambitions and joys of life. There is little basis for this idea in the early records of Jesus' sayings. Those who try to find it there sometimes separate it from the more important supplementary idea of the devotion of life in all its aspects to the supreme purpose of preparation for the kingdom of God.

"Anyone who wishes to be my disciple will practice self-denial and take up a cross and follow after me" (Mk. 8:34). This saying taken out of its context and placed by itself could be made a basis for a teaching of extreme asceticism. Mediaeval monks felt they were fulfilling this rule of Jesus when they left home and friends and property. They denied themselves every conceivable comfort, even in matters of food and clothing. They literally carried a cross upon a chain or band around the neck. They tried to "follow" Jesus literally by walking along the road from place to place, as Jesus did.

The ascetic and monastic movements so important in the history of the Church did not come from Jesus. In modern times the religions of India disclose the real home of such practices. In ancient times Oriental philosophies made their way westward into the Roman Empire and had strong influences through Gnosticism upon various branches of the Christian Church. Asceticism perhaps had gained some acceptance among the Jews. John the Baptist is described in terms which might mean that he had renounced the world. In Mark 2:18, there is a reference to fasting practiced by John's disciples and by the Pharisees.

But Jesus' disciples did not fast (Mk. 2:18). "John came not eating or drinking like others, and you say 'He has a bad spirit.' Now the son of man has come, eating and drinking like others, and you say, 'There is a glutton and a drinker, a friend of tax-collectors and worldly people'" (Lk. 7:33, 34; Matt. 11:18). Jesus did not regard either fasting or eating as having any independent value. Self-denial may be either good or bad, according to the purpose prompting it. The kingdom of God is like "a merchant looking for precious pearls; and having found one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matt. 13:45, 46). Material possessions are the lesser pearls of life's store, but may be of great value in making it possible to secure the one pearl of great price.

The Father above knows that his children have need of the necessities of life (Matt. 6:32). The Lord's Prayer recognizes the need of food for our daily living. But spiritual values are of greater importance. It would be of little use for a man to accumulate early possessions even to the point of gaining the whole world, if in so doing he lost his own soul. . . . .

Self-denial is a means to an end. Brotherly helpfulness, the devotion of all to the welfare of others, constitutes the higher good, to which all lesser things must be brought into subjection. The one who makes it his rule of life to cater to his own comfort and fulfill all his personal desires will lose his soul. It is through the giving of all one's capacities and possessions to the higher ambition that a man will truly find himself.

The relation of self-denial to social service has been a matter of much discussion. Many modern social leaders claim, as Plato did in ancient days, that the good of the individual must always be subordinated to the good of the group. Such thinkers conceive of a society perfected through the contribution of each of its members. If every act of every individual has in view the good of all, then the result must be completely good.

This attitude, however, is not at all that of Jesus. He had no such social program. Jesus expected the coming of the kingdom, and he left to God the plans for the inauguration of that new social order. Jesus was chiefly concerned in preparing men and women for that great day when it should come. His interest was in the individual soul. Jesus called upon his disciples to devote all to the service of others, not because he wished to subordinate the individual to the community, but because he knew that service was the secret of growth. He taught men how to develop their highest and best selves.

The religion of Jesus has become the greatest power in the world for

social service. This is because it fosters the highest type of individual character. Of what use would a perfect social order be if the individuals of which it was composed were only commonplace mortals? Many of the lower animals have a well-developed order of society. The level of life of the group depends upon the character of attainments of the individuals in it. Jesus was very close to the heart of life in his insistence upon the development of the highest type of personal character.

Fear and Trust

Do not worry about your life, fretting as to what food you are going to eat or about your body as to what clothes you are going to wear. Your life is more important than what you wear. Look at the birds of the air, they do not even plant fields or reap harvests; they have no storehouses or barns; yet the Father above gives them food. You are of far greater value than the birds.

Will worry help any one of you to add a single hour to his life? If worry cannot help you in the least, what use is there in it?

Learn a lesson from the lilies of the field (Lk. 12:22-27; Matt. 6:25-28).

One of the obstacles in the way of human progress through the centuries has been fear. People of backward countries are still in modern times largely controlled by motives of fear. They are afraid of lightning, thunder, darkness. They are terrified by eclipses, volcanic eruptions, and other unusual occurences. Many primitive religions are based upon the ineradicable sense of fear and superstition. Awe, for instance, makes Oriental mothers sacrifice babies to some river god, whom they think may otherwise visit them with disease or plague or famine.

Caution and foresight, however, are virtues of the highest order. It is a certain kind of useless fear, carried to extreme, which men share with the lower animals. The finest type of horse is seized with fear when its stable catches fire, not a fear which makes him seek safety, but a fear which makes it almost impossible for him to be rescued from danger.

Human beings are often subject to similar panic in times of sudden catastrophe. It is this sort of fear which the religion of Jesus aims to remove from human life. Jesus had no fear which in any way interfered with his usefulness. He did not shrink from death itself. His ministry stands out as the clearest example in history of the fearless life.

A particularly destructive expression of fear is found in the highest and best civilization of modern times. In the life of our large cities, the individual is pursued and harassed by an enemy known as "worry." The hospital patient who is to undergo an operation is driven by anxiety into such a state of mind as often to endanger the success of the operation. The man who cannot pay his rent begins to lie awake at night. And often the man who is financially solvent makes his life unhappy by worry about his social status.

The religion of Jesus has no place for worry. It eliminates fear and anxiety. If even the birds of the sky and the flowers of the field thrive in the course of nature, what rational basis can there be for thinking that God will not take care of his human family? Jesus very strongly asserts the need of caution and foresight. In the parable of the talents, his denunciation of the man who laid away his talent and failed to improve his opportunity is unmis-

takable. The ten virgins were five of them prudent and watchful, while the other five were shortsighted and unprepared. The unjust steward was commended for his clever foresight.

Jesus' teaching is not that we should let the future take care of itself, but that we should not let undue anxiety interfere with the concentration of all our best on the present task and the larger program. It should be noted, too, that Jesus does not tell the sluggard or the self-centered man not to worry. Jesus speaks to those who have turned their abilities to a high and noble purpose. He never encourages laziness or lack of thrift.

When Jesus states in what seems an absolute and extreme way that the Father will take care of his children, he is not saying that the children need not do anything for themselves. He is rather expressing the attitude and state of mind in which the children may undertake to work out their own salvation. Men need not be afraid that God is working against them. They may rather feel that there is an abundance of good things in the natural resources of life. Men are surrounded by abundant opportunities for growth and happiness.

These beliefs of Jesus are in striking contrast to the attitude of many ancient philosophers toward nature. Thus the philosophy of Plato was gradually developed into a dualism which sometimes conceived of life as a great struggle between the spirit of God dwelling in men, and the contrary element existing in a hostile world. But Jesus taught his followers to be friends with nature. To be sure, he expressed very strongly the value of work and service and effort. But he also made men see the great value of occasional relaxation. The functions of the human body soon deteriorate unless they have relaxation as well as exercise.

Trust in the heavenly Father is one of the greatest truths and necessities of the largest life. It does away with unnecessary worry and anxiety. It enables men and women to develop the highest and finest qualities of which they are capable in an increasingly favorable environment.

Resisting Evil

Love your enemies, do a kindness for those who hate you, say a prayer for those who abuse you (Lk. 6:27, 28; Matt. 5:44).

If anyone takes something of yours, do not demand it back (Lk. 6:30; Matt. 5:42).

Do not pass judgment on others (Lk. 6:37; Matt. 7:1).

One of the most widely discussed questions about Jesus has to do with his attitude toward war. The answer is clear, Jesus said nothing directly on the subject. Jesus addressed himself to the people and conditions of his time. The only nation against whom the Jews could have declared war in that day was the Roman Empire. If Jesus ever said anything about war with Rome, it was, of course, to advise against such a war, which could have only one possible ending—the destruction of Jerusalem. Simkovitch in his admirable little book on Jesus has brought out with great clearness the political situation which was the background of anything Jesus might have said about political non-resistance.

One or two passages found in the Gospel of Matthew have been made

into a teaching of universal pacifism. "He who takes the sword will perish by the sword" (Matt. 26:52). It is doubtful whether the words should be taken out of their context and applied to other situations than the one for which they were spoken. . . . .

Nevertheless, it is certain that Jesus told his listeners to love their enemies and to do a kindness for those who hated them. He told them to return good for evil. Scott, in his book, has an interesting paragraph on this subject. He says that the rule of not returning evil for evil has "been now incorporated in the customs of all civilized nations. It is recognized that however grievously a man has been injured, he must not retaliate for himself. The world has gradually discovered that when once the right of private revenge is granted, the door is thrown open to all kinds of evil and injustice. Nothing in the teaching of Jesus has been so often ridiculed as his precept of non-resistance; yet all experience has proved its wisdom" (*Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, p. 72).

Jesus' teaching against a personal revenge, like that regarding self-denial, is not to be understood by itself, but only in relation to the more important ideal of doing good to all, both friend and enemy. "Love your enemies, do a kindness for those who hate you." To return evil for evil is only to increase the amount of hatred and hostility. The true way to overcome and banish evil is through kindness, forbearance, and brotherhood. This higher ideal of Jesus is the subject of a later chapter.

Marriage and Divorce

Anyone who does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother (Mk. 3:35).

Any man who has left house or wife or brethren or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will receive many times as much in this world and will inherit eternal life (Lk. 22:30; Mk. 10:29; Matt. 19:29).

Any man who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery (Lk. 16:18; cf. Matt. 5:32).

To the married I give advice, not I but the Lord; let not the wife depart from her husband, but if she depart, let her remain unmarried (I Cor. 7:10, 11).

And some Pharisees were asking him if it is right for a husband to divorce his wife. . . . . Moses permitted a man to write a statement and send his wife away. This rule was written in consequence of your hardness of heart. . . . . Let not a man separate what God has joined together (Mk. 10:2-9).

There are many sayings in the Gospels which have been interpreted as meaning that Jesus regarded marriage as something inferior to the higher state of a celibate life. These are, for the most part, passages in which Jesus is emphasizing a spiritual ideal of placing God and his kingdom above all other interests of life, even one's own home and family. Jesus himself did not marry. His rapid, active ministry, with its dangerous and its tragic end, left little opportunity for home life.

But there is little basis for the idea that Jesus in any way disapproved of marriage or of married life. He speaks in the highest terms of the sanctity of the marriage tie. He looked with profound disapproval upon the easy divorce customs of his time. In the days of Moses it had been customary for a man to send his wife back home without any explanation or apology. The

legislation of Moses introduced a new era in the history of marriage, by requiring the husband to write out a statement and give it to her (Deut. 24:1) when he sent her away. She was then given a definite status and had a legal right to marry another man.

In the time of Jesus there was much feeling that even such a written statement from the husband was not sufficient. There should be some sort of official understanding in the matter, and some recognition of the growing feeling that marriage had more sanctity in it than the mere passing whim of a husband. What Jesus most seriously opposed was such an action as that of Herod Antipas, who fell in love with another woman and proceeded to send home his own wife. Then, because John the Baptist objected, Herod had yielded to the plea of Herodias and given the order for the execution of that noble prophet of righteousness.

It is evident that Jesus was suggesting a great principle, rather than laying down any arbitrary rule. Jesus believed the institution of marriage to be a holy and beautiful one and that it was being flagrantly abused. There has been much discussion regarding the meaning of the "doubly attested" saying of Jesus regarding marriage. Taken literally, it means that anyone who "sends away his wife and marries another"—that is, anyone who not only divorces his wife but marries again—has broken the Mosaic Law. In other words, it is remarriage rather than divorce which Jesus opposed. This is the sense in which Paul applied the rule of Jesus in the situation at Corinth.

Perhaps Jesus was not so much condemning either the divorce or the remarriage as the combination of the two in a divorce secured for the immediate purpose of remarriage. But to insist upon any exact application of Jesus' rule is to become a literalist like the scribes whom Jesus denounced. The spirit of Jesus' attitude stands out clearly above all such discussion. It was a part of his religion to inculcate a greater reverence toward the love of man and wife.

The Gospel of Matthew introduces an element not found in the other Gospels. Any man who sends his wife away, "except for unchastity" (Matt. 19:9; 5:32), is a trespasser. This addition of Matthew's reflects a period in the early Church when Christians were trying to find exact rules of conduct in the sayings of Jesus. To them it seemed that Jesus must have made such an exception to his rule against divorce. The exception is not in accord with the spirit of Jesus nor in accord with his manner of expression. He spoke in general principles, not in exact rules. Surely the modern mind can rise above this ancient pre-Christian and un-Christian idea and attitude (cf. John 8:1-11).

The mutual love of man and wife will, in the spirit of Jesus, be exalted higher and higher with the passing centuries. All sorts of changes in marriage laws and in divorce laws may occur. Some of them may be good and some may be bad, but all those which tend to enthrone the mutual love of man and woman as a God-given blessing are in the spirit of Jesus.

Personal Character

There is nothing that is covered up which is not going to come to light (Lk. 8:17).
Do not swear either by heaven . . . . or by earth . . . . but let your speech be "yes" and "no" (Matt. 5:34, 37).
When you are invited to a banquet do not take the best seat . . . . but when you are invited, go and take the lowest place so that your host may be able to say to you "My friend, come up higher" (Lk. 14:8, 10).
Because you have been found faithful in a small matter, you will have authority over ten cities (Lk. 19:17).
The one who is faithful in a small matter is faithful also in a large one (Lk. 16:10).
A healthy tree does not produce bad fruit, nor does a bad tree yield good fruit (Lk. 6:43; Matt. 7:18).
Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness (Lk. 12:31; Matt. 6:33).

Jesus insists that sincerity is a primary quality in personal character. The doubly attested saying, "There is nothing that is covered up which is not going to come to light," is only one of his many utterances to this effect. There is scarcely any sin which Jesus denounces so often and so sharply as hypocrisy. Any falsehood of character such as he observed in some of the Pharisees was for him intolerable. One who pretends to be good when he is not and who misleads himself into thinking that he is God's favorite is sinning against the very spirit of goodness. Such an attitude is "unpardonable" (Mk. 3:29).

"If the light that is in you be darkness, how great is the darkness!" It is a further development of the insistence of the Old Testament prophets upon the need of heart righteousness in winning Jehovah's favor. Religion is not a matter of external acts or ceremonies so much as a cultivation of noble character. The Beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart," (Matt. 5:8; Psa. 24:4) has primary reference, both in Jesus' thought and in the Psalm, to this same quality of sincerity and purity of purpose and action.

To be truly sincere, moreover, a man should avoid every sort of falsehood and lie. The commandment, thou shalt not tell a lie, is a decidedly modern commandment. The ancient Spartans are said to have considered it far better to lie than to be caught in an act of stealing. Lying was and still is so common in the Orient that the custom is that when a man wishes to convince his listener that he is telling the truth, he swears by heaven (Gal. 1:20) or by some other sacred object that he is not lying. Jesus carried his teaching of sincerity to such an extreme that he begged his followers to avoid all such swearing and to answer questions with a simple "yes" or "no" (Matt. 5:34, 37).

Humility is another basic quality in Jesus' ideal of personal character. A Pharisee who publicly gave thanks to God that he was not like other men (Lk. 18:11) did not win God's favor by any such prayer. It is the man who recognizes his own shortcomings, the man who has ideals which reach out far ahead and above him, the man who is humble in the presence of great ideals, who is the more likely to grow and improve.

This teaching of Jesus has been misrepresented and misunderstood as much as any other. Jesus had no place in his religion for an inferiority complex. A man or a woman who suffers from such a misfortune may find

in the religion of Jesus the best cure for such a condition. Jesus never tells anyone to consider himself inferior to any of his fellows. Even in the presence of kings and governors, early Christians held their heads and hearts strongly and courageously. Scott has put the gist of the matter in a single sentence when he says "The humility which Jesus demands is humility towards God." Humility is for Jesus primarily a religious attitude. It is a recognition that there are higher ideals of living to which men have not yet attained.

The Beatitude of Matt. 5:5, "Blessed are the meek," has often been interpreted to mean that meekness is a Christian virtue. This interpretation is guilty of three errors. In the first place, the word "meek" in its modern connotation is not a good translation. Goodspeed translates "humble-minded," Moffatt translates "the humble." Humility is one of the elements in the character of the world's greatest leaders. Washington and Lincoln, Jesus and Paul, were all examples of the power and blessing of humility. The second error lies in the assumption that the beatitudes were in praise of certain qualities. This is perhaps true in the Gospel of Matthew, but according to Luke the Beatitudes, at least some of them, had a more direct application to actual existing conditions in Palestine. "Blessed are you who are poor" (Lk. 6:20) did not, of course, mean that poverty was a blessing, but meant rather that Jesus was addressing himself to poor people and exhorting them to hope for a blessing in the future. In this sense, Jesus may have promised blessing to the humble-minded. The third error is in failing to understand that "the meek" is a common phrase in the Old Testament and refers to a particular class or group of God's people. The Beatitude of Matthew is, in fact, a direct quotation from Psalm 37:11 in which the psalmist sings of the glorious future in store for God's favorite ones.

There is, in fact, in the religion of Jesus a dynamic quality which develops personality to the greatest extent. He never calls on anyone to dwarf his own personality. The spirit of Jesus rather makes a man understand that he is a child of God with an eternal destiny and that the world is a workshop in which character can be developed and enlarged until it is fitted for the larger plans which God has in store for his human family. . . . .

Jesus' approach to the development of individual personality is distinctly religious. He led men to find God and to prepare themselves for his kingdom. Particularly did he react against the common idea of his day that God keeps a record of deeds and misdeeds, that he will reward or punish according to the record which shows on his ledger. It is significant that in the scene of the great judgment (Matt. 25:31 ff.), the righteous are greatly surprised when the judge highly commends them. They have been living godly lives but have not been counting their credits. The ideal of the religion of Jesus is not that of building up a life of credit, piece by piece, but the development of character which does good spontaneously. The true follower of Jesus works not for fear of hell or hope of heaven. He works not for reward, but unconsciously, easily. Because he is God's son, he lives the life of god's kingdom.

Such a life is the pearl of great price. The life of the age-to-come lived here and now. This life of the age-to-come is not easy to attain. It is through constant and persistent prayer that Jesus attained to his consciousness of that higher order. His thought was that if men could only all now live the life of the perfect brotherhood, the great reward would at once be realized. This teaching is the "Gospel," the Good News. Jesus urged his disciples to tell it to all men and give them this vision of a kingdom already coming to pass and near at hand.

In establishing contact with this life of the age-to-come and in maintaining close communion with the heavenly Father's plan for his children, prayer becomes an essential element and assumes an important part.

THE ETHIC OF JESUS AND THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

Reinhold Niebuhr

SINCE WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH aroused the American church to the urgency of the social problem and its relation to the ethical ideals of the gospel it has been rather generally assumed that it is possible to abstract an adequate social ethic for the reconstruction of society from the social teachings of Jesus. Dozens of books have been written to prove that Jesus' ideals of brotherhood represented an outline of the ideal society, that his law of service offered an alternative to the competitive impulse in modern society, that guidance for the adjustment of every political and economic problem could be found in his words, and that nothing but a little logic would serve to draw out the "social implications" of his teachings.

Most of this energy has been vainly spent and has served to create as much confusion as light. There is indeed a very rigorous ethical ideal in the gospel of Jesus, but there is no social ethic in the ordinary sense of the word in it, precisely because the ethical ideal is too rigorous and perfect to lend itself to application in the economic and political problems of our day. This does not mean that the ethic of Jesus has no light to give to a modern Christian who faces the perplexing economic and political issues of a technological civilization. It means only that confusion will be avoided if a rigorous distinction is made between a perfectionist and absolute ethic and the necessities of a social situation.

The ethic of Jesus was, to begin with, a personal ethic. It was not individual in the sense that he believed in individual perfection abstracted from a social situation. He saw that wealth tempted to covetousness and that poverty prompted the virtue of humility. He spoke of the kingdom and not of salvation, and the kingdom meant an ideal social relationship, even though he might emphasize that it proceeded from internal spiritual forces. His ethic was an ethic of love and it therefore implied social relationships. But it was an individual ethic in the sense that his chief interest was in the quality of life of an individual. He regarded as a temptation the suggestion that he become a political leader or that he develop the political implications of the messianic idea, and he resisted the effort to make him king. He was not particularly interested in the Jewish people's aspirations toward freedom from Rome, and skillfully evaded the effort to make him take sides in that political problem. He accepted monarchy on the one hand and slavery on the other, though he called attention to the difference between the ideal of his kingdom, which measured greatness by service, and the kind of greatness which the "kings of the gentiles" attained.

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His lack of concern for social and political issues is, however, not as important from the perspective of this problem as the kind of ethical ideal which he actually developed. In terms of individual life his ethical ideal was one of complete disinterestedness, religiously motivated. No one was to seek his own. The man who asked him to persuade his brother to divide an inheritance with him was rudely rebuked. Evil was not to be resisted, the borrower was to be given more than he asked for without hope of return. A special premium was placed upon actions which could not be rewarded. In other words, the prudential motive was treated with utmost severity. There are, of course, words in the teachings of Jesus which are not as rigorous as this. He promised rewards. Some of these words belong to a humanist strain in his teachings in which he merely makes a shrewd analysis of the effect of certain actions. The severe judge will be judged severely. The proud man will be abased and the humble man exalted. Here the social rewards of social attitudes are recognized. Other offers of reward occur, but with one or two exceptions they can be placed in the category of ultimate rewards—"in the resurrection of the just," of "treasures in heaven," of favor with God. On the whole, they do not seriously qualify his main position that moral action must be motivated purely by obedience to God, emulation of God's attributes and gratitude for the forgiving grace of God. An ulterior motive (desire for social approval, for instance) for a worthy action would destroy the virtue of the action and would result only in the attainment of the object of the ulterior motive—"verily, they have their reward."

Jesus did not deny that disinterested action would result in rewards; "all these things" would be added, and the man who forgot himself completely would find himself most truly. Here is the recognition of the basic ethical paradox that the highest result of an action can never be its desired result. It must be a by-product. If it is desired the purity of the action is destroyed. If I love to be loved or to be socially approved I will not be loved or approved in the same way as if my fellowmen caught in me a glimpse of pure disinterestedness. Obviously the only way to achieve such pure disinterestedness is to have actions motivated purely by religious motives. But this very emphasis upon religious motives lifts the ethic of Jesus above the area of social ethics. We are asked to love our enemies, not because the social consequence of such love will be to make friends of the enemies, but because God loves with that kind of impartiality. We are demanded to forgive those who have wronged us, not because a forgiving spirit will prove redemptive in the lives of the fallen, but because God forgives our sins. Here we have an ethic in other words which we can neither disavow nor perfectly achieve. We cannot disavow it because it is a fact that the prudential motive destroys the purity of every ethical action. We have a right to view the social and personal consequences of an action in retrospect, but if we view it in prospect we have something less than the best. So powerful is the drive of self-interest in life, however, that this ideal is as difficult to achieve as it is to disavow. It remains therefore as an

ideal which convicts every moral achievement of imperfection but it is always a little beyond the realm of actual human history.

Though Jesus was as indifferent to the social consequences of pure disinterestedness as he was critical of concern for the personal consequences, it is not difficult to draw conclusions in regard to the social ideal implied by such disinterestedness. In practical terms it means a combination of anarchism and communism dominated by the spirit of love. Such perfect love as he demands would obviate the necessity of coercion on the one hand because men would refrain from transgressing upon their neighbors' rights, and on the other hand because such transgression would be accepted and forgiven if it did occur. That is anarchism in other words. It would mean communism because the privileges of each would be potentially the privileges of all. Where love is perfect the distinctions between mine and thine disappear. The social ideal of Jesus is as perfect and as impossible of attainment as is his personal ideal. But again it is an ideal which cannot be renounced completely. Whatever justice men attain in the society in which they live is always an imperfect justice. The careful limitation and definition of rights which Stoicism gave to the world as a social ideal always develop into injustice in actual life because every person views rights not from an absolute but from a biased perspective. The result is a society in which the perspective of the strong dictates the conceptions of justice by which the total community operates and necessitates social conflict through the assertion of the rights of the weak before the injustice is corrected. Justice, in other words, which is only justice is less than justice. Only imaginative justice, that is, love, which begins by espousing the rights of the other rather than self, can achieve a modicum of fairness.

Whether we view the ethical teachings of Jesus from the perspective of the individual or of society we discover an unattainable ideal but a very useful one. It is an ideal never attained in history or in life, but one which gives us an absolute standard by which to judge both personal and social righteousness. It is a standard by comparison with which all human attainments fall short and it may offer us the explanation of Jesus' words, "Why callest thou me good; no one is good save God." Perhaps it ought to be added that an attempt to follow this ideal in a world which is, particularly in its group relationships, hardly human and certainly not divine, will inevitably lead us to where it led Jesus, to the cross.

Valuable as this kind of perfectionism is, it certainly offers no basis for a social ethic which deals responsibly with a growing society. Those of us who believe in the complete reorganization of modern society are not wrong in using the ideal of Jesus as a vantage point from which to condemn the present social order, but I think we are in error when we try to draw from the teachings of Jesus any warrant for the social policies which we find necessary to attain to any modicum of justice. We may be right in believing that we are striving for a justice which approximates the Christian ideal more closely than the present social order, but we are wrong when we talk about achieving a "Christian social order." The Barthians are quite right, I think, in protesting against the easy identification of the kingdom

of God with every movement of social reform and social radicalism which has prevailed in American Christianity in particular and in liberal Protestantism in general. Those of us who dissociate ourselves from the easy optimism of modern liberalism and who believe that a just society is not going to be built by a little more education and a few more sermons on love have particular reason to reorient our thinking in this matter so that we will not come forward with a social ethic involving the use of force and coercion and political pressure of every kind and claim the authority of Jesus for it.

Our confusion is, of course, no worse than that of the conventional teachers of Christian ethics and theology who have a rather complacent attitude toward the present economic society and criticize us for violating the ethic of Jesus in our espousal of the class struggle, for instance. Our confusion is, in fact, not quite as bad as theirs. They have used every kind of exegetical device to prove that the teachings of Jesus are not incompatible with participation in nationalistic wars or, if they have been a little more clearheaded, they have found ethical justification for their actions by proving that the ethic of Jesus does not provide for the responsibilities of politics and economics, and therefore leaves them free to choose a political strategy which is most consonant with their conception of the moral goodwill which they believe Jesus to idealize. The critics of the former type have no ground to stand upon at all when they accuse radical Christians of violating the ethic of Jesus; for participation in a non-violent strike action, to choose an obvious example, is certainly not more incompatible with the ethic of Jesus than participation in an international conflict. Critics of the latter type have cut the ground for criticism from under their own feet. They admit that any responsible relationship to political and economic affairs involves compromise and they ought to have a difficult time proving that the assertion of national interest or the protection of national rights is more compatible with the perfectionist ideal of pure disinterestedness than the assertion of class interests and the protection of class rights.

But the confusion of our critics does not absolve us of the necessity of clear thought for ourselves. The struggle for social justice in the present economic order involves the assertion of rights, the rights of the disinherited, and the use of coercion. Both are incompatible with the pure love ethic found in the Gospels. How then do we justify the strategy of the "class struggle"? We simply cannot do so in purely Christian terms. There is in the absolute sense no such thing as "Christian socialism." We must justify ourselves by considerations of the social situation which we face and the human resources which are available for its solution. What we discover in the social situation is that human life in its group interests moves pretty much upon the basis of the economic interests of various groups. We realize that intelligence and spiritual and moral idealism may qualify economic interest but they do not destroy it. Whatever may be possible for individuals, we see no possibility of a group voluntarily divesting itself of its special privileges in society. Nor do we see a possibility of pure disinterestedness and the spirit of forgiveness on the part of an underprivileged

group shaming a dominant group into an attitude of social justice. Such a strategy might possibly work in intimate personal relationships but it does not work in the larger group relations. . . . .

The social struggle involves a violation of a pure ethic of love not only in the assertion of rights but in the inevitable use of coercion. Here again one need but state the obvious; but the obvious is usually not recognized by academic moralists. No society can exist without the use of coercion, though every intelligent society will try to reduce coercion to a minimum and rely upon the factor of mutual consent to give stability to its institutions. Yet it can never trust all of its citizens to accept necessary social arrangements voluntarily. It will use police force against recalcitrant and anti-social minorities, and it will use the threat of political force against a complacent and indifferent group of citizens which could never be relied upon to initiate adequate social policies upon its own accord. No government can wait upon voluntary action on the part of the privileged members of a community for an adequate inheritance or income tax. It will use the political force created by the votes of the disinherited and less privileged to initiate and enforce taxation policies, designed to equalize privileges. Privileged groups may accept such legislation without violent revolt but they will probably argue against its justice until the day of their death. An intelligent society will constantly strive toward the goal of a more equal justice by initiating a more rigorous policy just as soon as a previous and more tentative one has been accepted and absorbed into the social standards of the community. If this is not done by gradual process, with the unrealized goal of essential equality beckoning each generation to surpass the approximations of justice achieved in the past, the inequalities of the social order, always increasing through natural process, are bound to grow until an outraged sense of justice (probably spurred by actual physical want on the part of the least privileged members of a community) will produce a violent revolt. In such nations as Germany, for instance, it is really an open question whether any political measures can achieve the desired end of social justice quickly enough to prevent violent revolution.

The necessity of this kind of coercion, based upon the assertion of interest on the part of the less privileged, is such a clear lesson of history that one hesitates to belabor the point and would refrain from doing so were it not for the fact that half of the academic treatises on social ethics and Christian ethics were written as if no such necessity existed. In this respect secular moralists are frequently as naïve as religious ones. In the one case it is expected that a change in educational technique will eliminate the drive of self-interest which determines economic life and in the other case there is a naive confidence in the possibility of changing human nature by religious conversion or religious inspiration. It is the thesis of the radical wing of Christian social theorists, whether in England, Germany or America, that nothing accomplished by either education or religious suasion will be able to abolish the social struggle. We believe that such hopes are corrupted by the sentimentalities of the comfortable classes and are caused by their lack of understanding of the realities of an industrial civilization. In what

sense, then, may we call ourselves Christian or how do we hope to insinuate Christian and ethical values into the social struggle? The simplest answer is that we believe that the highest ethical and spiritual insight may mitigate the social struggle on the one hand and may transcend it on the other.

We believe that it makes some difference whether a privileged group makes a stubborn and uncompromising defense of its special privileges or whether it has some degree of social imagination and tries to view its privileges in the light of the total situation of a community. Education ought to create some of that social imagination, and in so far as it does, it will mitigate the class struggle or the social struggle between races. The religious contribution to the same end may consist of various elements. Real religion produces the spirit of humility and repentance. It destroys moral conceit. Moral conceit is precisely what makes privileged groups so stubborn in the defense of their privileges. The human animal is just moral enough to be unable to act immorally with vigor if he cannot find a moral justification for his actions. If the Christian Church used the ethical ideal of Jesus, the ideal of pure disinterestedness, more rigorously, and if the modern pulpit made a more astute analysis of human motives in the light of this ideal, many of the rationalizations which now support the anti-social policies and attitudes of privileged and powerful people would be destroyed. At least they might be qualified. One of the most unfortunate facts about our contemporary moral situation is that the church has ceased to convict men of selfishness at the precise moment in history when human greed is more obvious and more dangerous than at any previous time. Nowhere has the liberal church played more false to its generation than in its optimistic and romantic interpretation of human nature, just when an industrial civilization revealed the drive of self-interest in all its anti-social power. The part of the Christian Church which has tried to convict the generation of sin knows too little about the problems of modern life to convict men of their significant sins. Thus religion has on the whole produced moral complacency rather than the spirit of repentance. The number of men who are sufficiently sensitized by religion actually to renounce their privileges must always remain small. But it ought not to be impossible for the church to create enough contrition and consciousness of human selfishness to prompt men to a more willing acceptance of and less stubborn resistance against social policies which aim at the restriction of power and privilege. If we dealt realistically with the facts of human nature we might be able to create an attitude of complacency toward increasing social restraint, based upon the realization that few, if any, of us are wise enough to restrain our expansive desires voluntarily in a degree sufficient for the needs of our highly interdependent society. If there were a better understanding of human nature in the church to-day, an understanding which we could acquire by the study of psychology and economics but which we might appropriate just as easily from the insights of great religion, there would be fewer Christian captains of industry who lived under the illusion that they were good enough and wise enough to hold irresponsible power and exercise it for the good of the community. They would know that the very possession

of irresponsible power tempts to its selfish use and that the benevolent pretensions of despotism rest either on unconscious self-deception or conscious hypocrisy.

True religion could mitigate the cruelties of the social struggle by its creation of the spirit of love as well as the spirit of repentance. The love ideal which Jesus incarnates may be too pure to be realized in life but it offers us nevertheless an ideal toward which the religious spirit may strive. All rational idealism creates a conflict between the mind and the impulses, as in Stoicism and Kantian morality. The mind conceives ideals of justice which it tries to force upon recalcitrant selfish impulses. Real religion transmutes the social impulses until they transcend the limits set them by nature (family, race, group, etc.) and include the whole human community. Real religious imagination is able, furthermore, to create an attitude of trust and faith toward human beings, in which the potentialities rather than the immediate realities are emphasized. Through such imagination the needs of the social foe are appreciated, his inadequacies are understood in the light of his situation, and his possibilities for higher and more moral action are recognized. Only the religious spirit which surveys the human scene from the perspective of its pre-suppositions about the character of life is thus able to disregard present facts and appeal to ultimate possibilities. The fact that in Jesus the spirit of love flowed out in emulation of God's love, without regard to social consequences, cannot blind the eye to the social consequences of a religiously inspired love. If modern religion were really producing it, it would mitigate the evils of the social struggle. It would, to emphasize the obvious once more, not abolish the social struggle, because it would not approximate perfection in sufficiently numerous instances. The fight for justice in society will always be a fight. But wherever the spirit of justice grows imaginative and is transmuted into love, a love in which the interests of the other are espoused, the struggle is transcended by just that much.

It is the fashion among many Christian idealists to criticize the political movements of the disinherited for the spirit of hatred which they generate. The church, so it is said, would espouse their cause much more readily if the spirit of love were manifest in it. What the church fails to realize is that its responsibility is chiefly for the moral and spiritual attitudes of the privileged rather than the disinherited; for it is the former who makes professions of Christian idealism. If the church wants to insinuate the spirit of love into the social struggle it ought to begin with the privileged groups not only because it has greater responsibility for them but because those who hold entrenched positions in the social struggle are obviously under the greater obligation to be imaginative in gauging the needs and discounting the limitations of those who suffer from social injustice. The perfectionist ethic of Jesus allows for no such distinctions; for it demands that love be poured forth whether or not we suffer from injustice. But no one can avow such an ethic from the vantage point of privilege and security. If the portion of society which benefits from social inequality and which is endangered by a rising tide of social discontent, attempts to counsel love, for-

giveness and patience to the discontented it will convict itself of hypocrisy, except it is able first of all to reveal fruits of the Spirit, which it commends, in its own life. Even if it were to reveal some fruits, but too meager to justify a more trusting and a less vehement attitude on the part of the underprivileged, its moral ideals would be regarded as pretensions. . . . . If the spirit of love is to qualify and mitigate the social struggle the groups which profess to believe in the efficacy of love and who, at the same time, have favored positions in society are clearly under obligation to introduce this Christian element in society. . . . .

In the social struggle we are either on the side of privilege or need. No ethical perfectionism can save us from that choice.

GOD AS AGAPE

AGAPE: THE IMPETUS AND THE TEST FOR CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Nels F. S. Ferré

. . . . We now come to the very center of Lundensian thought, that God is definitely known through Christ. What, then, is meant by this definiteness which by its very nature cannot be theoretical definiteness? The sum and substance of this revelation is that God is spontaneous, unmotivated, value-indifferent love creative of fellowship. *God is agape.* To prove their main thesis from the history of Christian thought, Aulén and Nygren have written their most challenging books. In his book on general theology, Aulén accordingly writes as follows: "The highest and last word about the God of the Christ-deed is the word concerning God's *agape.* God's nature, as Luther says, is '*eitel Liebe.*' . . . . Thus in the last analysis all the utterances of Christian faith gather around God's *agape* as its center. This *agape* breaks to pieces all legalistic or rationalistic frames. . . . . Faith can never go deeper than to the divine *agape.*" [1] "Not the order of justice expresses God's deepest nature, but his spontaneous, free, sovereign love which gives because it is its nature to give." [2] "All statements that can be made about God are statements concerning his love." [3] God's power and holiness are nothing but descriptions of his love. Equally clear is Aulén's latest statement on the subject: "All that the Christian faith has to say about the revelation of God is summed up in God's Love; 'God is Love.' Faith cannot say anything about God that is not a statement about His Love. The Majesty of God is the Majesty of His Love. The Righteousness of God is the Righteousness of His Love. The Judgment of God is the Judgment of His Love." [4] God's love, which gives itself freely, unconditionally, sovereignly to the unworthy sinner—a love high as the heavens above thought or law—this is God's definite disclosure in the Christ-deed. Around this thought is centered all else. . . . .

Agape is God's way to man. *Eros* is man's way to God. *Agape* is unmotivated love. *Eros* is self-centered desire. The uniqueness of Christianity lies in its basic motif, in its new picture of God as *agape.* Jesus broke with Judaism qualitatively when he spoke of calling not the righteous but sin-

[1] Aulén, *Den allmänneliga kristna tron,* p. 159.
[2] Aulén, *Den kristna gudsbilden,* pp. 186-87.
[3] Aulén and Rosén, *Den kristna tros och livsåskådningen,* p. 29.
[4] In *Revelation,* p. 304.

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ners, when he spoke of loving enemies, for then he spoke no longer of human love, but of God's *agape*. God's love for the sinner is the clearest expression for the new relation with God. "*The Christian way of fellowship with God depends wholly on the Divine Agape.* Thus the question how far those whom God loves deserve His love falls to the ground. To the question, Why does God love? there is only one right answer: Because it is His nature (*essentia*) to love." [5] In succinct sections, Nygren then defines *agape* as spontaneous, unmotivated, value-indifferent, creative, and productive of fellowship. *Agape* is entirely, unconditionally independent of the worth of its object. There is no relation whatsoever between *agape* and its object, except the free overflowing of a creative love, which by the power of its purity, is productive of the highest and most beautiful fellowship. The section as a whole is ended by the conclusion: "Hence in this respect also the advent of Agape implies a complete revolution. Hitherto the possibility of man's fellowship with God had been summed up in the question by what way man could attain unto God. But now, when the way of self-abasement and amendment is set on one side as decisively as the way of righteousness and merit, the conclusion follows that *there is no way, from man's side, by which he can attain to God.* If, then, there manifestly is such a thing as a fellowship of man with God, this can depend only on God's own action; God must Himself come to man to offer him fellowship with Himself. There is thus no way for man to God other than the way which God has made in coming to man: the way of the Divine Agape and the Divine forgiveness. Agape is God's own way to man." [6]

With true insight as to its great importance Nygren then takes up a theme which he has treated more extensively at an earlier time: the meaning of Jesus' parables. In this he especially turns against A. Jülicher's monumental work on the subject: *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*, since the latter author explains the parables demonstratively, i.e., as common incidents used in order to elicit an inevitable affirmative from the hearers, even in application to the spiritual realm. The strength of the parables lies, therefore, according to Jülicher, in their obviousness. The parables would thus be reasoning from the natural to the spiritual, from man to God. Nygren, on the other hand, endeavors to show that they are not demonstrative, but revelatory, that they deal not with general religious or ethical truths, obvious in nature if demonstratively revealed, but with relations directly contrary to human customs and ideas. The two parables which Nygren makes most use of are those of the Workers in the Vineyard and the Prodigal Son. Here the accepted order of Justice is broken, and through it all a picture is drawn revealing God's *agape*, God's spontaneous, unmotivated, value-indifferent, creative love productive of fellowship.

Needless to say, Paul provides a great deal of material, although it must be stressed that, in Lundensian thought, no basic cleavage between the thought of Jesus and Paul is allowed. To Paul the Gospel is the news of

[5] Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, p. 52.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

the Cross, and the theology of the Cross is nothing but God's free, overwelling love giving itself to the absolutely unworthy, for whom, for the sake of driving home the lesson, Paul uses four different expressions: "weak, ungodly, sinners, enemies." [7] Paul himself, in that the persecutor became apostle, had experienced God's *agape*. In connection with Paul's famous hymn to love, Nygren differs sharply with the interpretations of both Harnack and Reitzenstein, who make it, respectively, love to neighbor and love to God, but who also respectively interpret it moralistically and as an expansion of *eros*. For Nygren, the hymn is a most definite statement of *agape*, for "the fact is that for Paul Agape has a meaning and a character all its own, independent of its object. He thinks of Agape as primarily God's own love." [8] Even though, according to its nature, it has overflowed into our hearts where it constrains and compels us, it is still God's *agape*, the divine love which has taken possession of the inner man. It is no longer we who live, but "Christ liveth" in us. Paul is definitely, whether or not conscious of it in these terms, breaking with the *gnosis* "which is in part," for this is the very expression of the Hellenistic *eros* motif. Here is, perhaps, the first historic clash between the two motifs. . . . .

The highest formal expression of *agape*, however, is given in the First Epistle of John. "Both in the Synoptic Gospels and in Paul the thought of God and the thought of Agape are brought so near together that they are virtually identified. Paul in particular hovers on the edge of the formal identification in such phrases as 'the God of Agape'; but though he has in fact fully grasped the essential idea, the phrase which clinches the matter is never uttered by him. The first Epistle of John takes the final step: 'God is Agape' (I John iv: 8 and 16). God is Agape, *and Agape is God.*" [9] Nevertheless, the *agape* motif is nowhere nearly so purely expressed in John as in Paul, and that for three definite reasons: (1) The Johannine literature gives a metaphysical background to *agape* which has even a cosmic flavor. God's *agape* is schematized into a love flowing from God to Christ, then to the disciples, and finally, to the brethren. This scheme makes of *agape* a process of continuous self-impartation. The love of God for his Son, moreover, might have a definite motivation. John even lets Jesus speak of the Father's loving the disciples *because* they have loved the Son. (John 16:27) (2) The love of the disciples, furthermore, is particularistic, i.e., the love of "the brethren." For *agape* to be entirely unmotivated, however, it can in no way countenance any particularism. (3) Besides, the love of the world is specifically forbidden, and this involves selective reflection, i.e., some recognition of the worth of its object. John's significance in relation to the *agape* motif, therefore, can be looked at from two points of view. From the one, he gave the highest formal expression to the motif: God is *agape*. He also gave the immortal thought that "God so loved the world that he gave. . . . ." On the other hand, he weakened the force of

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 87.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 104.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

the motif by introducing a particularism entirely inconsistent with its innermost nature.

In discussing the *eros* motif, Nygren centers his attention around Plato, Aristotle, and Neo-Platonism. . . . .

Plato, it is well known, took over this myth, and the idea of *eros* forms no little part of his soteriological philosophy. Nygren further maintains that the genuine Platonic system is so sharply dualistic that it allows for only *one* active relation between the world of ideas and the world of existence: namely an upward relation. "The authentic Platonic teaching knows only one direction of movement, that of ascent. Plato's forms are not real forces, and they cannot either directly or mediately exert their influence on the lower world; Plato sharpens the dualism between the Two Worlds to an extreme point." [10] Although the two worlds are distinct, man has a part in both, not so that he in any way bridges the two, but in such a way that he must ever desire to escape from the sensuous in order to find the ideal. "*Eros is man's conversion from the sensible to the super-sensible; it is the upward movement of the soul; it is a real force, driving the soul upwards to seek the world of the Forms.* If there were no such thing as Eros, there would be no interaction between the two worlds at all; they would simply remain at rest, side by side with one another." [11] From this point of view, "the Myth of Eros can be regarded as the chief of all Plato's myths, the myth which gives us the clearest view of the inner meaning of Plato's thought." [12] Thus we can understand Plato's doctrines of recollection in the *Phaedrus*, and of Eros as the child of Penia and Poros in the *Symposion*. Even though *eros* in the nobler sense always desires the beautiful and the good, it is, nevertheless, always man's selfish yearning for what is above him. It is man's way to the divine; it is egocentric love. *Eros* desires to obtain and possess eternally. Its doctrine of immortality is merely selfish desire eternally prolonged.

Aristotle, on the other hand, is historically important in that he gave a cosmic scope to the *eros* motif. "The whole process of nature is represented by Aristotle as a movement or successive ascent from matter to form, from potentiality to actuality, from imperfection to perfection of being. The cause of this movement is to be found in the influence of form on matter, an influence which works in two ways: partly as an attraction, drawing matter into the likeness of the form, and partly as the actual change made by the form in the matter, so that the resulting thing itself becomes matter for the production of a higher form." [13] Even as in Plato the forms have the primacy, for they affect, but are in no way affected by, matter. The forms are ever and entirely unmoved, while moving matter or lower degrees of form according to the principle. The motion found in matter or in the incomplete form is caused by *eros*, and this motion is always in an ascending direction. "*In Aristotle we meet again the Platonic Eros, exalted*

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 153-54.
[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 127-28.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 125.
[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 141-42.

to become the driving-force of the universe. However wide be the gulf between them in other respects, in regard to Eros Aristotle is Plato's faithful disciple." [14] No wonder that the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages was unable to give expression to the basically Christian idea while working with this philosophy which, at its very foundations, directly opposed Christianity.

Similarly Neo-Platonism taught the *eros* doctrine, the way from man to God alone. This may, at first, seem to be an obvious mis-statement, since the Neo-Platonic philosophers plainly taught a downward as well as an upward movement. Nevertheless, whatever may be the other relations of Neo-Platonism with Gnosticism or Alexandrianism, as to *eros* its teachings are perfectly clear. Between the idea of descent in Platonic philosophy and the Christian *agape* there is no connection. The Neo-Platonic descent is invariably cosmological and caused by a philosophical desire to explain how the lower world, the world of evil matter, could proceed from the One. In short, the problem was ontological. Soteriologically, Neo-Platonism has only one way: from man to God. The descent, further, is really unreal. The One is its absoluteness still remains divinely elevated and never descends from its heavenly throne. Since the idea of *eros* in the Neo-Platonic system as well as in the Platonic is far from above controversial considerations, it seems best to let Nygren sum up his own position.

> It would be a complete mistake to infer . . . . that the teaching of Plotinus makes a real approach toward the Christian idea of Agape; there is no connection between the two. The differences may be tabulated thus: (i) When Plotinus speaks of a Descent, he is thinking of a cosmic process, corresponding to the creation of the world, the process by which the lower world proceeded forth from the One, and not at all of salvation; salvation is described by him exclusively in terms of the upward way. The union with God of which he speaks is attained, not at all through God in Agape coming down to man, but through man by Eros ascending to God. (ii) His language about the downward way does not at all mean that God in any true sense came down. The One, the Divine, remains ever in its exalted place; and in the same way reason and the world-soul and the individual souls which maintain their connection with the world-soul are never thought of as descending from their royal thrones; for when the higher cares for the lower and "sets it in order and adorns it," it is regarded as remaining in its exalted place while it exercises this influence. It never enters in under the conditions of the lower level of life; it acts altogether by "passive rule". . . . . It is fundamental to Plotinus' thought that the Divine is self-sufficient, and cannot be thought of as leaving its exalted repose. The idea of a spontaneous coming-down is to him inconceivable. (iii) In so far as the downward way means a real Descent, *it means not a Divine "coming down," but a fall—the fall of the soul into sin and guilt.* That which descends to a lower level does so involuntarily; its fall is the result of weakness and inability to retain its exalted place. Therefore it is impossible for the Divine Being ever really to descend.
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> It is clear, therefore, that the likeness between the downward way in Plotinus and the Christian idea of Agape is purely superficial; the two conceptions have nothing to do with one another. Zeller sums the matter up thus: "The one speaks of a Descent of the Godhead to the lowest depths of human weakness; the other calls for an ascent of man to superhuman divinity." [15]

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 142.
[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 154-55.

Even when Plotinus identifies God with *eros*, the love which God is, or has, is from and for himself. God in himself is beautiful, lovely, and by his very nature can love nothing but himself. God, to be sure, is *eros*, but eros desiring himself. Thus we see that *eros* and *agape* are completely distinct, qualitatively different. *Agape* is the Christian motif depicting a loving God who freely, unreservedly gives himself without any thought as to the worth of the object of his love. *Eros* is always the desiring, craving, self-centered love so thoroughly characteristic of the motif that even when God is called *eros* it is meaningless unless understood in the sense of self-satisfaction. "The idea of Eros does not really apply to God, and if it can, by a *tour de force*, be used of Him, its character as love of desire and egocentric love forces the consequence that it can only mean a love centering wholly in Himself and enjoying His own perfection. 'God is Eros' is meaningless unless Eros is interpreted as ἀυτοῦ ἔρως. But it would be pure nonsense to speak of Agape as self-love." [16]

Agape, on the other hand, is the transvaluation of all values. "*Agape is a slap in the face to the Jewish piety of the law as well as to the Hellenistic piety of eros.*" [17] *Agape* is the direct contradictory of *nomos* and as such destroys the entire foundation of the Jewish world of values. *Agape* is also the direct opposite of Greek wisdom: God loves not the wise, as Aristotle said, but the foolish, in order to confound the wise. In the Christian motif the chasm between God and man is absolute. Man cannot by work or by wisdom find God. God alone can bridge the gap. Truly and ever *agape* is a stumbling block to the Jews, and to the Greeks, foolishness. *Agape* is the value-indifferent love of God, who simply loves by his own nature, unconditionally, unreservedly.

In contrast with *Eros*, *Agape* can be effectively illustrated by Nygren's own tabulation of opposite descriptive terms:

Eros is a desire of good for the self.	Agape is self-giving.
Eros is man's effort to ascend.	Agape comes down from above.
Eros is man's way to God.	Agape is God's way to man.
Eros is man's achievement, the endeavor of man to achieve salvation.	Agape is a free gift, a salvation which is the work of Divine love.
Eros is ego-centric love, a form of self-assertion of the highest, noblest, sublimest kind.	Agape is unselfish love, which "seeketh not its own," and freely spends itself.
Eros seeks to gain its life, a life Divine, immortal.	Agape lives by God's life, and therefore dares to "lose it."
Eros is a will to have and to possess, resting on a sense of need.	Agape freely gives and spends, for it rests on God's own richness and fullness.
Eros is primarily human love, and God is the object of Eros.	Agape is primarily God's own love, for God is Agape.
Eros, when it is applied to God, is a love fashioned after the pattern of human love.	Agape, when it appears in man, is a love that takes its form from God's own love.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 156-57.
[17] Nygren, *Den kristna kärlekstanken*, p. 162.

Eros is determined by and dependent on the quality of its object, its beauty and value; hence it is not spontaneous, but "caused," called forth by the value of its object.	Agape is sovereign and independent with regard to its object, and is poured out on "the evil and the good"; hence it is spontaneous, "uncaused," and bestows itself on those who are not worthy of it.
Eros recognizes value in its object, and therefore loves it.	Agape loves, and creates value in its object.[18]

The two motifs may be compared systematically: "Love expresses a relation between a subject who loves and an object that is loved. We have, then, three 'relations' of love, according to its possible subjects and objects: (i) God's love for man; (ii) man's love for god; (iii) man's love for his fellow-men. To these, however, we must add (iv) man's self-love; for though this is not properly a relation, since the subject and the object are the same, human self-love has held so important a part in the history of the idea of love, that it is necessary to include it in our scheme.

"We must now see what different forms these four relations of love take in the contexts of Eros and of Agape respectively, and how they illustrate the opposition of the two ideas."[19]

God's love as *eros* is entirely meaningless. If *eros* is desiring love, and if God needs nothing, but remains in untroubled bliss, God's *eros* is, naturally, non-existent except as it can be interpreted by a *tour de force* as self-love or self-affirmation. In the *agape* motif, however, God is in the very center. God is the source of all *agape*. God *is agape*. Love to God must be central in the *eros* system, however, since God represents the acme of the values which egocentric love desires. In the *agape* motif, on the other hand, it is difficult to speak of *agape* to God, partly because of the fact that since God only is by his nature love, man has no real independence and spontaneity in the relation with God, and partly because man's love to God is only gratitude for belonging to him. This love is a "reflex" of God's love, and might better be termed faith. It is purely theocentric, and man has no choice in the matter. "Man's love to God cannot, except in a limited sense, be the love of desire; for God is too high, too great, to be simply the object of man's desiring. He is not the Highest Good, in the sense that He surpasses all other objects of desire, but he stands above and beyond the things that man can desire. Man's love to God, in the Christian sense, must be a purely theocentric love, in which all human choice is excluded: 'Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you.' (John xv:16) Here lies the deep truth of predestination. Man is to love God, not because he finds fuller and completer satisfaction of his need in God than in any other object of desire, but because God's 'uncaused' love has overpowered him and constrained him, so that he can do nothing else than love God."[20]

In the love of man for his neighbor the two ideas are equally distinct. *Eros* is man's love of neighbor for the sake of reaching God, for the sake

[18] Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, p. 165.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 166.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

of selfish achievement and advancement. It is, then, not the love of neighbor for his own sake, a free, happy, overflowing love, but the selfish love of the divine in the neighbor. *Agape*, however, is God's free love flowing through man over to his neighbor. "The use of the term Agape to describe the love of the Christian for men means that *in this case also Agape denotes God's own love.* It is not that God's love for man and man's love for his neighbor are two different things; they are one thing. Agape is used to denote God's love, not human love; God's love present in the Christian heart." [21] The love of neighbor is, then, *agape's* free overwelling according to its nature. Man finds a freedom, a spontaneity through the gift of God which as sinful he could not have. In the love of neighbor, thus, God is not *causa finalis* but *causa efficiens*. Since "for God's sake" is not a teleological but exclusively a causal concept, the Christian *agape* has a love to neighbor which in the teleologically oriented Platonic *eros* is definitely impossible. *Eros*, moreover, is even formally self-love. Egocentricity is the basic form of the drive. *Agape*, on the other hand, is restlessly, exclusively outgoing love. The very nature of *agape*, once and for all, excludes even the consideration of self-love. These relations are summarized by Nygren verbally and diagrammatically:

> If now we attempt to summarize our consideration of the "relations" of love, it is clear that the matter resolves itself into this, that Eros and Agape stand as direct opposites at every point. Eros begins with self-love, and lays great stress on love to God, as the final satisfaction of the needs of the self. On the other hand, Eros always has difficulty in finding room for love to man. It might be true to say that love to man was never really welcomed into an Eros-scheme till that scheme had been adopted into Christian theology and a compromise effected with the idea of Agape. In any case, Eros must always regard love to man as a love for the good in man and thus a step in the soul's ascent. But there is one form of love for which Eros has no place: God's own love.
>
> Agape is the precise opposite. God's own love is the ground of all love, and the pattern of all love; it consists in free self-giving, and it finds its continuation in man's love for man; for he who has received all for nothing, is thereby constrained to pass on to others that which he has received. Love to God is far from absent from the Agape-scheme, but its significance is wholly different from that of Eros-love to God; Agape-love to God lacks entirely the egocentric note, and is identical with the complete abandonment of self. And there is one form of love for which Agape has no place: self-love.[22]

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[21] *Ibid.*, p. 96.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Rudolf Bultmann

WHAT THEN is the meaning of "the Kingdom of God?" How is it to be conceived? The simplest answer is: the Kingdom of God is deliverance for man. It is that *eschatological* deliverance which ends everything earthly. This deliverance is the only deliverance which can properly be so called; therefore it demands of man decision. It is not something which man can possess along with other good things, which he may pursue along with other interests. This deliverance confronts man as an Either-Or.

Thus it is meaningless to call the Kingdom of God the "highest value," if by this is meant the culmination of all that men consider good. And the phrase would still not express truly the distances between the Kingdom of God and all other values, even if the relativity of these other values to this highest value is emphasized. A "highest value" always remains in connection with the relative. The Kingdom of God as eschatological deliverance is diametrically opposed to all relative values—provided that the idea of eschatology is wholly and radically understood; and such an understanding must now be sought.

It is already clear that the Kingdom of God is *no "highest good" in the ethical sense.* It is not a good toward which the will and action of men is directed, not an ideal which is in any sense realized through human conduct, which in any sense requires *men* to bring it into existence. Being eschatological, it is wholly supernatural. Against all impatience which would bring in the Kingdom by force, the parable speaks:

> The Kingdom of God is as if a man throws seed on the land. He sleeps and rises up, as day follows night, and the seed sprouts and grows up, he knows not how. The earth brings forth fruit of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the ripe grain in the ear. When the grain is ripe, he sends the reapers, for the harvest is ready. (Mark 4:26-29)

Such a parable must not be read in the light of the modern conceptions of "nature" and "evolution." The parable presupposes that the growth and ripening of the seed is not something "natural," within man's control, but that it is something miraculous. As the grain springs up miraculously and ripens without human agency or understanding, so marvellous is the coming of the Kingdom of God. If we need proof that we must lay aside our modern view-point in order to understand such a saying in the sense of primitive Christianity, let us consider a very similar parable of the early Christian tradition. It is found in the first Epistle of Clement, dating from

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From *Jesus and the Word,* New York, 1934, pp. 35-45, 126-27, 130-32. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

the end of the first century, and there the interpretation is given. The parable is to show how inevitably the divine judgment comes.

> O you fools, consider a plant, a grapevine for example. First it sheds the old leaves, then the young shoots sprout, then leaves, then flowers, then the green grapes, finally the ripe grapes appear. You see how quickly the fruit is ripe. Even so quickly and suddenly will God's final judgment come, as the Scripture testifies: He will come quickly and will not tarry, suddenly the Lord will come to His temple, the Holy One for whom you wait. (I Clem. 23:4, 5)

The Kingdom of God, then, is something miraculous, in fact the absolute miracle, opposed to all the here and now; it is "wholly other," heavenly (*cf.* R. Otto). Whoever seeks it must realize that he cuts himself off from the world, otherwise he belongs to those who are not fit, who put their hand to the plow and look back. The stories of the calling of the first disciples are legends (Mark 1:16-20, 2:14); he who seeks for a historical kernel in them by attempting to explain psychologically the behavior of the disciples misunderstands them. But these legends are the historical witness for the meaning of Jesus' message concerning the Kingdom, which tears men up by the roots from their business life and from their social relationships and commands the dead to bury their dead. "The saints," the company of disciples of Jesus soon called themselves—those who are separated from the present world and have their life in the beyond.

Although the metaphor of "entering into" the Kingdom of God often occurs that does not imply any possibility of conceiving the Kingdom as something which either is or can be realized in any organization of world fellowship. Naturally both the Greek word and the Aramaic behind it can be translated as "Realm of God." However, this translation is a dangerous one, for all modern conceptions of citizens or members of the state, of fellow-countrymen and the like, are utterly mistaken. The Kingdom of God is not an ideal which realizes itself in human history; we cannot speak of its founding, its building, its completion; we can say only that it draws near, it comes, it appears. It is *supernatural, superhistorical;* and while men can "receive" its salvation, can enter it, it is not *they*, with their fellowship and their activity, who constitute the Kingdom, but God's power alone. Even if the parables of the mustard-seed and the leaven really applied originally to the Kingdom of God, they were certainly not intended to denote the "natural" growth of the Kingdom, but were meant to show how inescapable will be its coming, however easily ignored or misinterpreted may be the signs of its coming which are conspicuous in the activity of Jesus. The marvellous, superhistorical character of the Kingdom is the constant presupposition.

But must we stop at this merely negative definition? What should we understand positively by the Kingdom of God? What sort of *events* are meant when its coming is announced? There can be no doubt that Jesus like his contemporaries expected a tremendous eschatological drama. Then will the "Son of Man" come, that heavenly Messianic figure, which appeared in the apocalyptic hope of later Judaism, partly obliterating the older Mes-

sianic figure of the Davidic king and partly combining with it. Then will the dead rise, the judgment will take place, and to some the heavenly glory will be revealed while others will be cast into the flames of hell, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Evidently Jesus shared with his contemporaries the belief in all these dramatic events. As in that saying at the last supper, so at other times too, he speaks with entire naturalness of eating and drinking in the Kingdom of God.

But it should be noted that he neither depicts the punishments of hell nor paints elaborate pictures of the heavenly glory. The oracular and esoteric note is completely lacking in the few prophecies of the future which can be ascribed to him with any probability. In fact he absolutely repudiates all representations of the Kingdom which human imagination can create, when he says:

> When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven. (Mark 12:25)

In other words, men are forbidden to make any picture of the future life. Jesus thus *rejects the whole content of apocalyptic speculation*, as he rejects also the calculation of the time and the watching for signs. . . . .

The real significance of "the Kingdom of God" for the message of Jesus does not in any sense depend on the dramatic events attending its coming, nor on any circumstances which the imagination can conceive. It interests him not at all as a describable state of existence, but rather as the transcendent event, which signifies for man the ultimate Either-Or, which constrains him to decision. The meaning of this decision becomes clearer when we consider further how Jesus' message of the Kingdom is related to the *Jewish eschatological hopes*. Obviously the Jews thought of the deliverance of the Kingdom of God as deliverance for the Jews. The Kingdom of God is at the same time the Jewish kingdom. (Daniel 2:44, 7:27) Even where the expectations have gone beyond the old national political boundaries, where God's world judgment of all men has replaced the downfall of nations overthrown for the benefit of Israel, where the material and nationalistic colors have been blended into the pictures of the heavenly glory, where the deliverance of the whole world is expected at the last day—even there the favored position of the Jewish people is taken for granted. The Messianic king of the last day is depicted after the model of the national Davidic dynasty; Jerusalem and its temple, though exalted to heavenly grandeur, are still in the final day of triumph symbols of Jewish glory. The hope of the return of the scattered lost tribes to the holy land is a constant element in the eschatological expectation. And obviously the overthrow of the Roman rule is equally necessary to the picture.

From Jesus we hear almost nothing of all these things. A clear impression of this difference can be derived from a comparison of the eschatological petitions of a Jewish prayer, the "Eighteen Benedictions," with the corresponding petitions of the prayer used in the circle of Jesus' disciples, the Lord's prayer. In the former the petitions run as follows:

Look upon our need and guide our warfare
and redeem us for Thy name's sake.
Deliver us, O Lord our God, from the pain of our hearts,
and bring healing to our wounds.
Sound a great trumpet for our freedom
and raise the standard to bring back our exiles.
Bring back our judges as at the first,
and our counsellors as at the beginning.
Give no hope for the apostates,
and bring quickly to nought the kingdom of violence. . . .
Have mercy, O Lord our God, on Jerusalem Thy city
and on Zion where Thy glory dwells, and on the kingdom of the house of David,
the Messiah of Thy righteousness.

In the Lord's prayer we find only

Father, hallowed be Thy name,
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done
as in heaven, so on earth.

This is in agreement with the answer of Jesus to the question whether the Jews should pay tribute to Caesar: "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God." (Mark 12:13-17) That is, the seeking after God is not to be confused with political desires. Similarly Jesus rejects the request to settle a quarrel over an inheritance: "Man, who made me a judge or arbiter over you?" (Luke 12:13, 14)

But unmistakable as the difference between the eschatological expectation of Jesus and the popular Jewish hopes is, it must neither be exaggerated nor, as is usually the case, misunderstood. The fact that in the thought of Jesus the national connotation of the Kingdom of God remains in the background does not mean that he taught its universality. He took for granted as did his contemporaries that *the Kingdom of God was to come for the benefit of the Jewish people.* Among his reported sayings are some in which the Kingdom of God is at the same time the kingdom of the faithful, who are comforted: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." (Luke 12:32, *cf.* Daniel 7:27) And a saying in a different form is preserved in which the chief authority in the Messianic age is promised to the Twelve as the representatives of the twelve tribes of the holy nation. (Matt. 19:28, Luke 22:29, 30) These are indeed not genuine words of Jesus; they reflect the hope of the earliest community, in which the Twelve were probably first chosen. But the history of this earliest community itself shows plainly that the preaching of Jesus had not extended beyond the boundaries of the Jewish people; he never thought of a mission to the Gentiles. The mission to the Gentiles came into being only after serious conflicts in the primitive church; and then the assumption was that such a mission was a way of adding to the chosen people, the *Jewish* Messianic community. The Gentile who wished to belong in the last day to the elect must be circumcised and keep the Jewish Law.

Out of such assumptions arose certain sayings which are put into the mouth of Jesus:

Go not into any way of the Gentiles,
and enter not any city of the Samaritans,
But go rather to the strayed sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt. 10:5, 6)

And this natural limitation of the preaching to the Jews is naïvely expressed in the words:

But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next; truly I tell you, you shall not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come. (Matt. 10:33)

From the time of the controversy over the conversion of the Gentiles come the stories of the centurion in Capernaum and of the Syro-Phoenician woman. (Matt. 8:5-13 omitting verses 11, 12; Mark 7:24-30) These stories show that there are exceptions among the heathen who are worthy of being saved.

It is not impossible that the following saying goes back to Jesus himself.

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, and yourselves cast out. From east and west, from north and south shall men come, and shall sit down to eat in the Kingdom of God. (Luke 13:28, 29 *cf.* Matt. 8:11, 12)

Even if those who are to come from all directions to put to shame Jesus' fellow-countrymen are really Gentiles and not Jews of the dispersion, the words none the less naively assert that the chosen people and its heroes hold the central place in the Kingdom of God; afterward the Gentiles would join them, according to ancient prophecy. (*Cf.* Isaiah 2:1-3; 59:19) This is not an assertion that the Gentiles will come instead of the Jews, nor even that the Gentiles will come *like* the Jews; rather it is said that many Gentiles will come to shame the Jews. Further, the coming of the Gentiles does *not mean that they join the actual historical community as a result of the* preaching; it is rather a miraculous eschatological event. But the chief significance of this saying is negative: if many Gentiles are to bring the unrepentant Jews to shame, then clearly, belonging to the Jewish race does not constitute a right to a share in the Kingdom. Just this emphasis is characteristic of Jesus' conception, probably also of that of John the Baptist—the Jew as such has no claim before God. Consistently with this Jesus proclaims a call to decision and repentance. Consistently, too, Jesus can elsewhere picture a Samaritan as putting the true Jew to shame. (Luke 10:29-37) . . . .

The words of Jesus about the will of God are to be understood strictly in the light of the eschatological message. That is in a certain sense entirely correct, but here it has a special meaning which remains to be tested. The eschatological message is taken one-sidely to mean the prediction of the dramatic events of the end of the age, the prediction of the destruction of the world. It is argued that because of this expectation of the imminent end of the world, Jesus had no interest in the different aspects of moral life, in marriage and work, in the value of property and civil order. He did not intend to give absolute rules for man's conduct; his ethic was an "interim-

ethic," that is, his commands were only practical rules for the last short span of time which remained before the end. For this brief time one must do his utmost, enlist all his energy.

Now it is certainly true that as a result of the expectation of the imminent end of this world, Jesus was not interested in many of the concrete possibilities in which man's obedience can be proved on earth. But this does not mean that obedience is merely relative, a matter of prudent rules for attaining a share in the Kingdom, rather than radical and absolute. We need only remember that eschatological expectation in itself is not necessarily associated with the call to repentance and with the preaching of the will of God. It can be combined just as well with wishful fantasies of future glory, with economic ideals and hopes, with thoughts of revenge and pictures of hell. Jewish apocalyptic as well as the history of eschatology elsewhere offers abundant proof of this. It still needs to be explained why such ideas are not found with Jesus and why, on the contrary, with him the demand for obedience goes hand in hand with the proclaiming of the future age. . . . .

So long as we speak of an ethic of Jesus in the usual sense, we cannot understand how the teacher of a system of ethics can at the same time preach the imminent end of everything in the world. For a system of ethics presupposes the existence of the world and of the human race under the conditions of this world as they are known to us. It presents ideals, or at least ends, which are to be realized by our action, and at the same time a future which is under our control. All this is expressly denied in the eschatological message of Jesus; he knows no ends for our conduct, only God's purpose; no human future, only God's future. But so we have learned to understand Jesus' preaching of the will of God. In it no ends were prescribed for man, no future place under his control. Every ideal of personality or of society, every ethic of values and goods was repudiated. The one concern in this teaching was that man should conceive his immediate concrete situation as the decision to which he is constrained, and should decide in this moment for God and surrender his natural will. Just this is what we found to be the final significance of the eschatological message, that man *now* stands under the necessity of decision, that his "Now" is always for him the last hour, in which his decision against the world and for God is demanded, in which every claim of his own is to be silenced. Since, then, the message of the coming of the Kingdom and that of the will of God point men to *the present moment as the final hour* in the sense of the hour of decision, the two do form a unity, each is incomplete without the other.

For the Kingdom of God remains a dark and silent entity, like death, as long as it is not plain that the demand for decision has for man a clear, comprehensible meaning. Only then is the determination of the present by the future Kingdom not a denial of the present but its fulfillment; only so is the future a controlling factor in the present.

Conversely, the will of God, as calling man in the present to decision, is comprehensible only if this will gives man a future. For this decision is no choice between two possibilities which lie equally at man's disposal; it

is a true crisis, that is, the Either-Or between two possibilities, in which the "old man" leaves his position of independence and comes under the sovereignty of another. The sovereign in both cases is God, either the angry, judging God, or the gracious God. A man becomes through the decision either a sinner or righteous. The *real* future stands before man in decision, not the false future over which he already has control, but the future which will give him a character which he does not yet have. This is the meaning of the present instant, that it involves the necessity of decision because it leads into the future.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE MESSAGE FOR OUR DAY

Paul S. Minear

To CONSIDER THIS topic brings to a focus two contexts within which the interpreter stands. In the first place, it reflects the interpreter's attempt to come to terms with himself, with his immediate situation in all its complexity. To measure the meaning of the gospels is to measure the meaning of his own existence within his total environment. And if he be a Christian, any statement about the message of the gospels reflects the fibre of his own faith, his personal relationship to God in Christ.

In the second place, the interpreter must speak as an historian, for he is dealing with data of an historical character. He deals with documents and events in the past which condition his existence in the present. The very importance of these documents and events to contemporary faith demands that he examine critically their original nature and impact upon history.

This interpenetration of faith and history is no new thing; it has characterized Christianity since the initial interpretation of the events which the gospels narrate. Apart from living faith there would have been no gospels, not to speak of a relevant message therein. On the other hand, apart from concrete historical events, the interpretation of which *is* the message of the gospels, there would have been no faith. Because the gospels are the product of history and of faith, their interpretation involves a double perspective.

Since they are products of history, the student must apply to the gospels historical criteria and methods, seeking to understand their origin, their form, their purposes and functions. The written gospels represent different stages in the crystallization of the *Gospels*. They contain the precipitate of tradition, both oral and written, in which the first Christian generations articulated their faith. Always pointing back to the eschatological events which ushered in the era of redemption, this tradition always pointed as well to the emerging needs of the eschatological community. And it was always through the medium of living persons that the tradition maintained this life-giving contact with the crucial needs of Christians, through persons called to responsible tasks of preaching, teaching, worship and defense. Always the core of the tradition was firsthand testimony to the impact of revolutionary events. About this core the tradition developed in response to countless situations, to multiple and mixed motives, which left their mark on the forms which the tradition assumed: proverb and parable, paradigm and poetry, legend and myth, ritual and symbol, miracle stories and the greatest miracle story—the Passion narrative.

Because the gospels arose in this way, I am compelled as an historian to adopt the following attitudes toward the message which they tell:

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(1) The message is a proclamation of events interpreted as divine revelation. Through these events God was believed to have spoken to the faithful, releasing the best news that tragic humanity had ever heard.

(2) Christian narrators were confident that this message was relevant to all men, of whatever race, nation or century, for it disclosed an utterly unique activity on the part of God through Jesus Christ, an activity utterly necessary if men were to be saved. To Christians the message was as relevant to Seneca as to Paul, to Tacitus as to Luke. Its relevance to Paul and Luke was actual; to Seneca and Tacitus it was only potential. And to Paul and Luke the message was relevant to every situation, to every moment of existence.

(3) Potentially relevant to all men, the message became actually the power of God unto salvation only through the leap or gift of faith. Only through a radical reorientation of life could the relevance be experienced. It presupposed faith in God, consciousness of sin and death, desire for life in the kingdom, repentance and "dying-to" the world, faith in the crucified Jesus as God's Anointed, participation in the Holy Spirit, fellowship in the church, regeneration through the powers of the end-time, now operating in "the time-between-the-times." To use technical terms, the message of the gospels is thoroughly theocentric, thoroughly Christological, thoroughly soteriological, thoroughly eschatological. We may discern different strata in the developing tradition, but we discover that at every stage the relevance of the message depended upon the validity of this total faith. If we separate "eternal values," ethical norms, theological doctrines from this context, early Christians would discover no relevance whatsoever. Even the non-Christian, "unbiased" historian should concede this.

As an historian I am compelled to conclude that the gospels possess this character. As a Christian I am constrained to go further and to witness my solidarity with those early Christians through whose faith the tradition was preserved and elaborated. As a Christian, my experience testifies that those events narrated are the most decisive events in human history, that the story of those events has inexhaustible meaning because of what God is still doing for men in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

In fact, to Christians it must seem gratuitous to raise the question, "Is the message of the gospels relevant to our day?" Indeed, the spectacle of Christian leaders debating this issue—even with proper academic dignity—must raise doubts as to whether they are Christians in fact. And the very prominence of this debate in church circles reveals the uncertainty and vacuity of our faith. Those who read the gospels and who find only irrelevancies remind me of Clifton Fadiman's discussion of the reading by children of books beyond their depth. "The child reader is an automatic selecting mechanism. What he is not emotionally ready to absorb, his mental system quietly rejects." Is this not true of us who read the gospels? The meaning we find may not be an accurate gauge of the meaning that is really there. As Nietzsche has written:

> History will make you only those confessions which are worthy of you.
> Only out of the highest power of the present is it permissible for you to interpret

the past; only in the most intense exertion of your noblest qualities will you divine in the past what is worth knowing and preserving. Equals by equals! Else you drag the past down to yourselves.

Through the centuries men have found the gospels too gloriously, yes, too terribly relevant. If we find otherwise, should we question their testimony or our own "selecting mechanism"?

The problem, as I see it, is not to defend the relevance of the gospel message, but to define it and to suggest its peculiar appropriateness to our day. First, however, we must clear the field of current but dubious assumptions that often render such discussions futile.

First, the relevance of the gospels is not and never had been dependent upon the ability of historians, sociologists or philosophers to construct systems of evidence. Early Christians recognized that the message of the Cross was both foolish and offensive to Greeks and Jews. Only those who had eyes to see and ears to hear could apprehend the divine power working in Christ. Kierkegaard has done great service in puncturing the illusion that we can or should prove by objective reason what can be grasped only by faith. If we should succeed in demonstrating by philosophical or historical argument the relevance of the gospels, we should do violence to the very essence of the gospel.

Second, the relevance of the gospels does not depend upon the immediate practicability of the teachings of Jesus within this world order. Recent scholarship is underscoring the fact that, considered as rules to be fully obeyed within the existing structure of society, Jesus' teachings are imposible. Does anyone today seriously consider giving money to all, loving all, forgiving all? Can we refuse remarriage to divorcees, recourse to oaths and law-courts, abandon wealth and property and family? Do we serve only one master, take no thought for the morrow, seek to become last of all, least of all, servant of all? But the impossibility of Jesus' radical demands does not diminish their relevance. Professor Whitehead has pointed out that it is the impossible ethic of Jesus that has been mankind's most precious instrument of progress. Nor is the relevance measured by the degree to which we find the teaching easy of accomplishment. Has not the message of the kingdom been most indispensable at precisely the times when it has seemed most futile? Did not the incarnation tidings have greater significance on Christmas Day, 1941, than on Christmas Day, 1940?

Third, the relevance of the message does not depend upon the adequacy of the gospels in formulating a blueprint of Utopia or in prescribing social strategy by which the world can be reformed step-by-step toward that Utopia. We do not find a formula for social progress, anything commensurable with *Das Kapital*, *Mein Kampf* or the *Four Freedoms*. Jesus did not romantically expect that existing institutions may be reformed according to the Sermon on the Mount so as to guarantee the ultimate arrival of mankind in the Kingdom. To say this, however, is not to deny that the gospel has social and ethical significance.

But if the primary relevance does not lie in these directions, where shall we look for it? By following the clues supplied by those who created and

preserved the tradition. For them, all of the gospel teachings are oriented about the kingdom of God. Through faith they had already entered the sphere within which the power of the kingdom was operating. The incarnation, the baptism, the teachings, the healings, the calling of disciples, the Passion, the resurrection, the coming of the Spirit—all these had significance because of their relation to a decisive turning-point of history. They were preliminary but pivotal steps in the revelation and gift of the kingdom. Preliminary steps, because the gospels warned as did Paul against deceivers who claimed that the day of the Lord had already come. Pivotal steps, because the gospels testified that Jesus, the Messiah, had given to those who received him power to become sons of God.

Precisely at this point lies the central problem in apprehending the original relevance of the gospel. Assume that the original reference of the message was the proclamation of the advent of the kingdom, with the demand, threat and promise implicit in the imminent Judgment Day. Assume that the death and resurrection of Jesus were significant chiefly as preliminary steps in the eschatological drama. Assume that hopes for the fulfilment of that drama were frustrated. Assume that we can no longer expect in the future the finale of the historical process in a Judgment Day and millennium. How, then, with its postulates shattered by the irrevocable logic of events, can the message retain relevance for our historical situation? If the kingdom be a reality, the gospel has inescapable significance; if the kingdom be a delusion, the power of the gospel evaporates.

Dibelius has shown that many interpreters go astray at this point. Tolstoi, Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard rediscovered the radical nature of Jesus' demands and revealed the sharp discontinuity between the Sermon on the Mount and the necessary compromises which this world forces upon men. But they had no comprehension of the eschatological setting of the Sermon and no eschatological setting for their own message. Consequently, their radical espousal of the Sermon seemed only fanaticism to their contemporaries. Having discovered the setting of the gospel, can we discover an adequate eschatology for our own day, a modern perspective within which the gospel may again exercise its pristine authority?

Such is the problem set for preachers and teachers. And upon the solution rests the continuing relevance of the message. For every man must act in the light of an anticipated future, though no man can know what will happen in the next moment. Early Christians lived triumphantly because of firm trust in a future kingdom. Events seem to have belied their trust. We cannot feign their certainty about the future; how can we act as triumphantly in the present?

Here, again, early Christians suggest a clue, for this very problem became acute before the gospels were written. Faced with the failure of future hopes, they did not surrender their eschatological vision, nor their faith in the Messiah as Judge and Redeemer of history. Rather, they shifted emphasis from an unreal future event to real past events and to real present experiences. The kingdom had in fact drawn near to them in the message and mission of Jesus. Life in the new age was a vivid reality to his servants.

The past and the present, considered in their eschatological framework, became the ground of certainty.

Is it not sound instinct that propels modern interpreters in the same directions? Realized eschatology, as expounded by C. H. Dodd, underscores the eschatological meaning of events which have already taken place. Futurist expectations are renounced, though their deletion from the gospel records is questionable. Nevertheless, the recovery of early Christian apprehensions of the final significance of the Event, Jesus Christ, is to be welcomed. To view Jesus as bearer of the kingdom, his teachings as signs of the kingdom, his healings as symbols of the Messiah's conquest over Satan, his death as the road to the kingdom, his resurrection as the first-fruits of the new age, his church as an eschatological community sharing the powers of that age—to interpret these events in this perspective does justice to the meaning which Christians have found in the gospel.

But not only may past events be understood in eschatological terms; present events in 1942 may be set within the same framework. Kierkegaard and Bultmann insist that the present moment is the only point in which eschatological reality can enter history and condition it. Now is the Judgment, now the day of repentance, now has the kingdom come upon you.

Can a futurist Jewish hope be so transmuted into a realized eschatology and a contemporary Judgment? Much can be said for the affirmative. Ancient Jewish eschatology was a myth which articulated the meaning of history in terms of a divine purpose that transcended history. For people with strong historical consciousness, such a purpose can be fulfilled only at the end of history. Yet such a purpose is grounded in the eternal character of the Creator, and is revealed to men in historical events. The past and the present thus may reveal the final meaning of life as clearly as does that future event which brings history to an end.

Are the emphases of Bultmann, Dibelius, Dodd and Tillich effective in suggesting the relevance of the message for our day? Let me suggest two examples, the teaching on repentance and forgiveness.

If Jesus' demand for repentance, which must be considered a key-note of his teaching, is disjoined from an eschatological setting, its true quality is modified. For it becomes a character trait, a moral virtue, to be cultivated and possessed by those who seek the good life. It becomes an evidence of man's righteousness rather than a recognition of his sinfulness. It becomes an acquired humility in which man takes pride, a first step in the acquisition of merits, which logically diminishes the need for repentance. It becomes a human achievement rather than an eschatological relationship to God, wherein at every moment man sees himself judged and found sinful by God. Viewed as the result of confrontation with the kingdom, repentance becomes an *event*, not a moral quality, an event produced not by man's will as he seeks self-development but produced by the impact of God's kingdom upon everything human and worldly.

Likewise the command to forgive permeates the gospels, and is sanctioned by the faith in the kingdom. To this command there is no exception, no limitation, no postponement. It includes the forgiveness of pecuniary

debts, personal affront, legal injustice, persecution, and any infringement upon one's rights. Absolute, radical, revolutionary, absurd—these words aptly characterize the command. Taken as an ethical and social norm it is impossible of application to all areas of life in an age dominated by Satan. Yet there it is, impregnable and eternal, inseparable from the uneasy memories of Jesus that haunt men.

Wherein lie the roots of this imperative? In the continuing activity of God in the present evil order; in the character of the future consummation of history; in the revelation of the kingdom of God in the death and resurrection of Jesus; in the continuing power of Jesus as Messiah to forgive sins; in the active forgiveness which animates the fellowship of the Spirit; in the immediate personal experience of the power of the gospel to convict one of sin and assure one of reconciliation; in the immediate awareness that forgiveness of self necessitates the forgiveness of others and that such forgiveness is the channel of the redemptive activity of God in his conflict with the demonic forces of history. These roots of forgiveness as an eschatological event can be amply illustrated from the gospels. Can they not be illustrated in contemporary experience?

The Christian confesses that the message of repentance and forgiveness is relevant to every moment of his existence, to his relationship to himself, to others, to God. And the teachings of love, obedience, integrity, self-denial are similarly relevant. These imperatives may and do seem foolish and offensive in time of war. They leave the Christian most painfully conscious of his distance from the kingdom; nevertheless, this very consciousness may be to him a sign of the kingdom's power and its nearness. He may not fulfill the demands of the kingdom, nor merit inclusion in its life, but he may experience a forgiveness which shifts his life to a new center and radically changes the source and goal of his history. From this new perspective, repentance and forgiveness are no longer seen as abstract, speculative moral ideals to be integrated into a philosophical hierarchy of values and then applied insofar as possible. Rather, they are seen as existential realities, stemming from the historical activity of a transcendent God, whose kingdom remains the only source of meaning for the relativities of human existence. The message of the gospels is relevant to our day because it tells of an event, at once historical and contemporaneous, which gives meaning and direction to all other events.

CHRISTIANITY AND SECULARISM

John C. Bennett

I SHALL USE the word "secularism" for that characteristic of our world according to which life is organized apart from God, as though God did not exist. In using that word and in dealing first with the subject of secularism I want to warn against the view which is quite popular in the churches that our chief task is to combine all the religious resources of the world against secularism. Unethical religion is a far greater danger to true religion than secularism. It is possible to be closer to God in seeking what God wills while denying his existence than in defending an unjust order of things while praising him. And yet, secularism is a great distortion and impoverishment of human life.

There are two things which secularism means. From a religious point of view it means that the highest objects of devotion are human ideals and human causes which emerge in the social process. It is in practice very easy to single out one such ideal or cause and make a god of it. The most significant forms of secularism are not those which have grown out of academic skepticism, but those which with religious enthusiasm make a god of the nation or of the communist utopia. From the point of view of the interpretation of life secularism implies an answer to the final question which life forces us to ask—what is the nature of the reality to which we owe our existence? Its answer (dressed up as it may be in various forms) is that man is the product of a blind cosmic process (or processes)—a blind process which does not know what it is producing, which does not know the difference between good and evil, beauty and ugliness, persons and things. It matters little whether we think of this process in mechanical terms or in vitalistic terms: the result is essentially the same.

This secularism has at least three roots in our society. It is rooted in our intellectual life. Our one-sided emphasis upon science tends to level down the world to those things with which the sciences deal most successfully. A reaction is setting in against this tendency, but our minds have been largely formed by the scientific habit of selecting from the world those aspects of it which fit the purpose of science and of suggesting that they are the only sure reality. The development of a public educational system in this country separated from all forms of religion in order to prevent any one form of religion from dominating it has created a bias of mind to which religion seems to have no organic connection with the major interests of the educated man. The persistence beyond their time of forms of religion in the churches which are incompatible even with the assured results of

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science and which are an affront to the consciences of men who have been exposed to the scientific spirit has greatly aggravated these tendencies.

But more important than the intellectual roots of secularism are some of the habits of living which go with our kind of civilization. Our lives are so cluttered with things that it is not strange that there has been some atrophying of our spirits. We are so constantly stimulated by speed and noise and entertainment and crowds that quiet and reflection are almost beyond attainment. The results of applied science have been so amazing and have so completely made over the externals of our lives that we have become preoccupied with human achievements. There has come over us what critics of our culture have called a sense of "human autonomy" or "self sufficiency." Also, there has been the inevitable specialization, which has meant that many of our best minds (as well as those who must specialize in what seems meaningless drudgery) spend their lives in concentration upon one small segment of the world from which they can get little light concerning the meaning of life as a whole. Strengthening all of these factors is the nature of city life, which again reminds us of what man has built and cuts us off from the world of nature, without which men lose their sense of ultimate dependence upon what is more than human.

One further root of secularism must be mentioned because it is so different from the others. This is the antireligious bias of the radical social movements in many countries, and especially of communism. In part this is a reflection of the secularism of our civilization. But it is also in part a judgment upon religion as it has been lived; a judgment which is too much deserved. There is no doubt but that religious institutions have been controlled by the groups with most privilege in society, that religion has been very often an opiate of the people—an opiate alike for the consciences of the exploiters and for the feelings of the exploited. The revolutionary criticism of society which is implicit in Christianity has generally been soft-pedaled. So, in the Soviet Union all the force of education and social approval is thrown against religion in spite of the fact that religious worship is tolerated. There are signs that this tendency is being moderated, but already the attitudes of a whole generation have been molded. For the first time in history the masses, as well as the sophisticated few, deliberately reject not only all true religion but even all supernatural superstition. It is one of the tragedies with which Christians have to live that authentic elements of Christianity are embodied in a movement which has turned against all religion, and that churches which are being punished because they lack those same elements of their faith readily assume that they serve Christ by denouncing the secularism of radicalism instead of by changing their own ways of life. There is, however, a growing minority in the churches which understands that this root of secularism cannot be cut except by an inner transformation of the churches themselves.

What Christianity Means

Over against this secular interpretation of life outlines of the Christian faith stand in sharp relief, and overshadow in their importance the differ-

ences of belief among Christians. I shall here present an interpretation of Christianity in contrast to secularism in the form of a modern creed.

It is the Christian faith that there is nothing which is worthy of our supreme devotion short of the reality upon which we and the whole structure of our lives ultimately depend. Whatever else is true of God, God is more than human, prior to man, the being to which we owe our existence. Christians may differ about the degree to which God transcends the known universe, how far he is revealed in it, how far he is present within it; but God is not merely another word for the universe. The universe depends upon God and not God upon the universe.

It is the Christian faith that men in their search for the meaning of their lives cannot stop short of God. They need God as the intellectual explanation of their existence as well as for the sense of belonging to an order of things which gives coherence to their experience.

It is the Christian faith that God is the final source of moral obligation. One of the surest facts of human life is the fact that moral demands are made upon us which we cannot refuse without the sense of having somehow fallen. The significance of these demands is obscured when they happen to coincide with our interests or desires, or with what our social group approves. It is when a moral demand cuts across our own desires and interests and runs counter to the approval of our group that we are forced to raise the question: Why is this demand binding on me? Notice that we are not here concerned with the origin of the particular thing which is demanded. It may have developed through a long process of trial and error in social experience. The question here is not, What is the good? but rather, Why should I bother about the good? It is in the answer to that question that morality and religion meet. Here more surely than anywhere else we feel within our own souls the impact of a demand which derives its authority from beyond ourselves and from beyond society. To disobey is to fall, and to fall not merely in our own eyes or in the eyes of society. There are some words of Professor Hocking which put with great effectiveness what I have just been saying:

> The day is saved, if it is saved, by men who keep on working for a group which is not worthy of their effort, frequently under the calumny and attack of those they are best serving. The day is saved by men who keep on, longer than any collectivity can require them to keep on.
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> The essence of the matter is this—and I rest the case on it [the case for the significance of religion]. There is such a thing as conscience; what is it? Not a racial memory, but a sense of obligation that lights on this or that course when reflection has detached us for a moment from the clamor of self-interest. Is conscience a luxury, a psychological accident, an economic lubricant, an ephemeral sentiment induced by an indifferent world? Or is it a companionship, an intimation of destiny, a perception that human choices have some bearing upon an eternal order of being? To suppose that in some way conscience represents the nature of things makes all the difference in a man's life; to have such men as its components makes all the difference in the life of a civilization.[1]

It is the Christian faith that God is personal. That word is a stumbling

[1] *Christendom*, October, 1936.

block to many of our contemporaries. What it means can be put in this way. In the nature of the case God is unique. One cannot describe God by comparing him with anything else of the same kind. The most that we can do is to find suggestions or symbols in the world of our experience (the only world which is open to us all) which seem fruitful in our thought about God. The possibilities among such suggestions are very limited. To say that God is personal is to say that God is more like a person than like a thing, more like a person than like a machine, more like a person than like a mathematical proposition, more like a person than like a tree. This last suggestion is pertinent, because the whole conception of God as blind life-urge is symbolized quite well by a tree. But, when we use the word "personal" as a description of God, we mean to include only a few of the characteristics of persons. Our human limitations which are inherent in our physical existence obviously do not apply to God. Those characteristics which do apply to God are: *awareness, intelligence, purposiveness, the capacity to appreciate, the capacity to respond to persons.* It is difficult to see how a God who lacks those qualities could be a fitting object of devotion or an adequate explanation of existence, or one to whom our conduct could make any difference.

It is the Christian faith that in Jesus Christ we have the surest clue to the nature of God. It is not enough to say that God is personal. That might leave it open to believe that God has the characteristics of a Napoleon or a Mussolini—the man of power. To say that it is in Christ-like personality that we have a true symbol of the nature of God becomes especially significant when we contrast Jesus with other types of persons. Moreover, God is revealed not only in the personality of Jesus but also in his teaching about God and in his religious response to God. His trust in God and his commitment to God form the clearest portrayal of man's right relationship with God.

It is the Christian faith that it is the purpose of God that the spirit of Jesus should be the norm for our lives, and that men should develop in the world a fellowship which knows no barriers of race or class or nation, and which is characterized by abundance of life, mutual loyalty, and a common devotion to God. So long as Christians take seriously the revelation of God and of his purpose which they find in Jesus they have a corrective for the most menacing perversions of our time, for racialism and nationalism, for economic injustice and war.

It is the Christian faith that there is a judgment of God which can be observed in personal life and in the events of history. God seeks to draw us, to persuade us, but we can resist him; and when we resist him too stubbornly we find ourselves up against punishment. This punishment is at work in the moral structure of things which makes evil in the long run self-defeating. In the next chapter will be shown more clearly the nature of this moral structure. It is enough to stress here that through it we can discern the sterner side of God's activity. Men who organize their lives around the narrow self or one or two impulses of the narrow self find themselves in blind alleys. The world is unable permanently to organize its life on the

basis of injustice and nationalism without reaping chaos and conflict which become each year more destructive. But one of our grounds for hope is that the prospect of the judgment of God upon us or the foretaste of the judgment of God upon us may reinforce the persuasion of God; and, drawn by the ideal and hammered by the threat of punishment at the same time, we may find the way in which to build the structure of our common life.

It is the Christian faith that God forgives those who are honest with themselves about their sins, and who seek to turn from them. If God makes moral demands upon us and if failure to meet those demands gives us the sense of having fallen, that is not the end of the matter. If it were, the more sensitive we are the more we would be driven to complete despair or to self-deception. The revelation of God in Christ is a revelation of one who forgives those who repent. The evil in the past still has its consequences, but the individual is able to make a fresh start without being morally crippled by the burden of guilt.

There is much in the emphasis upon divine forgiveness in traditional forms of Christianity which quite rightly repels. Sometimes Christians have been too preoccupied with it; sometimes they have used it as a substitute for adequate moral effort; sometimes it has been narrowly conceived in relation to specific ecclesiastical practices and specific doctrines; sometimes it has been put into a framework of legalism, with the emphasis upon the future rewards and punishments. But in our days we are again coming to see the importance of forgiveness. Modern psychiatry has revealed the degree to which the sense of guilt (even apart from its conventional religious manifestations), when it is unrelieved, can cripple a personality. Moreover, the social situation seems often to involve only possibilities which are in varying degrees evil, all of which give us a sense of having done wrong. Reinhold Niebuhr has come to emphasize the necessity of divine forgiveness in view of our entanglement in inescapable social evil. He says: "In every life there must at least be times and seasons when the good is felt as a present possession and not as a far-off goal," [2] and he traces the possibility of that experience to the realization of the forgiveness of God.

If there were no such forgiveness, one of three things would be forced upon us: the denial of the binding character of moral obligations, the attempt to deceive ourselves about our achievements, or self-despair. To Christian faith this problem has always been an acute one and its promise of forgiveness to those who give up the attempt to deceive themselves and seek to *turn* from their sins is the word most needed at times in the experience of every honest soul.

It is the Christian faith that God can be trusted to deliver from frustration those who fulfil the conditions. The conditions are simple in the sense that they have nothing arbitrary or artificial about them, but they are not easy. They can be summed up in two words—commitment and trust. Men without the consciousness of God stumble on the fact that there is a healing power in life which goes beyond the obvious in delivering from frustration those

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[2] *Reflections on the End of an Era*, p. 285.

who are not preoccupied with self. Worship is both the act of commitment and the exposure of our spirits to those things which can lift us and make us capable of commitment. There is here no stereotyped solution of all our human problems. There are puzzles to which we cannot see the answer, especially the puzzle that so many persons are so controlled by fear and self-concern that they cannot know the experience of healing when they need it most. But it is a matter of record that countless persons who have fulfilled the conditions have in the face of all the tragedies of life found deliverance for their spirits. It is one of the meanings of the cross that Jesus found such deliverance, though he experienced almost every form of external evil.

The confidence of Christians in personal immortality has been a way of underscoring this trust in God. It is the trust that not even death (which has all the appearance of being the final frustration for persons) is beyond the range of God's deliverance.

It is the Christian faith that there are evils in the world which God does not cause. Although most Christians would agree with that statement, they would differ in the range of its application and in the explanation of it. If we take seriously the belief that in man's freedom there is a source of evil by which the realization of God's purpose is limited, we can get real light on the most baffling problem which Christian faith faces—the problem of evil. A very large part of the evil in the world is the result of human action. Some of it can be ascribed to ignorance; some of it to a conscious choice of evil or the lesser good. We must still ask the question: Why did not God create a world which would be fool-proof and knave-proof, in which the risks of human freedom could be avoided? The answer to that question is that God himself faces a limited number of possibilities. If he seeks to create a community of persons of tested moral worth, who are to be loyal sons and not puppets of the divine power, he can do so only on the basis of human freedom with all of its tragic cost. To have persons of developed intelligence it seems that he must also grant them freedom to learn by trial and error and to learn most by error when it hurts.

This is not a complete answer to the problem of evil—we still, for example, have unsolved the problem created by many forms of evil which are rooted in nature—but it does greatly reduce the problem. Evil which comes into the world through human agencies is not to be attributed to the intention of God. Nor is it to be attributed to a devil over against God. This kind of evil at least is the by-product of a structure of life which is the necessary condition for the highest good. In other words, evil is the result of freedom, and freedom is willed by God as the condition for the growth of persons. Along these lines it is possible for Christians to combine with their belief in God full realism concerning themselves and the world. They can thus avoid the greatest danger which besets religion—the danger of sanctifying the existing order of things because it is the creation of God.

It is the Christian faith that man combines in his nature high possibilities and tragic handicaps. One of the reasons for the adequacy of Christianity

is that it is realistic about human nature. It avoids equally cynicism and sentimentalism. It sees the best in man and draws it out. Man is thought of as created in the image of God; and, though that image is distorted, glimpses of it are still present in human nature.

Wrapped up with man's freedom there is the fact of sin, and—as inevitable consequences of the limitations of his existence—there are failure and suffering. Man is not a finished creature living with a static character. As an individual and as a race, he is always at a particular point in a long process of growth—growth which is uneven and precarious. Moreover, man is limited in his knowledge, in the range of his imagination by the fact that he lives at a point in time and space, in a body, in a particular combination of social relationships. Even at his best, he never escapes the pull of inordinate self-interest, and this becomes a bias in favor of the group which is nearer, which is *his* group. In any particular situation it is impossible fully to untangle the strands which are the result of a culpable selfishness, unavoidable ignorance, an external situation too complex and too much weighted with past evil to control. They are all there together creating man's problem. They will always be there to some degree so long as men are finite, but we cannot set definite limits to the degree to which men can rise above them. High possibilities—tragic handicaps: that is the Christian view of man.

It is the Christian faith that, in contrast to the habits of all history, there is a genuine equality of all men before God. This equality does not mean a dead level in ability, contribution, character, religious experience, but an equality in the fundamental right of all men to develop the possibilities within them.

The Christian idea of equality implies in our kind of world a substructure of economic justice and true equal opportunity in matters of bread and health and education and environment. Christian love is a mockery when content with anything less. Moreover, equality implies loyalty to a universal community according to which exclusive racialism and exclusive nationalism—the two distortions of life which are most tempting to our generations—are an offence against the God of all humanity.

It is the Christian faith that there is a movement of life in the world in which God is working most clearly to lift the level of the life of men. Christianity is not merely a set of ideas; it is primarily such a movement. This movement of life first appeared in the dim past when Hebrew religion emerged as something different from other Semitic cults, took clear form in the prophets of Israel, burst into the world with new clarity and power in Christ. It has continued its course, often cloudy and broken, in the Church; but it is not limited to the Church. To make the Church a more adequate vehicle for this movement of life is an absolute necessity for Christians in our day. As individuals, Christians are helpless in the face of the pagan forces in our world. They are thus being forced to rediscover in the Church an undergirding fellowship, a base for operations, and a collectivity which can stand up against the organized powers of the world.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE CHURCH

Walter Marshall Horton

IN A RECENT PAPER Professor Clarence Tucker Craig analyzed the Biblical concept of the Kingdom of God into three main aspects: "eternal fact," "present manifestation," and "consummation still to come"; and described the New Testament Church as "the sphere of God's salvation in the present . . . . prophetic of his ultimate triumph in the Kingdom of God . . . . that is yet to come."

While Professor Craig is inclined to restrict the term "Kingdom of God" (both in the New Testament and in modern usage) to the hope of a radically restored and utterly transformed future world order, separated from the present corrupt world order by a great crisis of divine judgment and redemption, it is clear from his own description that the "present" and "eternal" meanings of the term are always implicit in it, even when hope is as sharply concentrated upon the "future" meaning as was the case in New Testament times. We shall use the term in its full three-fold sense; for taken thus comprehensively it is the clue to all Christian thought, whereas in the merely "future" sense (which is, indeed, the most typical and decisive) it is the clue only to one periodically disappearing and reappearing factor in Christian thought. The truth seems to be that as the relationship between the church and the world constantly shifts, first one and then another of the three meanings of the "Kingdoms" is forced into prominence, while the other two are relatively obscured; but if any of the three is utterly lost, the Gospel itself is lost and a reformation of the church is in order.

I

The Kingdom and the Church in the History of Christian Thought: The Early Church and the Millennial Hope. During the early period of struggle and persecution, the Christian Good News continued to center in the New Testament hope of an imminent future Advent of Christ upon the clouds in glory, to reign in New Jerusalem with his saints over a wondrously fruitful and prosperous earth. Details of this eschatology varied, as they vary in the New Testament, but it always involved at least the two elements upon which Dr. Craig comments in its eschatology: (1) it hoped for a "new society" on the earth; but (2) this new society was to result from divine intervention rather than from any "program of social reconstruction." The church was therefore not a "means" to the Kingdom of God, but an "earnest" or "foretaste" of the coming new order, a faithful "little flock" to whom God would "give" his Kingdom in due season.

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The Catholic Church and the Present Reign of Christ. The earthly triumph of the Gospel over the imperial might of Rome was a great surprise to the Christians, and led them to revise their conception of the Kingdom of God on earth. While they continued to look forward to the heavenly and eternal Kingdom, which was to follow the general resurrection and judgment at the end of history, they now tended to identify God's earthly kingdom with the existing Christian Empire rather than with the coming millennial reign. In the East, where Christianized Roman civilization lasted a thousand years longer than in the West, this conception has endured down to our own times, having been preserved after the fall of Constantinople by the Russian Orthodox Church and the other national Eastern churches. From the time of Ivan III the Russian Czars ruled as Christ's earthly viceroys, like the Byzantine Emperors before them. The ecclesiastical authorities shared with the civil authorities in administering this Christian Empire; but their power was confined to the sphere of doctrine and ritual.

Because of differing political circumstances, disillusionment with the Christian Empire came earlier in the West than in the East. After the sack of Roman by Alaric in 410 A.D., the reign of Christ in Western Europe became exceedingly difficult to perceive! It was St. Augustine's *City of God* which led Western Christianity to transfer its faith from the crumbling Roman Empire to the militant and heroic Roman Catholic Church, and to maintain faith in that Church as the Kingdom of Christ for over a thousand years. According to St. Augustine, it is a mistake—which he confesses that he himself shared at one time—to look forward to a coming millennial reign of Christ. The millennium began with the first coming of Christ in the flesh. The "first resurrection" spoken of in the New Testament is the New Birth which Christ has already brought to those who are his. There will be a second resurrection at the end of history, which will inaugurate God's eternal Kingdom; but "now too," says St. Augustine, "the Church is the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of heaven. Therefore, the saints reign with him even now, but otherwise than they shall reign in the future." (*De civ. Dei*, xx, 9.) This is the charter of that earthly dominion and temporal power which the Church of Rome exercised so effectively during the long period of political anarchy that followed St. Augustine's death, and to which she still officially lays claim.

Catholic Christians do not necessarily claim perfection for this institutional form of the Church's vice-regency. While they uphold her authority to exercise the power of the Keys in both heavenly and earthly affairs, they do not imagine that in the institutional sphere God's will is perfectly done "on earth as it is in heaven." St. Augustine himself, though he defended the authority of the visible, institutional church against the Donatist schism, never equated the City of God or the Kingdom of Christ with the visible church, but with the "invisible union (*compages*) of love" (*De unit. eccl.* xxi, 60), which joins all those born of the Spirit into a true communion of saints. For the medieval mind, this true church was more clearly to be seen in the monastic orders, with their strict discipline and their ardent desire to subject their whole communal life to the Will of God, than

in the mixed multitude of half-Christianized barbarians who composed the whole group of baptized Catholics. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries this monastic conception of the Kingdom of God underwent a daring development at the hands of Joachim of Fiore and the Spiritual Franciscans. They maintained that the "Age of the Son," which began with the coming of Christ and was under the authority of the Church of Peter and the Popes, was now about to give way to the "Age of the Sprit," when all the world would become a vast monastery, full of prayer and song and every spiritual grace. The Franciscan movement, which carried monastic devotion out of the cloister into the common walks of life, was believed by many to be the fulfilment of Joachim's prophecies. Had all these hopes been justified, this would, indeed, have been *a present divine reign co-extensive with earthly society*, as in the old hope of the millennium.

Whether in its Eastern form as the Christian Empire, in its Papal form as the temporal power of the visible church, or in its monastic form as the spiritual communion of saints, the Catholic hope of the Kingdom has always laid extraordinary stress upon the present earthly reign of Christ through his body the Church—a spiritual body at its centre, a political power at its periphery. In this view, the Church is not merely a means to the Kingdom, but *an end in itself*, for which (as some of the Fathers maintained) the world itself was created.

Protestantism and Theocracy. If the Early Church stressed the future Millennium, and the Catholic Church the present reign of Christ, original Protestantism stressed the eternal sovereignty of God the Father Almighty, as affirmed in the Old Testament; and by this it proposed to judge all earthly institutions, ecclesiastical or secular. While the more radical wing of the Reformation leaned toward feverish millennial expectations, the prevailing Protestant view of the Kingdom of God was sober and conservative, like that of the Jewish theocrats who purged their religion of idolatry in Babylonian exile and set up the Second Temple in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Lutheranism and Calvinism had, of course, different conceptions of the Kingdom of God. In the Lutheran doctrine of the "two kingdoms," secular sovereignty was wielded by the Christian prince in the name of that order of *creation* (*Schöpfungsordnung*) which God had established from the foundation of the world, and that order of *conservation* whereby God kept the creation from flying into anarchy when it had been corrupted by sin. The church had little to do with the Kingdom of God in this first sense. Her fellowship coincided rather with that new spiritual Kingdom which Christ had established by his redeeming sacrifice, and within which abounded all the spiritual graces of the Pauline church. In practice this meant a sharp contrast between the rule of force in public life and the rule of spiritual freedom in the more intimate circle of Christian church life and family life. The Calvinists aspired to bridge this gulf, and put private life, church life, and public life all alike under the control of the revealed Will of God, which included the evangelical counsels of the New Testament, but was fundamentally based upon the Old Testament law. The term "theocracy" is much more clearly applicable to the Calvinist than to the

Lutheran conception; yet both wings of the Reformation, as they faced the claim of the Roman Church to represent the Kingdom of Christ, rejected that claim by substantially the same theocratic test: Rome was shown to be an usurper, because not in conformity with that charter of divine constitutional government which God had laid down in his creation, and issued to the world in Holy Scripture.

In the Reformation, then, and above all in Calvinism, the Christian idea of the Kingdom of God had reverted to its original Jewish sources; from the millennial hope of a future kingdom and the Catholic sense of a present reign of Christ, to the lofty and severe faith of the prophets in an eternal divine order established at the creation, departed from at one's peril, and destined to be re-established everlastingly at the end of time, in spite of the machinations of all evil men and angels. The church was to this eternal Kingdom what the Jewish community under the Second Temple was to the divine ordinances which it sought to obey, but which were realized in their perfection only at the beginning and the end of history. The obedience of this "saving remnant" to the will of their divine Sovereign was a sort of prayer that he might sometime manifest his Sovereignty in its completeness, and meanwhile prosper his servants on their way through an evil and rebellious world. Richard Baxter spoke for all Protestantism when he said, "The World is a Kingdom whereof God is the King . . . . an absolute Monarchy . . . . by the title of Creation . . . . God is the end as well as the beginning of the divine monarchy of the world . . . . all men as men are the subjects of God's Kingdom, as to Obligations and Duty, and God will not ask the consent of any man to be so obliged." Ezekiel or Ezra might have used the same language.

II

The Kingdom and the Church in American Thought. H. Richard Niebuhr has put us all in his debt by his analysis of the development of the idea of the Kingdom of God in the history of American Protestantism. It has been customary for European observers of American church life to remark upon the extraordinary vogue among us of the idea of "building the Kingdom," and "making the church a means to the Kingdom of God." They have usually asserted that the idea of the Kingdom of God presupposed in such "activistic" slogans is a shallow and secular one, quite remote from historic Christianity, Niebuhr shows that this is not so; that in its roots the American idea of the Kingdom of God is thoroughly Christian. At least one European visitor has remarked in my hearing that on this fundamentally important issue Niebuhr's book was the most illuminating document he had read since coming to this country, and one calculated to do much to bridge the gulf of misunderstanding that now exists between European and American Christianity.

We may sum up Niebuhr's account by saying that the American idea of the Kingdom of God has retraced the three stages which Christian thought had already passed through, but in reverse order. As we have seen the emphasis moving back from the future (Millenarianism) through the present

(Catholicism) to the eternal order of creation (Protestantism), Niebuhr sees the emphasis moving forward again from the Puritan faith in the sovereignty of God, through the Evangelical faith in the present reign of Christ the Redeemer, to the Liberal Protestant faith in a future radical reform of human society which would deserve to be called the Millennium. Only in its recent secularized forms is this characteristic "American dream" to be called "utilitarian," "utopian," or "fatuously optimistic." Essentially, it is the ancient Christian hope replanted in a new country, where tradition has not impeded its growth and where circumstances have encouraged Christians to "claim the promises" in definite and concrete terms.

The most crucial moment in the development of the distinctively American conception of the Kingdom of God was the moment when the success of the Evangelical revivals began to generate hopes of a new heaven and a new earth. The Great Awakening under Jonathan Edwards and Whitefield, and most of the revivals which followed in its train, were fundamentally *personal* in character. They aimed primarily to make the Will of God regnant in individual lives, transformed by the redeeming power of the Living Christ. *But the widespread and deep-going character of this "life-changing"* process (as Oxford Groups would say) aroused hopes among the evangelists (as today among the "Groupers," and long ago among the Franciscans) that God might regenerate society as a whole through the agency of this movement. Jonathan Edwards himself saw in the Great Awakening "the dawning, or at least a prelude of that glorious work of God, so often foretold in Scripture, which, in the progress and issue of it, shall renew the world of mankind." While he saw the centre and the glory of the coming millennial reign in the spiritual "knowledge" and "holiness" of Christ's immensely expanded and excellently ordered church, he felt that "such a spiritual estate" as this would tend to produce "health and long life . . . ease, quietness, pleasantness, and cheerfulness of mind, also wealth and a great increase of children," together with "universal peace and a good understanding among the nations of the world." Edwards' immediate successor Hopkins saw great improvements in "the art of husbandry" and "the mechanic arts" as concomitants of the coming Millenium, and predicted that by these means, together with growing "benevolence and fervent charity," mankind might be permanently delivered from economic want. Finney, the later successor of Edwards and Hopkins in this line of thought, saw a relationship of cause and effect between individual redemption and social reform in the coming age. The spirit of saved men, he said, is "necessarily that of the reformer." Reform is "their business, their profession, their life"—especially, in those pre-Civil War days, the great causes of peace, antislavery and temperance.

The essential difference between the hope of the Kingdom as represented by Finney in the early part of the nineteenth century and as represented by Gladden and Rauschenbusch in the latter part of the century is not to be found in any replacement of Christian presuppositions by purely secular ones. The growth of materialism and utilarianism in America was indeed alarming at this period; but it was the intent of the Social Gospel to combat this trend in the name of Christ and the Kingdom. The difference lies rather

in a new conception of the function of the church in relation to social change. The early Christians saw in the church an "earnest" of a new order which must be brought about by divine intervention; the Catholics saw in it the evidence of Christ's present reign among men; the original Protestants saw in it a "faithful remnant" keeping the ordinances of the divine Sovereign in the midst of an evil world; the Evangelicals saw in its rapid extension and the philanthropies to which it gave rise the beginnings of a new heaven and a new earth; but the Social Gospel saw in it God's chief instrument for establishing his rule in the social order; or, as Rauschenbusch puts it in his *Theology for the Social Gospel*, the church was the great "social factor in salvation."

This meant on the one hand to ascribe a higher place to the church than had ever been ascribed to her, and on the other hand to reduce her to the humble status of a social servitor. The church was not only to redeem individuals, one by one, and trust them to sweeten their environment, but also to redeem society from all sorts of collective evils; and by her collective influence she was not only to uphold the ordinances of God against the rebellion of man, but also to transform the world in its entirety, and thus usher in God's eternal Kingdom. This stupendous work she was to accomplish, however, not by asserting herself but by effacing herself: by making herself the willing servant of every human need, and at last dying as a separate institution that the Kingdom of God might live in all human institutions. Rauschenbusch never tires of warning us that it is always fatal to make the church an end in herself, instead of a means to the building of God's Kingdom in individual and social life. Stanley Jones' recent strictures on the Madras Missionary Conference are based on the same point of view. In its practical application to missionary policy, this attitude means less stress upon individual baptisms and more stress upon the pervasive influence of the Gospel upon whole systems of culture and civilization.

III

The Place of the Church in the Strategy of the Kingdom of God. In the early years of the twentieth century the American hope of the Kingdom of God was in danger of being severed from its Christian roots and thoroughly secularized. A complacent satisfaction with the spread of Anglo-Saxon culture over the face of the globe, and the increase in material comforts through mechanical invention, was being substituted for the ancient call to radical repentance and spiritual renewal; and it was hard to see what place was left for the church in this humanized "kingdom," save as a disseminator of up-to-date ideas and a purveyor of modern conveniences to backward races and classes. But the humilations and frustrations of the last twenty-five years have put American Protestants in a more penitent and genuinely religious mood, driving them back afresh upon their whole Christian heritage in search of light and strength wherewith to face the present crisis of Christian civilization. Perhaps if the American faith in the Kingdom of God, thus chastened and deepened by adversity, were now to be restated in its implications for the church, it might do more for our discouraged generation

than the too ebullient faith of our predecessors did for their too complacent contemporaries.

The Church as Reflecting God's Eternal Reign in Creation. The unshakable foundation of all Christian faith and hope is God's original creation of "heaven and earth and all things visible and invisible." However corrupt the world may have become, its original stuff and structure are "very good." Having created a good world, God sustains and governs it forever after, never swerving from his original good intent, never permitting the folly and wickedness of his creatures to go so far as to destroy his governing order. When they go to a certain point, evil-doers destroy themselves–together with much good–in a tragic collapse; but they can never destroy the eternal sovereignty of God. That assurance is our great stay in these evil times.

The Kingdom of God, in this first and fundamental sense, is found everywhere, even in the midst of violence, hatred and sinful pride; for God knows how, even there, to "make the wrath of men praise him." It is present in the whole course of events, secular as well as sacred. The significance of the church is that in a world for the most part ignorant of, indifferent to, or rebellious against its Creator, there is at least a little band of people acknowledging the divine sovereignty, and seeking (however half-heartedly and stumblingly) to make the divine Will the law of life. In the church, the original *ordo creationis* is expressed as nowhere else in God's whole universe; for apart from her, the whole of nature is mute, and the whole of history gives forth but a confused noise; only here is the heavenly King consciously confessed and glorified by his creatures, in thought, word and deed. The fellowship of the church, thus conceived, includes all those who have received the "baptism of desire," and cry out in thirst for the living God, however mistakenly they may conceive him; but the trajectory of the church through human history is most clearly to be traced through God's chosen people, Israel, who first of all nations decisively turned away from idols to serve the Lord of the whole earth.

The Church as the Capital of Christ's Present Empire. It is the central affirmation of Christian faith that the Creator has not left his creatures to their own devices, raining down favor upon the obedient and punishment upon the disobedient while staying aloft in his heaven, but that "for us men and our salvation" he has come down from heaven and assumed our earthly nature, suffering even the death of the Cross for our redemption. The relationship established between God the Redeemer and those who accept his redeeming grace is a new sort of Kingship: the sovereignty of constraining love instead of the sovereignty of almighty power. Between Christ the King and his subjects there is deep, intimate fellowship (*koinonia*), like that which unites members of a family, but transcending all natural boundaries of race and clan. The Kingdom of Christ is a "realm of grace," from which all legality and all violence are excluded. It is a bit of heaven on earth, the Kingdom of God in our midst.

The visible church in its "spotted actuality" is not the Kingdom of Christ. Only the inner core of vital sanctity in the church, the *una sancta ecclesia Dei,* answers to that description. This it is which periodically revitalizes the

whole life of the visible church, when the world seems to have corrupted it fatally. Because of this holy Presence, the corporate life of Christ dwelling in her midst, the church has power to cleanse and renew the lives of her members; and all who have felt the touch of this Presence know that against it the gates of hell cannot prevail. Although the whole visible church can claim no such sanctity and saving grace as this, she is nevertheless engaged in a ministry of preaching, teaching, sacramental observances and works of charity without which, humanly speaking, the realm of Christ could not be perpetuated from generation to generation, and could not extend its sway over the world. These ministries furnish channels through which the stream of special revelation and special grace flows down from Calvary and out into life. If the *ecclesiola* or communion of saints is the heart or capital of Christ's Kingdom, its territory also includes the "Great Church," and through it reaches out to sanctify considerable parts of so-called "secular" society as peripheral regions of the same realm. Whether political and economic life on a grand scale are capable of being raised above the level of the *ordo creationis* and incorporated in the *ordo redemptionis* is a matter of dispute among Christians. In the interest of honesty, it is better to admit *as yet* the best that has been achieved in these realms in that very uncommon thing known as "common justice," while Christian love is limited to more intimate spheres. That means, of course, that we have to look beyond the present reign of Christ among his redeemed, and pray for a future coming of God's Kingdom.

The Church as Nucleus of a Coming World Order. The hope of a coming public triumph of God in earthly affairs has been associated with millennial hopes which have repeatedly been disappointed. These disappointments, as well as the achievements of divine Providence in Christian history, inevitably and properly shape our present expectations. Christian eschatology is shaped partly by the inspired imagery of Bible prophecy and parable, partly by the course of subsequent events. One of the most startling of these subsequent events was the unexpected triumph of the Early Church, which leavened and saved Roman civilization instead of witnessing its utter destruction as prophesied in the *Apocalypse.* This means that the church is truly a *factor* in the building of the Kingdom of God, as the Social Gospel has always asserted; but it suggests that the church's most significant contribution to the coming of the Kingdom may not be the launching of great schemes of social reconstruction, or the manipulating of political pressures to bring them about. "Let the Church *be* the Church" was a principle to which the Oxford Conference on "Church, Community and State" was led, as the outcome of all its sociological discussions. That is to say, a church's primary function is so to wait upon God, so to allow its own life to be molded by his power, that it becomes a living cell of the new divine order that is to be. Its greatest service is to be alive, in a higher order of life than that of the secular society about it, or even the order of creation.

The Church as a Seed-Plot for Heaven. At the end of history as at its beginning stands Eternity. God is the end and consummation of all his creatures, as he is their source and their sustainer. History therefore cannot be

the scene of the final triumph of God's Kingdom. As long as history lasts, judgment and redemption must continue to be co-ordinate principles. Every great historical crisis, such as that which is now upon us, is both a day of wrath and a time of deliverance, according to the way it is received. The church is deeply concerned to do her part in making these temporal victories possible; but she is also concerned to prepare men for "the life of the world to come." As she hopes to help civilization through periods of disintegration to new areas of peace and creativity, she also hopes to see all her children through the crisis of death into the life everlasting. When she is called a "colony of heaven," it is therefore in two equally important senses. On the one hand, she represents the beginning of a new world order here on earth; on the other hand, she sends home her colonists, when their work is done, to well-earned retirement and a new lease of life in the Mother Country. There, not here, is the final fruition of all our efforts and all God's grace.

Part V

MODERN EVALUATIONS OF JESUS

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS

Arthur C. McGiffert, Jr.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF which Jesus? Within the Christian movement the name "Jesus" has been used with reference to at least seven different figures. They share a common name, but they are not merely different aspects of a single figure. Partially these figures of Jesus overlap. But the resemblance among these figures is by no means close. They are not all exclusive of each other; yet they are not fully interchangeable. Confusion in contemporary thought about Jesus may be diminished if we analyze the meanings currently associated with the name.

I

There is, first of all, what Robert Keable aptly called the "literary Jesus." This is the Jesus of the four gospels, probably the most familiar of all seven figures. This Jesus was virgin born and a worker of miracles. He made claims for himself beyond all mortal men. This figure has become the sanction for the complex enterprise that took his name. The missionary movement, the Roman Catholic church, separatist and other worldly sects, pacifists and militarists, all find in this literary Jesus the justification for their program and their ideal. This is the Jesus of the unsophisticated Christian, and a glorious and adorable Jesus he is.

Closely related to the literary Jesus is the dogmatic Jesus. "All I need God for," Dr. Coffin reports a convert as saying, "I find in Jesus." This Jesus is God. Him the Christian worships and prays to. Him the Christian trusts and obeys. In his power over the forces of nature and over the unruly human heart the Christian rests his confidence that in time his reign will be established and his kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

When the theologian places the literary Jesus within the larger setting of cosmic activity by means of some form of the doctrine of the Trinity, this Jesus becomes the unique revelation of the nature of God. By his expiatory death he satisfies or turns away the anger of God toward human beings. His resurrection is judged to be proof of his victory over the world —a victory which the Christian may hope to share. The thoughts which occupied his mind and the manner in which he conducted himself during his life are of secondary interest. Not what he was in himself, but the effect he has on the attitude of God toward the world and on our understanding of the nature and character of God, is of primary concern.

Next, there is the ecclesiastical Jesus. This Jesus is sequestered within the

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confines of a particular church. Specific requirements of admission to that church, attendance at certain rites, and, not infrequently, profession of specific doctrines are ordinarily designated as standards which the individual must satisfy if he is to secure the benefits which are claimed to reside in this ecclesiastical Jesus. Whether deliberately so designed or not, these tests are calculated to enhance the importance of the institution.

Another Jesus is the invisible but living comrade, whose companioning presence saves the Christian from the bitterness of loneliness. The invisible playmate of many a childhood is continued into maturity as the mystical, living Christ. Frequently the believer has an almost physical sensation of the presence of this incorporeal being. Jesus "comes transfigured back, secure from change, in [his] high-hearted ways. Beautiful evermore . . . ." He becomes the best "part of life's unalterable good." Lifted out of the past, Jesus is for many Christians their "most significant contemporary." In regard to the technique of their relationship to him, they may nourish their spirits on him sacramentally in the eucharist. Or they may find him the mystic lover of their souls. In either case they believe themselves to be living with him in intimate, personal union. He is their guide, their counselor, their friend, the fountainhead of their faith and inspiration. He is one with them, and they with him.

The communal Jesus is a combination and corrective of the ecclesiastical Jesus and the mystical Jesus. Some Christians hold that we cannot make contact with Jesus in the solitariness of mystic, sweet communion. Neither may we expect to enjoy the unmediated, personal influence of the presence of Jesus (Schleiermacher). But where two or three Christians are gathered together, there is this Jesus. That is to say, what is called Jesus is actually that fellowship which a Christian group enjoys by virtue of its common spirit. The individual's connection with Jesus occurs only through fellowship with Christians who have become "little Christs" to each other. It is membership in a group dominated by a particular religious and ethical quality that sets the individual within the sphere of operation of the communal Jesus.

Still another Jesus is the symbolic Jesus. "Would it," inquires Dean Inge, "be going too far to say that in every generation Christian teachers use the figure of the founder as a peg on which to hang their own best thoughts?" One can say that it would only if one forgets the multitude of interpreters of Jesus who read into his thought and life whatever ideal they desire to secure prestige for. Bruce Barton, whose Jesus is the symbol of an ideal business executive, may be mentioned as an egregious example of a practice that is widespread. Even John Baillie's brilliant study of *The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity* is marred by his interpretation of Jesus primarily in terms of redemptive, suffering love. This instance of thinly disguised symbolic reference has behind it, to be sure, the authority of long years of historic precedent. It is none the less a selection and idealization of one element in the life and teaching of Jesus, and involves a subordination of other elements equally an organic part of his mind. "The mind of

this reverent disciple"—to apply to Professor Bailie and to many another, a phrase from Professor Case—"has been made the mind of the Master."

Finally, there is the historic Jesus. The "modernist" interpretation of Jesus, of which Professor Case's book, *Jesus*, may be considered both exemplary and prophetic, takes account of the symbolization of Jesus which had already occurred by the time the records of his life were written down. The modernist feels himself obliged to discard not a little that had been held authentic by the previous generation of "liberal" New Testament scholars. He perceives that Jesus was early made to speak "a message suited to the ear of the later Christian congregation, or designed to stimulate outsiders to ally themselves with the new cause." Christian missionaries, when addressing gentile audiences could not remain "uninfluenced by the temptation to make Jesus speak in the cadence of a contemporary Greek philosopher." Jesus, in order to be "a thoroughly efficient teacher for the people of a later day, had necessarily to be modernized." Nevertheless, in Professor Case's judgment, the "teachings of Jesus which are appropriate to his own immediate environment" (and so may be assumed to be authentic) are about equal in amount to pronouncements of his upon subjects that came to light only in the latter half of the first century of Christianity's growth (and so may be assumed to be accretions and not attributable to the historic Jesus himself).

Doubtless there will never be complete agreement regarding the details of the picture of that historic preacher and healer named Jesus. It may never be possible for the scholar to avoid reading in or reading out data in accordance with his own predilections. Professor Case himself, who is a pioneer in the application to the New Testament of the new sociological technique of interpretation, is not flawless in this regard. Yet he is probably right in his conclusion that this new technique, taken in conjunction with the long familiar methods of literary and textual criticism, makes it possible to reconstruct a veracious picture of the historical Jesus "with a fair degree of certainty." Contemporary research is in a favorable position to do this because it has no apologetic ax to grind and so may hew close to the line of fact. Having witnessed the rise and fall successively of the church as a sole ark of salvation, and of the Bible as the infallible rule of faith and life, and having observed that the outcome was not as calamitous as had been anticipated by the respective nervous and faint-hearted champions of authority, the "modernist" New Testament scholar feels under no obligation to refrain from tearing off the wrappings of mythology, dogma and sentimentality with which the figure of Jesus has been mummified and from presenting him as he actually was.

II

Of the figure that emerges from this unveiling, the characterization of Albrecht Schweitzer, though written almost a quarter of a century ago, is still pertinent. The historical Jesus is "to our time a stranger and an enigma." What to do with such a figure is not the problem of the New Testament scholar. His task is to get at the facts. Where he leaves off, the theologian begins. He must do something with this historical Jesus. The

theologian faces a dilemma. Either he may accept the factual figure of the historical Jesus and undertake to evaluate his significance for contemporary life or he may discard him. If he discards the historical Jesus, he is again confronted by a dilemma. Either he may substitute one of the several other representations of Jesus that have already been referred to in this paper or he may do away with the figure of Jesus altogether. Professor Harry Elmer Barnes is only the latest, though one of the most pungent and vociferous, of those who propose to eliminate Jesus wholly from the religious consciousness of the present. If, unwilling to be so drastic, or compelled by his own loyalty to the historic tradition of Christianity, the theologian determines to substitute one of the other figures of Jesus, he is still faced by certain perplexities in regard to their usableness.

The literary Jesus is so manifestly a composite figure, a kind of carry-all of heterogeneous, not to say contradictory, behaviors and ideas that he cannot well act as a unifying object for the loyalty either of an individual or of a social group, such as a church. Furthermore, this figure is constantly subject to the disintegrating criticism of research. Despite these drawbacks he may still serve the older generation of Christians. But what will be the reactions of university students, here and around the world, when they become cognizant of the hiatus between the historic Jesus and the embellished, imaginary figure of the literary Jesus? They will become suspicious, to say the least, of a piety which apparently nourishes and can maintain itself only by the continued use of fiction in the place of the known fact.

The theological Jesus also seems unsatisfactory because he tends to lose all humanness as he becomes an arbitrary, dialectical instrument for resolving suppositious metaphysical anthitheses.

The ecclesiastical Jesus fails to weather the charge of being over-amenable to exploitation on the part of skilful institutionalists.

The mystical Jesus is so easily detachable from the actual Jesus of history as to lay himself open to every kind of visionary reinterpretation. What guaranty is there that the impulses presumed to come from this living Christ have any connection with Jesus? There would seem, however, to be no reason why in the future the historic Jesus may not serve, in a way the literary Jesus could not, as a wholesome control or corrective of the mystic Jesus. In fact, a combination of the mystic Jesus and the historic Jesus is opening up a new area of Christian experience hitherto practically unexplored.

The communal Jesus seems also more serviceable. He has elasticity. This Jesus corresponds for Protestants to the Roman Catholic principle of progress which Cardinal Newman referred to as "development of doctrine." With such a Jesus or with such a principle, Christianity is no longer fettered to its past. It can adjust itself to changing situations without being under the embarrassing necessity of proving it has not modified the original deposit of truth. The communal Jesus is always synonymous with whatever it is that a Christian group thinks or does. This Jesus, however, can scarcely meet the insistent demand both of those outside and of those inside Christian circles, a demand voiced by E. Stanley Jones, for instance, that a distinction

be made between Jesus and Christianity. The communal Jesus is Christianity. He is "Christ and his influence," to borrow a phrase from John R. Mott.

If one were attempting to estimate the significance of Jesus in human history, the communal Jesus would certainly be the figure with whom one has to deal. As from a stone cast into the water, there have gone out from Jesus across the surface of human affairs ceaseless waves of spiritual influence. Together with the initial impulse, these constitute the communal Jesus. Objectively considered, no appraisal of the significance, even of the historical Jesus, is adequate that fails to take into account all that Jesus has meant to generations of Christian people. Such a historical judgment relative to the significance of Jesus is highly desirable and illuminating. Yet it can never be a substitute for a judgment of the personal significance of Jesus. The two points of view by no means necessarily coincide. We may, for instance, acknowledge this historical significance of Jesus and yet conclude that he has no personal significance for us. Or we may discover for ourselves the personal significance of Jesus without ever having known anything of the wider ranges of his influence. On the other hand, the private appraisal of Jesus, though this is not inevitably the case, may be favorably affected by a knowledge of what Jesus has meant to other people. The interest of this paper, it hardly needs to be added, is not in an objective estimation of the significance of Jesus in history. It seeks to ascertain the personal significance of the historical Jesus for people today. The communal Jesus, by his very nature, is unavailable for such an undertaking. It is impossible to isolate or distinguish him from the Christian fellowship. Therein lies both the tragedy and the glory of the communal Jesus.

The symbolic Jesus is ably championed by Professor A. G. Baker in an article inspired by the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council, entitled, "Christ and the Missionary Enterprise." He writes,

> Jesus became the originator and center of the [Christian] movement only in so far as his followers created and have continued to recreate out of the Jesus of Judea and of Galilee a spiritual symbol which is both inspiring and satisfying according to the prevailing conceptions of the hour. The Real Christ . . . . is the Christ who exists as an idea and an ideal in the hearts of his people. The spiritual dynamic we feel from him is the allurement of the ideal, the inspiration of a noble heroic soul and the social influence of those who bear his name.

The future of the Christian religion in its relation to other religions, he concludes, depends on whether "the concept of Christ as it has evolved to date within the Christian movement is more alluring and more challenging than the ideal religious figures which have been the product of other religious movements." [2]

We may accept without question this statement that the name Jesus has become for many a frame or symbol for the ideals and ambitions of Christian people. It makes little difference whether the character of a symbol, as symbol, corresponds to the character's reality. There is no necessary relation between a symbol and the object symbolized. In the symbolic use of Jesus,

[2] *Journal of Religion*, January, 1929.

to be sure, there usually is a resemblance between the literary figure and the various religious and ethical ideals of which he has become the symbol. Jesus might be called an intrinsic rather than an extrinsic symbol. Yet it has always been possible to put almost any ideal into the symbolic Jesus without being untrue to the principle of symbolization. The practice is, doubtless, not only unavoidable but desirable. In the realm of ultimate objectives where exact definitions are impossible, a resort to symbolic statements becomes necessary. There is no danger in this practice so long as the Christian recognizes what he is doing. It may be urged that many another figure might have been selected for this purpose. But as a matter of history, Jesus, who was counted Founder or Lord, became and has continued to be the chief personal symbol for the faith, hope, and love of those who call themselves Christians. Professor Barnes's criticism of the use by notable Christian leaders of what he calls the "Jesus stereotype" betrays a complete misunderstanding of this practice of symbolization.

The chief disadvantages of the symbolic Jesus must, however, be recognized. As a symbolic figure he ceases to be an example and ceases to exert cohesive power. In his name each individual or group of Christians does battle for its respective ideals. And then, when, as so often happens, the programs of action or doctrine implicit in these various ideals clash, Christians are likely to quit thinking about the difficult facts and to take refuge from their reflective problems in expressions of mutually-shared loyalty to Jesus. Thus they achieve a specious unity and an appearance of harmony by an emotional appeal to Christ.

There remains for consideration the historical Jesus. This historic Jesus is the original Jesus. He is the foundation on which all subsequent figures of Jesus have been pedestaled. Now that he is becoming known for what he was, Christians no longer find it quite easy to accept any substitutes for the genuine Jesus. But neither are they convinced that they want even the genuine article. It is an open question whether a figure which "refuses to be detached from his own time or suffer himself to be modernized" (Schweitzer, again) can have any significance for our day. Few attempts have been made to explore afresh and without prejudice the merits of the historic Jesus and his meaning for contemporary religion. Such an investigation cannot effectively be carried on by anyone for whom, in Dr. Johnston Ross's unforgettable phrase, "the imperial vein of Christian experience is Christocentric." Such a Christian will at one or another point surreptitiously, and in spite of himself, overlay the historic Jesus with one or another of the figures of Jesus. Nor can the investigation be conducetd profitably by one who assumes what Professor Walter Horton has called "a negative emotional attitude" toward Jesus. So difficult is it to be true to one's ignorance as well as to one's knowledge!

THE MAN OF DIVINE FIRE

Francis C. Burkitt

ANYONE WHO IN modern times attempts to make a sketch of the career of Jesus Christ must begin by some explanation of his own general attitude towards that career. His sketch, if it is to be at all adequate, must set forth the career of Jesus as interesting and attractive. As a matter of history, the career of Jesus was the starting-point, in some sense indeed the actual source, of the great movement called Christianity. No account of Jesus is at all adequate which leaves mighty results which issued from that Life wholly unaccounted for. The results are surprising, but they are still more surprising if a picture of the Life be drawn in which everything is explained, if the Portrait be made a figure too small and too weak to have accomplished anything.

A great deal of the interest in a "Life of Christ" comes from the view taken of His Personality and His "Mission." Even a view that consciously belittles Jesus may be stimulating and interesting, if propounded in a society that believes Him to be Divine. The interest of the essays of Reimarus at the end of the eighteenth century lay above all in the fact of the believing, pietistic Germany in the midst of which Reimarus had lived. Now the background is very different. The old authoritarian constructions have been shattered. No one is looking to the Past for authority, and there is a general tendency to assume what is generally called a "naturalistic" view of all religious manifestations. The task that lies before the writer of a "Life of Christ" is therefore so to set it forth that the Christian movement naturally issues from it. It seems to me that it is not inappropriate to begin by considering what a paradox this involves.

Let us approach the story from without, as strangers. Let us forget the ultimate result and our Christian allegiance. Let us discount any incredible features as the misapprehensions of half-educated enthusiasts, except so far as the occurrences they talk about have left an appreciable mark in contemporary history. We shall find a rather featureless tale. Jesus comes before the Jewish country-side announcing that a new state of things, which He called the Kingdom of God, was soon to be established. His home was in Galilee, where His mother and the rest of the family lived: He himself is about thirty years old. He gathers about Him a band of disciples who are looking forward to the new age, but in the course of a very few months the authorities, both civil and religious, especially the latter, become definitely hostile to Him. For some time Jesus seems to be in retirement, outside Galilee and Judaea, but in the following year He goes up with His

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friends to keep the Passover Feast at Jerusalem. There He makes some sort of disturbance in the Temple courts, but the forces of law and order have the matter well in hand. He is arrested a few days later without serious resistance, and Pilate, the Roman Governor, is persuaded by the Jewish authorities to have Him executed. Some of His disciples, it is true, continued to revere His memory and to expect the New Age still, for they were persuaded that they had seen Him alive again, after He had been taken down from the gibbet and buried. The public career of Jesus occupied only a few months, a little under two years.

The New Age did not visibly arrive, and the whole episode seemed to be closed, except for the persistence of the little band of believers in Jesus. It is their existence, not the impression made by Jesus Himself on public affairs, that induced Josephus to devote a cold and patronizing sentence to the man whom His followers called "Christ."

This is not an adequate sketch, but I am persuaded that from a certain distance we should see this much and that it would be all we should see. So far as it goes it is true, and the finished Portrait will have to conform itself to this unpromising outline. When we approach the subject nearer we shall still find much that is quite alien to present-day ideas, a way of looking at the world and human life as different from ours as Jewish Aramaic, the tongue spoken by Jesus and His disciples, is different from English. The few sentences in which the career of Jesus has just been summarized contain several of these things, which need explanation if that career is to be at all intelligible to us. Pilate, the Temple, and the Feasts connected with the Temple, and, above all, the Jewish mentality which expressed itself in the expectation of a New Age, need elucidation if the words and deeds of Jesus are to have any real meaning for us now.

To come to the study of the Gospel History with intelligence and enthusiasm but without any prejudice or undue bias is surely impossible. What is called an unprejudiced view is very often a cold view, and therefore essentially untrue to the life. But I venture to think that this study is not so "dangerous" and "unsettling" to the convinced Christian believer as is sometimes imagined, unless by "believer" is meant one who thinks he knows beforehand what must have happened. The historical Christian Church came to regard Jesus as the incarnate Son of God, a real Man, but nevertheless as much a real impersonation of the Divine essence as is consistent with real humanity. Let us for a moment imagine ourselves accepting this doctrine, while still ignorant of what happened in Judaea in the days of Pilate. Would anyone, even the most orthodox, be able to reconstruct the Gospel History? Would anyone be able to predict the career of a God-Man? Obviously the answer is "no"; from the very beginning the tale of what did take place was a *σκάνδαλον*, a stumbling-block, both to Jews and to Greeks, though it had a strange fascination and vitality. There were Christian heretics in the early days who were "offended" at the Cross and at human Birth: the tradition was incredible to them. At the present day there are still Christian conservatives who are similarly "offended" at the conclusions of critical study: the result is incredible to them. The two states of mind are very

similar, for they both start with an *a priori* idea of what the career of the God-Man ought to have been, *a priori* ideas of what the extent of His limitations ought to have been.

Somewhat similar is the case with what has sometimes been called the "liberal" view of Jesus, that is to say a mode of regarding the Gospel tradition which was especially in favour during the latter part of the nineteenth century, but in various ways has been operative in all sorts of times and places. The essence of the liberal view is to begin by regarding Jesus as the ideal Man, and to evaluate the traditions about Him according as they seem to accord or to disagree with our notion of an ideal Man. And "ideal" always tends to mean sympathetic to contemporary modes of thought. Men saw Jesus enveloped in the conventions of centuries of ecclesiastical dogmas, and it was thought that if He were freed of these coverings He would come forth as a manifest guide and inspiration for us moderns. But it was a very attenuated figure that emerged, for so much of the traditional material was found to belong not to our age and country but to the Judaea of the first century A.D., and this seemed to be inconsistent with "liberal" presuppositions. In proportion as the figure of Jesus retains life and vigour it is in relation to His own age and country. This is what we ought to have expected: He himself is reported to have said, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs," and the oldest repetition of this story tells us quite distinctly that He meant that He had not been sent to outside nations but to the Israelites. What right have we to expect much direct sustenance from words spoken under strange conditions nineteen hundred years ago? What right have we to expect that counsel and warning from so far-away a source will have much echo in our surroundings? It is not fair to ask for beauty from a seed: all we can ask is that it shall have the necessary vitality to germinate into the appropriate plant.

The view that is taken of the Gospel History [by me] is that it is intensely concerned with contemporary Judaism, with the Jewish preoccupations of the first half of the first century, that Jesus not only had become a real Man, but in particular a real Jew of that age, and that it is only in proportion as we realize the prejudices, the passions, the religion, the aspirations of the men of that age, Jews and Gentiles, that we can hope to catch the authentic tones of the voice of Jesus Himself. . . . .

It is unscientific to write a sketch, however short and one-sided, of the Life of Jesus and leave out the Resurrection. In a sense we know nothing of personages of past ages who have left no written or artistic memorials of their own: strictly speaking, we only know the impression they made on their biographers. In that sense the Resurrection of Jesus is a well-attested fact; the impression He made on Peter and those who shared Peter's experience was that he was alive again, that they saw Him alive and that nothing could make them doubt it. The surviving traditions of the appearances of Jesus are confused and contradictory: there can be little doubt that there is an element of unhistorical legend and even fancy in some of the tales, notably those which are located in Galilee. But they have one curious characteristic which they share with the experience of Saul on his way to

Damascus and in which they differ from other Gospel "miracles." The Gospel wonder-tales, we are told, produced astonishment, but the effect was transitory: the "Feeding of the Five Thousand" did not make the disciples less anxious when they were short of provisions in their boat. But neither Simon Peter nor Saul of Tarsus seem to have had any further doubts when once they had been persuaded that Jesus had appeared to them alive.

The immense vitality of early Christianity is one of its leading features. A more instructed theology, which grew up gradually among the more thoughtful believers, came to distinguish between the favour and help (χάρις) of the Lord Jesus and participation in the more intangible spirit (πνεῦμα) of God, of which they were conscious as members of the new Christian Society. But at first it was all one; Jesus was speaking to them still, He was still alive and was waiting at God's right hand till the day when He would come again and bring in the Reign of God. It might be thought that such enthusiastic notions would gradually lose their vigour and fade. The odd thing is that they did not fade, but persisted.

The one thing certain about the earliest Believers, the little group that rallied round Simon Peter, is that they were to be found at Jerusalem, and nowhere else. Galilee never became a Christian country.

Modern representations of Jesus Christ have tended to portray Him as above all a Teacher, a Wise Sage who saw by unerring instinct what was essential in human life and conduct. But His career was not that of a Sage. Typical teachers of mankind are Socrates and Plato, in modern times Kant and Darwin, in the East Confucius and Buddha. All these lived long, they trained up a generation to think along the lines of their new ideas, most of them took pains to organize in some way the propagation or preservation of their philosophy. The Founders of religions, again, or of particular modes of life, such as Saint Benedict, have drawn up Rules for their followers: if Moses be the legendary founder of the Israelite religion, then the Pentateuch is legitimately called the Law of Moses. Moses and Benedict both lived to a good old age, and they needed it for their work. How different was the career of Jesus, yet how marvellously influential, notwithstanding apparent failure! Therefore His special characteristic cannot have been that of the Sage, the Teacher, the Founder. It was something distinct from all these, something so well expressed by Renan at the end of his *St. Paul:* "The Son of God is unique. To appear for a moment, to flash forth a sympathetic but piercing radiance, to die very young, that is the life of a God. To struggle, to argue, to convince, that is the life of a Man. . . . Paul is now seeing the end of his reign; Jesus, on the contrary, is more alive than ever." This, it seems to me, is more than a piece of fine rhetoric; it expresses a great deal of historical truth. As I once ventured to say, it is not as a Philosopher but as Prometheus, that we worship Christ—the Man who came down from Heaven to give men the Divine Fire. Jesus Himself once described His mission as that of a man lighting a fire, and whatever course He may have taken in doing it, it is at least certain that His Fire has burned for nineteen centuries and that it is alight still. The way that the Fire was lit finds its justification in the history of the Fire.

THE GOSPEL FIGURE

Edwin Lewis

. . . . FOR A GENERATION OR more now, responsible leaders have bombarded the church with such assertions as that Christianity is "the religion of Jesus," that Jesus was "the first Christian," that we need to "return to the simple gospel," and that in sharing "the spirit of Jesus" is the solution of all human ills. Behind these claims lay the assumption, often enough passing over into the flat assertion, that the whole supernatural element of historical Christianity has become indefensible for "the modern man." That the naive naturalism of the modern man needs itself to be challenged and exposed for what it is seems never to have occurred to these reformers of Christianity. Perhaps we are yet to see that one of the permanent functions of historical Christianity is to save men from philosophical error and its practical results as well as from moral and spiritual error. Belief in the supernatural may be necessary not only to account for Christianity but also to account for the so-called "natural." But what we cannot ignore is the fact that at the present time such a claim is widely repudiated. We are told that we can believe only that much of Christianity that agrees with, or at least that *does not violate*, naturalistic presuppositions. So little by little we have had to see explicitly or implicitly renounced many of the features that were distinctive of Christianity *as a religion*. A whole generation has been subjected to a type of preaching and a type of teaching which was presumably Christian, and yet from which have been eliminated those very truths in which the church began and by which it has been nourished and perpetuated—and, I will add, by which alone it can long continue into the future. Nevertheless, in all the contacts of that same generation with Christianity as it is enshrined in great hymns and expressed in great symbolic acts and forms and in such festivals as those of Christmas and Easter and Ascension—in all such contacts a totally different conception of Christianity must have been apprehended, even if not clearly perceived. I have often wondered as to just what is going on in the mind of an intelligent worshiper who having shared in singing great hymns like "Crown him with many crowns" and "The church's one foundation," and in repeating the Apostle's Creed, and in listening to the minister read the Highpriestly Prayer in John 17 or the account of nature and grace in Ephesians 2 or the description of Christian salvation in First Peter 1, having shared, too, in offering up those prayers which have been the stay of men for centuries past, should then have to listen, in the mood engendered by such "preliminaries" (!), while that same minister goes on to talk about

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Jesus Christ much as he would talk about Abraham Lincoln. In such incongruities, often repeated, lies the cause of the confused thinking as to what Christianity means which to-day characterizes so many people. The whole institution of Christian worship presupposes a supernatural element at the very heart of our faith. It is in the name of Christ that we come; it is in him that we trust; it is on what he did that we rely; it is to his service that we offer ourselves afresh; it is his Living Presence that we seek to apprehend. Yet all this, which alone gives meaning to our act of worship in so far as it is Christian, is at the same time in ways both open and insidious receiving a virtual denial. This is not empty talk. It takes place in a thousand churches every Sabbath Day.

In saying this, I am not for a moment suggesting that we are to ignore all that has been done by critical scholarship working on the problem of the Gospels, their origin, their authorship, their date, their component parts, their differences. The people have a right to be enlightened, but they also have a right not to be misled. So far from ignoring the work of the scholar, we are to welcome it and seek to use it. That the result will be modification at this point and that goes without saying. The modern theory as to the process whereby our Gospels reached their present form cuts directly across the older theory of "divine dictation" which guaranteed complete freedom from anything of doubtful authenticity. We have to show that no loss is involved in the changed view, but, rather, clear gain, on the ground that the process which was followed was exactly the sort of process which anything that passed through human hands was likely to follow. If Mark gives us Jesus as seen through the eyes of Peter, and if Matthew gives us Jesus as he was understood from the point of view of Jewish-Christian ecclesiastics living in and around Jerusalem, and if Luke gives us Jesus looked at by one who was an educated Gentile, a cosmopolitan, and a pronounced humanitarian, it is the most natural thing in the world that there should be differences in the results. We cannot, as a matter of fact, be too grateful for the colorings which the Portrait took as it passed through these different minds. One is glad for the forthrightness and the aggressiveness and the virility that are seen in the Jesus of Mark, just such a Jesus as we can imagine a man like Peter loving to talk about. One is glad for the lineaments of the incomparable Teacher that meet us in the portrayal in Matthew—the Master-Mind expressing itself in unforgettable "sayings" and equally unforgettable parables and longer discourses. If one is reminded that Matthew (if it *were* Matthew!) has obviously arranged his material according to a definite and even mechanical scheme, making a "Sermon on the Mount" out of teachings that were spoken at many different times and under many different circumstances, and, further, that repeatedly statements in Mark that indicated how very human Jesus was are so changed by Matthew that the suggestion of weakness or ignorance or passion is removed, one can only reply that details such as these leave unchanged the *total impression.* Again, one is glad that Luke undertook a little original research on his own account, as he tells us in his introduction; and if the theory be correct that he probably made the research during the two years that Paul lay in prison in

Caesarea, as a profitable use of his time while he was waiting for Paul's release, then we have one of the most remarkable evidences in history of the belief that "he maketh even the wrath of man to praise him." We cannot, of course, dogmatically affirm that if Luke had not preserved those elements of the story of Jesus which are peculiar to the third Gospel, they would have been entirely lost; but we can at least say that Luke is the man who did preserve them, and that the apparent cause of their preservation was his interest in Paul and Paul's cause. Who tells the matchless birth-stories? Luke. Who tells of Jesus' announcement and exposition at Nazareth of that passage from Isaiah which was to be the keynote of the public ministry? Luke. Who tells the parable of the prodigal son? Luke. Who tells the parable of the good Samaritan? Luke. Who tells of the conversion of Zacchaeus and the banquet at his house? Luke. Who tells the story of the appearing of Christ to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus—the story which more than any other reveals the *meaning* of the resurrection and indicates the method whereby that meaning may be perpetuated in human experience? Luke. If the price of Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea was the preservation of such priceless treasures as these, then God be thanked who from so bitter a bud brought to light so sweet a flower! . . . .

Or, if the critic elects to take his stand on the fourth Gospel, and to point out to us that the vocabulary which Jesus is there represented as using is so utterly different from that which we meet in the Synoptics that it cannot be that the same man used both, we will reply that the fourth Gospel gives us the message of Jesus and his meaning in the form which it took in passing through a mind of peculiar delicacy and insight, and in so far as the fourth Gospel does that it justifies for all time the effort of men to relate the gospel to their cultural heritage and to cause it to speak a new language. Always provided, however, that it is the *real gospel* that it is the subject of the correlation and the translation. To emasculate the gospel is hardly to preserve it. According to the fourth Gospel, Jesus said repeatedly, "I am the light of the world." Did he say it in just that way? Perhaps he did not: we will make the concession for the sake of argument. But anyone who thereupon concludes, either sadly or triumphantly, that Jesus is *not* "the light of the world," stands charged with suffering from that very blindness which Jesus says he came into the world to cure. And, in any event, Jesus could not be proclaimed the Light of the World, or the Bread of Life, or the Door of the Sheep, or the Perfection of Sonship, just because he said so himself, but *because he was found to be all of that by other men in their own actual experience.* If he were not found to be that, the fact that he said it would avail nothing; and if he did not say it, but proved that that is what he was, no dispute about his words could destroy the evidence of the experience. "I am the Way." In order to make that statement true, do we have to prove the "historicity" of the fourth Gospel which contains it, or would it not still be true even although it were never written? "Thomas, reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." Do you balk at that on the ground that the incident is "scientifically incredible"? Of

course it is scientifically incredible if you assume that truth can be expressed in only one way, and that the same language cannot be used to convey more than one meaning. But why make such an assumption—an assumption which, if it were valid, would limit us to the use of *nothing* but algebraical symbols? The point of the story about Thomas and the risen Christ is the faith of the disciples that between him whom they had seen crucified and who now in mysterious and undeniable ways was making himself known to them there is an absolute identity. One kind of experience, that which was "after the flesh," had been replaced by another kind of experience, that which was "after the spirit," but the two kinds of experience had one and the same source, and were the evidence to one and the same reality. The crucified Jesus and the risen Christ are one and the same Person, with whatever changes in mode of self-expression the changed circumstances may call for. How easy it is to explain the Thomas experience away, everybody knows. Take two parts of psychology and three parts of rationalism, and mix with an equal amount of naturalistic philosophy, and you have the magic formula. Only, with a strange stubbornness, those who have shared the Thomas experience—and their number is legion—will refuse to believe that they can so readily be deprived of their treasure. Yea, in hell itself they would whisper, "I have known."

No one who has entered upon that experience of which the risen and living Christ is the center will be troubled by the intricacies of the "Synoptic problem." For he has found the key to the gospel story. You cannot make Jesus too human for him. The more you emphasize the fact that he was "like unto his brethren," the more you increase the credibility of the total Christian claim—since the total Christian claim includes the amazing truth that for us men and for our salvation divinity appeared in the garb of humanity and the *meaning* of humanity was taken up into divinity, there to be the everlasting sign of our redemption and the evidence of its cost. The life which resulted from this, or, better still, the life which *was* this, was a real human life. If the resurrection was a great reality, then no critical process which under the influence of naturalistic assumptions strips from the gospel Portrait all the supernatural features, and claims to do this in the interests of historical accuracy and the true humaness of Jesus—no such process can destroy the ultimate significance of the Figure that is portrayed. But, again, if the resurrection was a great reality, the probability that those same supernatural features had a basis in actual fact becomes greatly heightened. We fall back upon the old principle that "the miracles are congruous with the Person." It is my own belief, however, that the Christian position is itself so impregnable that we could afford to waive the historicity of every single gospel miracle without weakening the position in the least. To this, of course, it would be replied that the resurrection is itself a miracle of miracles, and that precisely in that fact lies the difficulty. That the resurrection moves in the realm of the supernatural is undeniable: nothing has been more fatal to the faith in our day than the attempt to prove it otherwise by reducing the resurrection experience to a pure "psychologism." The final evidence to the resurrection, however, is not documentary, as is neces-

sarily the case with the miracles of the public ministry, but institutional, and, I will dare to add, permanently experiential. That is to say, to-day as in the past, Christ may "appear" to men in the way, bearing evidences of his presence just as indubitable as those that overwhelmed the questioning Thomas or the persecuting Saul of Tarsus. I should not be willing to say that every Christian knows the reality of the living Christ. "There are diversities of gifts." But I am perfectly willing to say that it is that smaller number who *do* know the reality of the living Christ who provide the dynamic of the church and who create the atmosphere in which the very much larger number of "formal" or "credal" Christians are able to keep alive. "God has a few whom he whispers in the ear"—and they *know*. Their trust is not simply in what others have said, but in what they themselves have felt and seen and understood. But for the resurrection experience in the first place there would have been no Christian faith, no Christian Church; but you cannot say that there would have been no Christian faith and no Christian Church if there had not been the feeding of the five thousand or the healing of blind Bartimaeus. The two cases are utterly different. Indeed, it is by no means impossible that it was the very fact of the resurrection itself and all it led to that heightened some of the traditions about Jesus and gave a miraculous character to deeds that in actual fact were not so. I know that some will regard that as a dangerous concession to make, but we must be utterly honest with our documents, and we must be willing to recognize what may happen to oral tradition before it is reduced to writing. Moreover, we must come to see that more important than the detailed account of any single miracle and its possible historicity is the fact that something lay behind the total body of miracle stories, some profound conviction created in the minds of men, and when the critic has pointed out the alleged difficulties in the *form* in which that conviction is expressed he still leaves untouched the fact of the conviction itself. In order to get rid of *miracle* you have to do very much more than find difficulties in the accounts of the *miracles*. The question is not whether Jesus actually did all he is said to have done, or whether in every saying and every parable we have his *ipsissima verba*: the question, rather, is whether there was a Figure so great as to account for the wonderful words and deeds attributed to him. If we deny the Figure, we are utterly unable to account for the gospel story as it stands. If we accept the Figure, then we have a perfectly free hand in the critical appraisal of the story itself. The moment we grasp the fact that the resurrection means continuity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, that moment we are delivered from bondage to documentary literalism. . . . .

For let it be said again that we have these Gospels only because certain men came to a great faith. To whom do we owe the story of the life of Jesus? Do we owe it to "secular" historians? Do we owe it to those who looked on in complete detachment and objectivity at what was said and done? But for the resurrection faith, the words and deeds of Jesus would have passed out of human knowledge. There are less than a dozen references to Jesus in first-century literature outside of Christian circles, and

every one of those references is under critical suspicion. If any single historical fact is beyond all doubt, it is that the church produced the Gospels and not the Gospels the church. That there is a good deal of obscurity about the early years of the church is not to be doubted. Few scholars today, however, deny that the Acts of the Apostles is good history: to an unusual degree, Luke has the respect of students of historical science. And the testimony of Acts and the testimony of the Epistles agree on the main issue —that the church was born of faith in a risen Christ. The more we understand the attitude of the original disciples as reflected in the Gospels, their personal ambitions, their conception of the nature of the kingdom of God, their hopes concerning Him around whom they had gathered, the persistence of those hopes to the very end, as evidenced by the story of the request of James and John for places of power in the coming Kingdom and by the anger of the Ten at the request as an attempt to "steal a march," as evidenced also in the mad enthusiasm with which those disciples tried to turn a simple circumstance into a Triumphal Entry, and as evidenced finally in the wholesale scattering at the arrest, and in the absence, hardly less complete, at the trial and crucifixion—the more we understand this the more we are made to feel that nothing short of a fact of overwhelming significance can account for the change that shortly afterward took place in them. The unimpeachable proof of that change is the fact of the New Testament faith and the church it originated. . . . . You to whom the resurrection is but an empty tale, and who lightly brush aside everything in the New Testament that does not agree with your own presuppositions, and who quite naïvely suppose that you would still have known all about the simple Jesus even if there had been no church, remember this —that had there been no risen Christ there had been no written Gospels. The Christian faith is founded not on a discourse but on a miracle. It may very well be that you do not like miracle. It is your privilege to say what you will believe, but it is not your privilege to destroy Christianity. For what is left when the great miracle is denied is not Christianity at all: it is an emasculated thing, utterly unable to account for its own origin and its own persistence. You are offered bread, but you choose a stone. You are offered a fountain of living waters but you choose a broken cistern. You are offered a truth whose acknowledgment throws a beam of clear light on the dark mystery of existence but you turn away from it as a sick man's dream.

The more you marvel at the words and deeds of Jesus, the more grateful you must become for that resurrection faith because of which they were preserved. The more you appreciate the results of that faith, the more you see that if reason is not to be overthrown it must be more than faith: it must be fact as well. *Christianity means supernaturalism*: this is the inescapable logic alike of the history and of the experience.

JESUS IS LORD

Georgia Harkness

1. Jesus and His Contemporaries

It is not easy to put ourselves back into the framework of first-century thought to see how Jesus looked to those who, believing in him, found life through his name and who, banding themselves together in little worshiping fellowships, founded the Church. Yet it is not impossible to do so, and barring the fact that miracle was a concept far more congenial to that day than to ours, the impression which Jesus made upon his contemporaries and their immediate successors was not radically different from what happens in our day when men are confronted with Christ. We may emphasize as much as we like the differences between the simple peasant society of the first century and our own highly complex industrial civilization, and the central facts remain unchanged. Jesus spoke mainly to the needs of individuals—fearful, lonely, bewildered, possessed of the demons of psychic disorder, illness and sin: so does he now. Jesus gave no blueprint for social action, but announced principles of sonship to God and brotherhood to all which placed in men's minds a new estimate of the worth of persons: so does he now. Imperialism and economic greed were as rampant in his day as ours; he set in opposition to them a new way of life and demonstrated it in his own person. Formalism in religion, then as now, was a pervasive poison: he countered it with stinging words, and refuted it best by the manner of man he was. There is a great peril in "modernizing Jesus," but there is a greater peril in failing to see in him a universal figure with a universal message.

How did Jesus look to the people of his own times? First, how did he look to his enemies?

Those who opposed Jesus were the socially elite, who thought him too "common" in his mingling with publicans and wine-bibbers; his family, who thought him crazy because he was different; the Pharisees—religious legalists—who felt the sting of his condemnation of their meticulous observance of the externals of religion; the Sadducees—priests and political aristocrats with vested interests—who felt their security imperiled by the new way; the Roman rulers, who were blind to much but who grasped the fact that here was a new king destined to imperil the supremacy of Caesar. More through intuition than through logic or testimony or factual demonstration, these groups discerned that in Jesus' view of things was something different

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from those values about which they had built their lives, and they hustled him to his death as a radical and an innovator.

The point need not be labored that it is exactly in these areas that we still find the most insidious and powerful opposition to all that Jesus stood for in his day, and to all that he means to the sensitive Christian in ours. Cultural gentility that substitutes "niceness" for understanding; family loyalty that puts human ties above the exacting demands of the Christian conscience; religious veneer, content to baptize, marry and bury by Christian custom and in some instances even to tithe mint and anise and cummin, while the weightier matters of the law go unobserved; ecclesiasticism that misses the mark; economic acquisitiveness; racial and national pride—these were and are, the forces that fail to recognize Jesus as Lord. . . . .

2. A Good Jew

To many he must have seemed like a good Jew—a more than ordinarily good Jew. We do not have much of this judgment recorded in the Gospels; for those who wrote and preserved the stories and sayings from which the Gospels were compiled were so much impressed with the differences between Jesus and the other Jews of his time that contrasts stand out on every page. . . . .

With his neighbors Jesus shared the hope of a Messiah who should come to redeem Israel. Though his mind did not run in the usual grooves of political authority and kingship, he seems in no small measure to have looked as did others of his time, to a great day when the Son of man should be seen coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory to claim his chosen ones. There would be a Great Last Judgment and then God would establish by divine decree the new heaven and the new earth envisioned of old by the Jewish seers.

It was among Jewish neighbors that Jesus grew up to have a great sense of oneness with his people—that binding sense of togetherness that we now call "community." It would have been less disturbing to him that the law of Moses had been dessicated by the formalism of the Pharisees and desecrated by their hypocrisy, had it not been *his law*—the law of his own people. He loved both the people and the law, and he could not bear to see them by obsession with its letter miss the richness of its spiritual meaning. Even in full maturity, when he had thought much of his mission and had dedicated himself to the service of a God who was the Father of all, he still yearned with a special compassion over the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In the presence of human need—a Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter or a Roman centurion's son that needed to be healed—he could break through the bonds of the Jewish community to be the servant of all. Yet to the end of his days he was a good Jew. He never tried to dissociate himself from his race; and it is an ironic, yet a natural outcome of his life that he who was to be enthroned as King of all men should die with a mocking placard over his head, "This is the king of the Jews."

I do not care to moralize upon Jesus' Jewishness. But two or three things we must see in it, else we shall go astray when we try to see him as more

than a good Jew. Insofar as he was a human figure—and he must have been fully human, else he could not be the Word made flesh—he stands in direct historical continuity with his past. When God chose to manifest himself in human flesh, he did not go outside of the stream of history to do it. Jesus is the revelation of God in history—not as a mutation or sport, an aberration or an incident in discontinuity from environing circumstance—but as the child of his past and the child of his times.

This I believe to be in keeping with all divine revelation. God cannot be reduced to a natural phenomenon or to a social process; yet God never speaks save through nature and through society. The more-than-natural is to be discerned in the natural, not outside of it; the more-than-human in the human, not in some isolated realm. All the problems of the relation of the natural to the supernatural, of the historical to the trans-historical, of the immanence to the transcendence of God, are foreshadowed, and the answer to these problems given in its most convincing form, in the fact that the Son of God was the son of man, and good Jew.

Certain ethical implications are also to be drawn. The most obvious is, of course, the utter inconsistency of anti-Jewish prejudice among those who call themselves Christians. But the issue goes deeper. Jesus both did, and did not, transcend his culture. He came not to destroy but to fulfill the law, and to fulfill it—not as the Roman he could not be—but as the Jew he was. Yet in fulfilling it he became the gospel—the good news—to all men, and he is so much more the bearer of good news to all than he is the fulfiller of the Jewish law that the latter sinks into relative insignificance. Because he could transcend his culture and social expentancy to live like God and win men to a realization of their place in the family of God, we see in him, not merely a good Jew, but the incarnation of universal goodness. . . . .

3. The Teacher of a New Way

. . . . This brings us to that which lies closest to the surface, yet goes deepest into the heart of the issue. Jesus took the concepts of his past, and by a new emphasis, a fresh scale of values, a sure sense of what was important, he remade them. This is indispensable to our judgment of what there was about him that was different. But his uniqueness lies not alone in the fact that he saw things differently. To see things differently is to be a different kind of person. *One is what one loves and lives for.* Jesus loved persons and he loved God—he lived for persons and he lived for God, in a manner unique among all the figures of history. It is not strange that when men looked upon him they beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son of the Father, and in such grace and truth saw God himself.

I do not propose to try to set forth any abstract doctrine of the divinity of Christ. I do not believe it can be adequately expressed in abstract terms, though the theologians of the ages have wrestled with it. Yet conceived in terms of personal acquaintance with a divine-human person, it loses—if not its mystery—at least its confusing character. Such acquaintance centers in the recognition that in Jesus, as in no one else, message and personality meet.

Jesus' moral attitudes were one with his religion. He could say: "Why

callest thou me good? none is good save one, *even* God" (Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19), because to him the source of all goodness was in God. He believed this and lived by it as naturally as he breathed. Because it was a part of his very being, we find in him the one sinless life, manifesting to men the perfection of God. When he said to his followers, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48), this saying was not to him what it has too often become to us—a statement of a perfectionist ethics about which to argue. Rather, it was an affirmation of the source from which he drew his life, and therefore an injunction to others to try to follow in this way.

In all the rest of us there is a great gulf between aspiration and achievement. Not so with Jesus. He practiced what he preached. Everything about him was of one piece—the set of values by which one ought to live, the life of simplicity and love in which he manifested them and so lifted every soul he touched, the consummation of that life in suffering love upon a cross. He gave himself in all he did so beautifully, so tragically, so compellingly that one cannot be truly confronted by that life and remain unmoved. We may be too dull to have eyes to see. But when the day comes that the film is drawn away, and we are in the presence of that lonely figure on a cross,

4. Christ the Saviour

After every Good Friday comes an Easter morning. After the first Easter there was lighted in the disciples of Jesus a burning conviction which, if they had held it at all before his death, was as but a feeble gleam to the flaming beacon it was to become. This was the conviction that Jesus was not only the Son of God, living like God and pointing men toward God, but that Jesus was himself the Christ, the Saviour of men.

So inseperable to us are the terms "Jesus" and "Christ" that we tend to use them interchangeably, and a large proportion of the world's Christians get along without knowing that there is any difference. There was a time when Jesus was known only by the name his parents gave him. In the play, *The Family Portrait*,[1] Jesus' little nephew calls him "Uncle Jesus"—a term which is both startling in its novelty and charming in its freshness. Then then we must say, as did a Roman centurion on the first Good Friday, "Truly this was the Son of God."

there came a time when Jesus was called Christ, or Jesus Christ, but was not often designated by the Jewish name he had borne as a boy and man of Nazareth. All over the catacombs one sees the early Christian symbol, the fish. The word "fish" in Greek is *ichthus*, a cabalistic word formed by taking the first letters of the five Greek words for "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour." It is this transition from Jesus of Nazareth to Christ the Saviour that we must now examine.

One must move with reticence in any attempt to interpret what happened on the resurrection morning. There is nothing in the New Testament of which we are more sure *that* it happened and less sure *how* it happened. A

[1]By Lenore Coffee and William Joyce Cowen.

discouraged and disconcerted little band of fishermen, who had fled to save their skins and had failed Jesus when he needed them most, felt after the crucifixion that it was all over. *He had failed them.* They had followed one whom they thought should redeem Israel, and now he was dead on a felon's cross and buried in the borrowed grave of a rich aristocrat.

Then everything was changed. The women who had loved Jesus knew that love was stronger than death, and that he who had saved them from a living death could not himself be bound by death. They told Peter, and Peter knew it too. Lighted by this certainty, he who had denied his Lord in moral vacillation now set his face like a rock to the task of rallying the eleven, to filling the place left by the betrayer, to founding a church.

Much of what is recorded as the resurrection story is poetry and high mythology—not mere legend, but sacred legend with a meaning, like the song of the angels on the first Christmas Eve. To literalize it is to flatten it out and to raise unanswerable questions. To catch its spiritual meaning is to enter into that living experience of an abiding Christ in which the early Church was born. It was a miracle, and a miracle without which all future history would have been different. May I try to say in verse how I feel about it?

I know not how the miracle was wrought.
The story says the stone was rolled away;
That angels sat within as Mary sought
Her risen Lord; that linen grave cloths lay;
That Jesus stood there speaking words of cheer;
And walked with two along the Emmaus road;
That when eleven were gathered, sick with fear,
They felt his presence, saw the wounds he showed.

"How can it be?" I hear men say in doubt,
Like Thomas, who must see the nails' imprint.
I know not how these things could come about,
To read the mystery I have no hint:
But I have seen the Lord on Easter Day,
My heart has burned within me in the way.[2]

Made strong by the certainty that Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God, was triumphant over death, the little band grew from twelve to ten times that size, and then after a great sermon preached on Pentecost three thousand souls were added in one day. Peter's text was the resurrection, and in it was "the power of the resurrection." Probably it would startle us if ever our preaching bore such fruits! What it did for the early Christians was to drive them closer together into a communal fellowship, touching even their purse strings and empowering them to share not only their prayers and praises but their bread.

I need not rehearse the story of how the church grew, gaining in numbers and strength; of how Paul was laid hold upon by Christ to become its pastor-at-large, evangelist, missionary, statesman, and theologian; of how in

[2] "The Miracle," from my *Holy Flame*, p. 35. Bruce Humphries, Inc., Boston, 1935.

the spread of the gospel those who were "ambassadors for Christ" were jailed, stoned, cast out of cities to which they forthwith came back, shipwrecked, scourged, driven into the catacombs, thrown to the lions. It is a thrilling story that never wears out. Through it all runs a steadfast conviction to which Paul has given classic utterance, "We preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:23).

This conviction permeates the first Christian literature, Paul's letters, and it is natural enough that such a living conviction should have found its way into the oral tradition and written fragments which finally were to converge to form the Gospels. Thus it follows that what Jesus thought about his own messiahship and to what extent he anticipated what was to occur after his death are almost unanswerable questions. What is of supreme importance is that, whether or not Jesus thought of himself as Christ the Saviour, he was and is. There are not two persons, Jesus and Christ. There is direct historical continuity between Jesus of Nazareth and the Christ of faith, and in Jesus Chirst—not Jesus only, not Christ only—is the Word made flesh.

This leads me to say, finally, that apart from the incarnation we cannot fruitfully consider the atonement, the forgiveness of sins, regeneration through the grace of God in Christ, justification by faith, or any of the other great concepts of Paul's theology. Accept the fact that God became flesh in a good Jew who was more than a Jew, in a teacher of a new way who was more than a teacher, in a God-man who died in love and rose in triumph, in an abiding Christ who is still our Divine Companion, and these terms take on meaning. Start from the terms themselves, and they are barren abstractions. God saves us in divine mercy when we do not merit salvation, God forgives our sins, God empowers us to newness of life and to service in his Kingdom—and we *know* that God does this because we know Jesus as Lord.

Jesus Christ is God's gift to man for our salvation. But he is God's gift because he followed God's way. The gospel is always a two-sided enterprise. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto us our trespasses. The correlate of this great fact is that unto us he has committed the word of reconcilation.

Faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour means faith in man and faith in God. As he is the supreme gift of God for our redemption, so is he the supreme challenge to us to become co-workers with God in the redemptive process.

DID JESUS REGARD HIMSELF AS THE MESSIAH?

B. Harvie Branscomb

THE MAIN FACTS as they appear in the Gospel account can be stated quite simply, though the solution of the problem is beset with the greatest difficulties.

The facts are as follows: Mark makes it clear that Jesus made no public claim to Messiahship, enjoining silence on demoniacs and on the disciples when they conferred the title upon Him. At the final trial no witnesses that He made this claim could be produced. It is, however, recorded that Peter, and presumably the other disciples, privately acknowledged Him as the Messiah. Mark does not record an explicit acceptance of the title by Jesus, but states that, having charged them "to tell no one," He proceeded to speak of His approaching Passion, referring to Himself as "the Son of Man." From this point on, this phrase appears repeatedly in Jesus' mouth, particularly in sayings concerning His death, resurrection, and future glory. There is no clear assertion of Messiahship, although the account of the request of the sons of Zebedee seems to imply it, until one reaches the account of the trials. Here, in answer to a question of the high priest, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus is said to have answered, "I am. And ye shall see the Son of Man seated on the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven." To Pilate's question, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Mark records an ambiguous answer—"Thou sayest it." A placard placed over the cross carried the wording, "The King of the Jews." These are the major facts in the case.

Thus there is only one instance in which Jesus is said to have declared unequivocally that He was the Christ—in His reply to the high priest. But it so happens that this scene in Mark, the story of the Jewish trial, is the one element in the final events most open to question. As an exact historical record it is of very doubtful dependableness. The grounds for this statement will be presented in the commentary, but even Professor Burkitt, who championed so persuasively the historicity of Mark, admitted that "the grounds against treating Mark xiv. 53-65 with the same measure of historical respect that one accords to the rest of Mark xiv. are sound." One is faced, therefore, with a baffling set of facts: in spite of the conviction of the early Church that Jesus was the expected Messiah, the Synoptic Gospels record only one dubious instance in which Jesus affirmed this, but do record numerous instances in which He spoke of Himself as the "Son of Man." One turns first, therefore, to a consideration of this term.

From *The Gospel of Mark,* New York, pp. 145-52. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Harper & Brothers.

The Son of Man

This phrase, originally a Semitic idiom meaning simply "man"—as in the familiar passage, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"—came to be, through its use in Daniel and Enoch in connection with the heavenly being of the visions, a title for a heavenly individual who would come on the clouds at the last day to preside over the Great Judgment and the New Age. In the Gospels a few instances of the meaning "man" seem to have been mistaken for the title, the clearest being perhaps ii. 28. These can be set aside. A number of others have no unifying thought, the title merely taking the place of the first personal pronoun in certain sayings of Jesus. This group is clearly secondary. Jesus did not use the title as an habitual designation of Himself. The greater number of the uses of the phrase are in contexts which refer to Jesus' approaching sufferings and death and His return to glory. It is with this group that we need to concern ourselves. The reader is referred to the lucid discussion of this phrase in Jackson and Lake's *Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. I, pp. 374 f., for the details of these several uses.

As soon as one raises the question whether Jesus applied to Himself this exalted title of apocalyptic literature, one incontrovertible fact emerges: the bridge by which the person of Jesus, the prophet and teacher, could be connected with that of a heavenly "Son of Man" at the right hand of God, must have been a conviction of Jesus' death and resurrection. Only by death and resurrection could Jesus enter into that heavenly region whence He would come on the clouds at the end of the age. This knowledge, it is often assumed, Jesus possessed by anticipation and by faith. He believed God would raise Him up after death, and so expected to become the Son of Man. The alternate view would be to assume that it was the early Church after the resurrection which identified Jesus with the heavenly Son of Man. According to Acts ii. 33 the Church thought of Jesus as "raised to God's right hand," and "to be kept in heaven until the restoration of all things" (Acts iii. 21).

In attempting to decide between these alternatives the balance of probability is strongly in favour of the view that it was the early Church which applied this title to Jesus:

(1) The only use of the title which is found in both of the earliest sources, Mark and the "Q" sayings of Matthew and Luke, is in sayings referring to the return of Christ in glory. Mark uses it repeatedly in connection with the Passion, but this use is never found in the "Q" sayings. Where these two documents agree, there will be found, surely, the earliest and most dependable tradition. This earliest use of the title thus referred not to the Passion, but to the glorified Christ. This would seem to indicate clearly that its use originated with the early Church. To the early Church the resurrection was the starting-point of a new theology. It overshadowed and wiped out the crucifixion. The Church's interest was Christ's return for judgment, which was now possible. To Jesus, on the other hand, the later events would have had meaning and significance only in connection with the

approaching ordeal. That the title seems to have been unrelated in the earliest tradition to the Passion argues against Jesus having applied the title to Himself.

(2) In the second place, for Jesus to have thought of Himself as the apocalyptic Son of Man it would have been necessary not only to have foreseen His death and to have believed that God would raise Him to have a part in the Age to Come, but also to have believed in a special resurrection for Himself immediately after death, or at least before the time of that great event. The normal expectation of a devout Jew who accepted the Pharisaic belief in the resurrection was that after death the body was placed in the tomb and the spirit went to the place appointed for the spirits until the last day. Then body and soul would be reunited and raised up together. The Son of Man, however, was supposed to wait in heaven until He came to inaugurate the new day. The thought of such a special individual resurrection was not impossible in the first century, as can be easily shown. But it does burden the hypothesis that Jesus thought of Himself as the heavenly Son of Man more than its proponents often recognize. Indeed this view comes very near requiring the older conception of Jesus' complete foreknowledge of the events that were to follow.

(3) For Jesus to have regarded Himself as the apocalyptic Son of Man requires that He must have accepted the certainty of His approaching death long enough in advance to have completely reorganized in His mind contemporary apocalyptic thought. The Son of Man was a heavenly personage already existing who had been "chosen and hidden before God before the creation of the world." To have brought the work of a Galilean prophet and servant of God into relationship with this figure involved a radical rethinking of the entire apocalyptic scheme. This would have been the work of months of meditation on the mystery of His fate. But the evidence of the Gospels, in spite of much reading back of later events into the earlier period, does not suggest such an early recognition of what the final result would be. The prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, if historical even in its general tenor, indicates a sudden realization that He must actually "drink the cup." We know very little about Jesus' final efforts in Jerusalem, but the impression left by the record is that He endeavoured up to the last to win the nation to genuine repentance, hoping for success. Nor do the words at the Last Supper give any indication of so vital a reconstruction of current apocalyptic hopes. Aside from the sacramental features, the thought expressed is that He and His disciples will be gathered together again at the great banquet in the Kingdom of God.

The point is often made in reply that the title is used so rarely in the New Testament as to indicate that the Church would not have originated it. The reply overlooks the fact that the New Testament is a collection of Greek documents. The title belongs to the earliest stage of the Church when it spoke Aramaic. We have only traces of this Aramaic Christian literature—namely, the early chapters of Acts and some of the traditions incorporated in the Gospels. In both of these the title is present. It meant nothing to Greek Christianity, which quickly dropped the term.

I conclude, therefore, that the series of ideas which viewed Jesus as the Son of Man to come in glory on the clouds of heaven, with the holy angels, was the theological achievement of the Palestinian Church. The sanction for these beliefs was naturally found in Jesus' teachings, and the title inevitably became part of the oral tradition, and later the written tradition of His words. But it never appears in the Gospels in the mouths of the disciples, probably for the following reason: It was known that this view of Jesus was not entertained by the disciples during Jesus' lifetime. In the tradition this fact took the form of the oft-repeated thought that the disciples did not understand until later what Jesus was endeavouring to teach them.

The Messiah

The above conclusion has seemed to many scholars to mean that Jesus made no claim to special or unique dignity, and that the title, "the Messiah," or the "Anointed One," is also to be attributed to the early Church. Jesus, it is maintained, only thought of Himself as a prophet. After the belief in the resurrection was established, His followers acclaimed Him as the Messiah or Christ, and this was read back into the earlier history. In this way the "Messianic secret" of Mark is explained: there was nothing of this Messiahship in the familiar story of tradition; hence it was assumed that Jesus had imposed on the disciples a decree of silence.

This reconstruction of the facts is attractive from a number of standpoints, but it has certain difficulties to face which are almost insuperable:

(1) In the first place it seems certain that Jesus' intimate disciples during His lifetime regarded Him as the Messiah. The story of Caesarea Philippi seems to go back to a definite historical recollection in which the place and chief spokesman are recalled. It is confirmed by the request of the sons of Zebedee for the places on Jesus' right and left hand in His glory—a story which would hardly have been invented. The strongest evidence of this belief, however, is the virtual impossibility of assuming that the belief in Jesus' resurrection, His Messiahship and His apocalyptic office would have arisen after His execution had there been no such belief earlier. But this evidence of the disciples' belief during Jesus' lifetime indicates that Jesus Himself held some such conviction. Had Jesus held no such thoughts concerning Himself, He certainly would have eliminated these false ideas and expectations.

(2) Jesus was executed by the Romans. At the public trial Pilate asked Him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" and received an answer that was not a denial. Over the cross was placed a placard which read, "The King of the Jews." Had Jesus never regarded Himself as the Lord's "Messiah" or "Anointed One," it seems unbelievable that He would have allowed Himself to be executed without protest on such false grounds.

(3) Supplementing the above, though without significance alone, are those sayings which show that Jesus attached to His hour, His teaching, and His person a special and unique significance. Here the data are all so coloured by later Christian beliefs that it is practically impossible to make a distinction between the sayings which are probably later and those which seem to be genuine. But all of these cannot be eliminated. He believed that

the end of the age was at hand. In His own exorcisms and cures He saw the evidences of Satan's power being broken. The cities of Galilee He upbraided because they had not repented at works greater than any which had been done in Sodom and Gomorrah. Many prophets and kings had desired to see the things which were transpiring in His day. He called for men to follow Him, and obey His teachings of the divine will. According to one saying, He declared that one's status in the Day of Judgment would be determined by the attitude they adopted toward His words. Other sayings promise rewards to those who suffered on His account. How much of all this picture is genuine it is very difficult to say, but there is certainly enough to make one hesitate at describing Jesus' conception of His mission in ordinary terms.

Thus we have a mystery of history. There is no dependable record that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, but His intimate disciples believed it to be true, and His enemies put Him to death after a public trial in which He was charged with this belief. It is possible that Jesus kept silent at every suggestion of Messianic dignity, but not that He consistently denied it. And if He kept silent, His refusal to answer has significance.

There is an old answer to the problem which has more recently been put in a new light. In an essay in Jackson and Lake's *Beginnings of Christianity*, G. F. Moore has shown with great care that the term "Messiah," or "Anointed One," was applied to various individuals and groups in the sense of "appointed" or "consecrated" by God to a unique task or mission. It had been applied to the patriarchs, to the people of Israel as a whole, to the prophets, to the kings of Israel, even to Cyrus the conqueror of Babylon. It had also been applied to the apocalyptic heavenly man in the visions of Enoch. In Jesus' day it was applied especially to the hoped-for warrior-king who would deliver the nation. Basically the term meant "one appointed by God," though in Jesus' day the reference to the one who would bring about the great deliverance of the nation was closely associated with the phrase.

In view of these facts it seems reasonable in itself, and in accordance with the evidence, to assume that Jesus, believing Himself divinely commissioned to proclaim the nearness of the Realm of God and also its true character, opposed in this work by virtually all the accepted leaders of the day, threatened with death, yet striving to create a repentant and righteous nation ready for the imminent judgment, should have felt that He was "the anointed one" whom God had sent for this task. The people expected a warrior-king. Jesus rejected such concepts. "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over you and their great ones exercise authority. Let it not be so with you. He who would be greatest, let him be the servant of all." The evidence asserts that Jesus accepted from His disciples the title, "the Lord's Anointed," while at the same time endeavouring to teach them that His work was not one of conquest but one of service and perhaps even of death in supreme obedience to the will of God. This seems entirely reasonable. And may not His refusal of an answer to the pagan Pilate have been for the reason that, though unwilling to deny His great vocation, He knew that the procurator

would misunderstand His claim, and regard His admission as a legitimate reason for His immediate execution?

This seems on the whole the most satisfactory solution. The records have been so overlaid with the later beliefs that proof and absolute certainty are out of the question. But without the assumption that Jesus accepted His disciples' expression of faith in Himself as "the Anointed One," the story of His last days and of the rise of the Christian movement becomes a series of unrelated and almost incomprehensible facts.

THE LIBERATOR

Dmitri Merejkowski

"MECHANISM IS PRESENT in everything in the world, but it is only secondary," says Lotze with the exactness of genius. "Creative evolution" (Bergson), the movement of the world, life, is not explained by the law of causation in mechanics, nor by the law of identity in logic. To the arithmetical sum total of the items in the cause (the acting physical forces), in the result is added an unknown quantity, x, that which we call "miracle" or "freedom." If it is $a+b+c$ in cause, in mechanics, then in the result, in life, it is $a+b+c+x$.

Once a living body consists of dead matter, it will always remain dead matter; "Came from dust, unto dust shall return," such is the law of mechanical causation, of logical identity—death. . . . .

Mankind is divided into two parts, and one must be with either the one or with the other, either with those who believe in the Tarantula, or with those who believe that Christ rose from the dead. One must choose one of the two experiences, either the external, sensual one, where, according to the law of identity—mechanics—the sum of acting physical forces, the arithmetical total of the items $a+b+c$ is immutable, or the inward religious experience, where to the sum is also added the unknown quantity, x="miracle."

"I have come not to destroy the law but to *complete* it" means "I have come to add to the Father's law, the Freedom of the Son, to restore the mutilated, to complete in the damaged law of causality, in the law of identity —death, the law of the Father—life."

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life (John iii, 36).

I am the resurrection and the life . . . he that believeth in me shall never die. (John xi, 25, 26).

One must either believe in Him Who said this, or else in the Tarantula.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me . . . He hath sent me . . . to preach *deliverance* to the captives . . . to set at *liberty* them that are bruised" (Luke iv, 18), by this the Lord begins the Blessed Message, and by it He ends it: "If the Son therefore shall make you *free*, ye shall be *free* indeed" (John viii, 36).

How difficult and unknown to man is the religious experience of freedom instead of the law, can be seen from this, that even in the prophecy of Isaiah, the nearest to Jesus' point of revelation, or as we should say "religious experience," the only name for the King Messiah comprehensible to people is "Slave," *ebed Jahwe*, "the slave of the Lord" (Is. liii).

From *Jesus Manifest*, New York, 1935, pp. 116-22, 131-32, 134, 137-40, 147-50. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

And for us, while the names of Jesus—"Christ," "King," are known, that of "Liberator" is still hidden.

There are people even now who live without Christ, as the Jews lived, under the yoke of the law. All our laws of state are but the reflexions of the laws of nature, distorting in death as in a devil's mirror the law of the Father—life. In these, as in the others, the compelling force is the fear of death. In order to free man from it it is necessary to break the yoke of the law. This is the reason of the struggle of Jesus, not only with the Jews, but with all the slaves of the law, with all mankind.

The slavery of all slavery, the hardest iron of all chains, is death. The pretended liberators of all mankind, extreme revolutionaries and rebels, remain slaves of death. It does not occur to any of them that man could be freed from death, and that without this freedom all the others are worthless. Only one man in all mankind, Jesus, rose up against death. Just as simply, naturally and reasonably as each one of us says, "I shall die," He said, "I shall rise up from the dead." He was conscious of possessing within Himself the power necessary to conquer death, and to conquer it not only in Himself, but in all mankind, in all people. And people believed in this, and some, though only few, will probably continue to believe till the end of time. This faith cannot be understood without also adding here, in history as there, in nature, to the arithmetical total of historically acting forces, $a+b+c$, also the unknown quantity, the dazzling x, the miracle.

And the meaning of all this is, that we shall never know by what Jesus lived and for what He died, if we do not understand the meaning of "miracle" to Him. . . . .

That Jesus performed miracles we know with as much certainty as is possible in history. But what He thought and felt when He performed them, we hardly know at all. Not perhaps because it is impossible to get to know from the Gospel testimonies, but because we do not as yet read them as they should be read. One matter, however, is perfectly clear, namely, that Jesus knew the "law of causation" not a whit less than we. How should He not have known it considering that His whole life long He only thought of how the law of the Father—"the law of causation" according to us—should be fulfilled in the freedom of the Son—in "miracles," as we say?

Apparently, in the three words signifying miracle in the Gospels—"Power," *dynamis*, sign, *sēmeion*, and "miracle" proper, *teras*, is to be seen what Jesus Himself thought and felt when He performed them. Having once for all rejected the external miracle offered by the devil on the Mount of Temptation, He manifested only "signs" and "powers."

Which comes from which—faith from miracles or miracles from faith? Must one see a miracle in order to believe, or must one believe in order to see? All the life and death of Jesus is an answer to this question.

"Blessed are they that have not seen and yet believe" (John xx, 29): in this is continued the whole Blessed Message of the fulfilment of the law of the Father in the freedom of the Son—in miracle.

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. *And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me* (Matt. xi, 5, 6).

This means that blessed is he who is not offended by external miracles, τέρατα (i.e. *terata*), who does not have to see in order to believe; such is the answer of Jesus to the question of John the Baptist: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. xi, 3).

Whether it is He, or not He, cannot be proved by any miracle.

For Jesus Himself there is an unbreakable bond between faith and miracle, but a contrary one to the one where faith comes from miracle.

If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you (Matt. xvii, 20).

He has proved it in Himself as no one else. That "faith moves mountains" is confirmed by the personal experience of every person and of all mankind; so much so, that it has become a commonplace to the unbelieving.

A miracle is for Jesus the inter-action of two measures, two forces—the one coming from Him and the other from men. If men believe in miracles, He can perform them, if they do not, He cannot.

And He could do there (in Nazareth) *no mighty works* . . . . (Mark vi, 5).

How far this testimony of Mark-Peter is historically authentic can be seen from the fact that for Matthew it is already an offence, and he softens it and blunts the sting of the offence: "And he *did not* many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matt. xiii, 58).

The Death on the Cross is the greatest negation of the external miracle, *teras*, and affirmation of the internal miracle, *sēmeion*. "Let Christ the King of Israel descend from the Cross, that we may *see* and *believe*" (Mark xv, 32).

If He had come down from the Cross and not risen from the dead, only an external miracle would have been performed, an enslaving miracle of anti-Christ and not a liberating one of Christ. . . . .

"Ought people to have believed in Christ if he had not performed any miracle?" is a question put by St. Thomas Aquinas, and by him answered "Yes, they ought."

It would have been difficult for the Great Inquisitor to have burnt St. Thomas at the stake, even more difficult perhaps than Christ Himself. And yet, from what St. Thomas says the interference is quite clear, that had Jesus resurrected ten thousand Lazaruses, it would not have proved that He was Christ, as it would not have been proof of the contrary had He not resurrected a single one.

"I would smash all my system to atoms and would be baptized, if I could only believe that Lazarus was raised from the dead, says Spinoza. This, of course, also proves nothing; not only because the matter treated of is greater than all systems, but also because of the question of the miracle of Lazarus, as

of every other miracle, is settled on quite another plane from that in which it is placed by Spinoza—not on the plane of reason, but on that of experience. Or, in other words, all is settled for us in the sole historical experience of Gospel testimony.

The first thing that cannot but come to the mind of anybody who weighs the historical authenticity of this testimony is, of course, the fact that in the Synoptics there is even no place where the raising of Lazarus from the dead could have been inserted. The more the fourth Evangelist speaks of this incident, the more significant is the silence of the Synoptics.

On the very day of the resurrection of Lazarus the High Priest and the Pharisees, holding a council, say: "What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him. . . . . Then from that day forth they took council together for to put him to death" (John xi, 47-48).

This means that the raising of Lazarus was the chief factor in deciding the fate of Jesus. How is it then that the Synoptics know nothing about it? And even more astonishing is it that the resurrected Lazarus is present with Jesus at the Bethany supper, six days before the Passover. . . . .

Between the two miracle-signs, Cana of Galilee, the first miracle of human gladness, and the resurrection of Lazarus, the last miracle of heavenly gladness, passes the whole ministry of the Lord, according to the fourth Gospel. What we have already said of Cana of Galilee should also be said of the resurrection of Lazarus—John, the incomparable Master of chiaroscuro, blends the most brilliant light with the darkest shadow in such graduation indistinguishable to the human eye, that the more we look into them the less we know whether what we see is real or visionary. He mixes two orders, or purposely unites them, History and Mystery, so that his whole testimony is semi-history, semi-mystery, or again, he purposely unites fact with prophetic dream, with what he calls "miracle-sign" and what we call "similitude," "symbol." . . . .

And what is perhaps the most astonishing of all in the testimony of John about the resurrection of Lazarus is, that however much we are convinced by others or by ourselves that Lazarus did not rise from the dead, that all this is "imagination," a "myth," or, as Smerdiakov would say, "all written about what is untrue," we need only re-read the Gospel narrative to be again convinced that people do not invent such things, do not lie, do not deceive themselves as well as others in this way. In order to feel once again through a ghostly film of mystery the firm body of history, to see blending with the clouds the snowy summits of mountains, in order to feel once again that here, next to what might have been, is something that certainly *was;* that according to the formula of Lotze, to the arithmetical total of added items, in reason, the dull series $a+b+c$, is also, in the result, added an unknown quantity, the dazzling x=miracle.

In the literature of all ages and peoples there is no other such convincing narrative of so improbable an event, such a natural one of something so outside nature. Here, perhaps, it is not the external details that are most convincing: "Bethany nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off" (xi,

18), "by this time he stinketh for he has been dead four days" (xi, 39), "Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met Him" (xi, 39). One might have suspected the narrator of wishing to emphasize such details artificially, to ring out with the mastery of chiaroscuro peculiar to John alone, single points of right light in deepest shadow. No, the most convincing are the inward details, showing such deeps in the heart of the Lord as could only have been seen by one very near that heart. . . . .

> Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, *embrimômenos*, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it (John xi, 38).

This "indignation," "anger," is certainly not against the unbelieving Jews, as commentators explain it, nor against people in general, but against their last enemy, "the immemorial killer of man," the devil, Death, because he has so long held them enslaved, dishonoured and tormented them. It is the anger of the wrestler going into battle for the liberation of man.

> The Spirit of the Lord is on me . . . because he sent me . . . to bring *freedom* to the captives, to *free* the tormented.

This indignation is unprecedented in the world. Never has any human being shown such indignation with death, thrown such a gage of defiance in its face. Of all mankind only one man, Jesus, rose up against death, as the Mightiest against the mighty, the Free against the enslaver.

The inner meaning of the whole of this miracle-sign is the victory over death by the law of nature, the law of "identity," of mechanical causation ($a+b+c=a+b+c+x$); the overcoming of the law by freedom, but the miracle of Resurrection. Here we see Jesus as the Miracle Worker, the Liberator. . . . .

The new name will be announced to the world on the Day of Judgment by the trumpet of the Archangel. But it can possibly be heard even now in the whisper of the imprisoned, who remember the Blessed Message: "The Spirit sent men . . . to preach freedom to the captives 'If the Son shall make you free you will be free indeed.' "

The new name is not yet known to anyone, but possibly it will soon become known. Slaves will remember the eternal name of Christ: The Liberator.

It is apparently not by chance that when speaking of the beginning of the ministry of the Lord, we have been led to speaking of the end, because the beginning is bound up with the end, the first miracle-sign of Cana or Galilee with the resurrection of Lazarus. This bond is the best proof that an historically authentic order of the events of Christ's life is to be found in the Gospels. If we fail to see this order, it is perhaps only because we do not yet know how the Gospels should be read.

How many years or months did the ministry of the Lord last? About a year, say the Synoptics, and about two years according to the fourth Evangelist. If even this cannot be definitely fixed by us on the testimony of

the Gospel, it is perhaps not only because we do not know how to read them properly, but also because for the restifiers themselves the understanding of time natural to us is broken by a too vivid feeling of the End, of the coming eternity. Their time is not ours.

There is in the Gospels "the anticipation of events" and the "return to them," *anticipatio* and *recapitulatio*, as St. Augustine says. The truth of the Gospel ("historical authenticity" in our word) does not depend on this or that "order in the narration of events," *ordo rerum gestarum*. This order may not correspond to the "order of recollection" *ordini recordationis*. This means that one must know how to read the Gospels in order to see in them the historically authentic order of the events. In other words, despite the radical criticism that "the life of Jesus Christ cannot be written, *scribi nequit*" (A. Harnack), it is nevertheless possible that, although even more difficult than they think—the life of Christ has already been written in the Gospels.

In order to be convinced of it, let us remember the order as we have found it—the first day in Capernaum, the Sermon on the Mount, the quarrel with the Pharisees about the Sabbath, the first conference of the Pharisees with the Herodians about how to destroy Jesus, the sending of the twelve to preach, the Revelation of the Kingdom of God.

Kingdom, Blessedness, Miracle—in these three words, actions, lies the whole ministry of the Lord. Simply, quietly, monotonously, almost without any external and visible events, but with a multitude of inward, invisible ones, more than in all the rest of the history of the world (for the life of Christ is like the sky at night, the more you look into it the more stars do you see), passed the life of Jesus. Journeying, announcing the Good Word, healing the sick, comforting the sorrowing, collecting disciples, He goes about the towns and villages of Galilee. The year from the Passover of Beatitudes to the Passover of the Multiplication of Loaves—"the Blessed Summer of the Lord"—was the most blessed year of humanity.

Slowly and solemnly rose the invisible sun over the world—the great luminary of the End. Mankind felt it vaguely, as a blind man feels the warmth of the rising sun. It was seen by only one people—Israel. Of all Israel it was most plainly seen by those who followed Jesus, the Galilean crowds. Still plainer, by the hundreds who heard Him on the Mount of Beatitudes. But the full light of the End illumined only one Man on earth —Jesus Himself.

If the earth is not turned to ice before the kingdom of God comes to pass, it will only be perhaps because the sun of the summer of the Lord has warmed it through to the very heart.

The day of the Multiplication of the Loaves was the noon of the life of Jesus, the point at which the great luminary of the End approached nearest to earth, the Kingdom of God to mankind. And apparently on that very day the disciples, who were sent forth by him,

"returned to him with joy" (Luke x, 17).

"and told him all things, both what they had done and what they had thought" (Mark vi, 30).

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Luke x, 21).

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you. . . . for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. xi, 28, 30).

However much mankind forgets Him who said this, some day it will remember. However much it may doubt, one day it will believe, that the world was saved by Him.

THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

Edgar Sheffield Brightman

ANY THOUGHTFUL CHRISTIAN must desire to know what Christianity is. Likewise, any thoughtful Christian must desire agreement with other Christians; there is no intrinsic merit in disagreement, much less in pride of opinion, and the practical values of agreement for human welfare and for common worship are obvious. Where truth is believed, there will be agreement. Dsiagreements among Christians are almost a scandal. Yet agreements forced on the basis that my view (whoever I am) is alone God's word are more scandalous.

Our thoughtful Christian might make some headway in defining what he himself conceives true Christianity to be; or, again, he might look for agreements among all Christians. But would the result of the first process bear much resemblance to the result of the second? Would a faith that fully satisfies my reason and conscience satisfy yours? Would what we all agree on be true Christianity or a thin dilution of it? Again, is it so easy to define exactly what we ourselves believe true Christianity to be, and to give adequate reasons? When groups of Christians come together, can they tell each other clearly and convincingly what their faith is? Ultimate presuppositions differ so radically that the very concept of one true Christianity seems almost to be an absurdity. At least, claim to knowledge of it seems absurd. Who is to decide for Roman Catholicism against Barthianism, or for humanistic against theistic Christianity? And if we cannot conclusively determine our own concept of true Christianity, then we cannot even begin to take the vote which would reveal to what extent Christians agree, for we cannot even determine who are the qualified voters. If, in our abashed humility, we leave it all to the divine word or the eternal decrees, then we have admitted that no human being can ever identify any item of his own faith as genuinely Christian. A priori, things look dark. Only God knows what a Christian is.

A posteriori, that is, historically, the outlook is not much brighter. Feuerbach and Harnack drew very different pictures of *Das Wesen des Christentums*. What Jesus taught, in so far as criticism can rescue the heart of it, was far from identical with the theology of Saint Paul or even with the simple Pentecostal preaching (*κήρυγμα*) of salvation by faith in Christ. As time went on, Christianity became a conflict of Gnostics, Montanists, and Old Catholics; of Tertullian and authoritarianism with Clement and Greek philosophy; of Pelagius with Augustine, pope with Luther, Calvin with

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Arminius, Everett Edward Hale with Mary Baker Eddy, Karl Barth with John Dewey. And we are to seek for essential agreement in all this!

Is it fantastically impossible to look for the essence of Christianity apart from some arbitrary authority? Does Christianity have no definite meaning whatever? Is it an undefinable or a mere courtesy title—a supernatural mystery or a social form used to conceal the anarchic absence of all meaning? Does it mean only the kind thought, "I shall not slay you if you say you are a Christian"?

I

The Problem of the Criterion of Christianity

Before any assured answer can be given to the question which we have raised, it is necessary to consider the problem of the criterion of Christianity. How are we to test what is and what is not Christian?

Since Christianity is not a mathematical object, it cannot be adequately defined by an arbitrary set of postulates. Christianity, if it is anything, is an historical religion. Hence it must be defined as living historical movements are defined, not like pure abstract concepts of logic or mathematics.

How then, do we define historical movements? It is certain that no living process of any sort can be adequately defined by exclusive reference to its beginnings or to any one stage of its development. Origin does not determine meaning and value; origin does not define. This insight at once disposes of many suggested criteria of Christianity. For instance, the criterion could not be merely the literal teachings of Jesus, even if we knew what they were. Few Christians accept them all. Nor (for the same reason) could it be the New Testament or the entire Bible or the experiences of first century Christians. Without the total life stream of history flowing from Jesus, the Bible, and the first century, Christianity would not have become a religion—or at least, not the religion that we are now seeking to define. Thus Christianity is not an acorn; it is a growing oak. It is not the words of Jesus, but the power of Jesus in history. To be a Christian is not, primarily, to accept certain ideas, however true they may be; but, rather, it is to stand in actual relations to the life-stream of Christian history, a stream that flows from Jesus down to the present.

As an example, let us consider the view of those who, like Kraemer, appear to regard the Pauline doctrines as normative Christianity. If those doctrines are normative, was the historical Jesus a Christian? Was James? Luther was in doubt! Was John the Revelator? The early church hesitated. Many would insist that some sort of doctrinal agreement (whether Pauline or not) is of the very essence of Christianity. If it is, and Christianity is viewed as a system of revealed truths, how are we to escape the regimenting authority of Roman Catholicism or its Calvinistic surrogate?—its surrogate, that is, in the matter of authority. Within the New Testament there are patent differences; who knows what the formula, "Paul and Apollos," may have had hidden behind it? The antitheses of Paul and James, Synoptics and John, lie on the surface. The differences between Christian Platonists

and Christian Aristotelians, between Catholic and Protestant, between Christian symbolists and Christian literalists, between theistic and naturalistic Christians are so vast as almost to preclude common understanding, to say nothing of agreement.

Yet who would care to deny the name of Christian to anyone who seeks to follow Jesus, regardless of divergences in interpretation? Does not anyone move in the Christian life-stream of history if he finds somewhere in the Christian Scriptures, especially in the records about Jesus, a source of supreme moral and religious inspiration?

II

Points of Conflict

The point of view just expressed is an *eirenikon,* and perhaps an oversimple one. No peace based on ignorance can endure. Actual Christianity has never been a simple peaceful agreement on following Jesus. There have been acute points of conflict, some of which we shall mention.

1. Harnack was quite right in distinguishing the gospel *of* Jesus from the gospel *about* Jesus. Professor W. H. P. Hatch has recently pointed out the character of the early Christian κήρυγμα, the preaching of the day of Pentecost and of the first generation of Christians—called in the spurious ending of Mark "the sacred and incorruptible κήρυγμα of eternal salvation." The κήρυγμα did not consist of the teachings of Jesus, but rather was a proclamation of his sacrificial death on the cross and his resurrection for our redemption. "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our κήρυγμα vain." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). This is indeed a different world of thought from that of the Sermon on the Mount or the epistle of James. Morgan in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* holds that the verse just quoted is the earliest explicit statement of belief in revealed truth as the condition of salvation. Is Christianity primarily a metaphysical transaction based on an act of faith in dogma or is it primarily a "way (ὁδός)? By what marks were the disciples known as such when they were first called Christians at Antioch? Were doctrine and life of coequal importance? Was life primary, as Jesus seemed to teach, or doctrine, as Paul appeared to teach?

2. A second point of conflict emerges for us today because of our historical methods of investigation. Criticism has rendered our knowledge of the teachings of Jesus so insecure and dubious that most critics deny that we can say with certainty exactly what Jesus taught about most points. If we follow Jesus, do we follow we know not what? Certain branches of the Church have been most meticulous in following the supposed teachings of Jesus on divorce, despite the conflicting textual tradition; yet, as far as I know, no church has adopted Christ's clear-cut definition of adultery in Matt. 5:28. "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." The Church has preferred an uncertain tradition to a relatively certain one, because the certain one would be awkward to administer.

3. In spite of critical doubts let us assume that we know with reasonable certainty what Jesus taught, or at least the impression he made on the community that passed his spirit on to the later stream of history. Even then, the meaning of the simple formula of "following Jesus" is far from clear. Where the record tells of the command, "Follow me," it implies practical commitment rather than doctrinal agreement. "We left all and followed thee" (Mark 10:28). "Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead" (Matt. 8:22). "A man named Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom; and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him" (Matt. 9:9). To the rich young ruler, Jesus said, "Yet one thing thou lackest: sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me" (Luke 18:22). Is following Jesus, then, merely a practical commitment to his movement and his person? Or is it also believing what he believed? He seems to have believed in Satan and demons, yet few liberal Christians would regard agreement with Jesus on this point as a test of the true Christian. Jesus rested his view partly on an appeal to "your sons." He seems to have shared and reinterpreted the apocalyptic and eschatological hopes of a certain group of the Jews of his day. Yet, if Seventh Day Adventists and Crisis theologians agree on the vital importance of these beliefs of Jesus, many other Christians regard them as husk and not kernel, as historical accidents of the teachings of Jesus, not its spiritual centre. What of his view of his own person, and of the Heavenly Father? There are those who argue that if we follow Jesus in spite of rejecting his demonology and eschatology, we may also reject his Christology and theology and still follow him. What, then, does it mean to follow him?

4. A fourth point of conflict, which has been studied more seriously by German theologians than by most Anglo-Saxons, is the problem of Jesus *vs.* Paul. As the Christian movement developed, did Paul pass it on unchanged, or did he purify and elevate it, or was he a mystical legalist who debased its ethical core into something more like Pharisaism and Mohammedanism? Why does he say so little about the life and teachings of Jesus, apart from the so-called facts of salvation (*Heilstatsachen*)? Is Paulinism essential to Christianity, or only one of its passing phases?

These points of conflict are sufficiently contentious to make clear the difficulty of our task.

III

The Dialectic of the Unity of Christian Faith

Without considering in detail the history of doctrine, of schism and heresy, of religious wars, and of the conflicts of Christian faith with science and philosophy, we are now ready to face the problem of the essence of Christianity in all its apparent hopelessness. Facing it may be a long step toward a solution.

The situation is dialectical. The *thesis* runs: Following Jesus is impossible without ideas. The *antithesis* points out that following Jesus unitedly is impossible if we insist on agreement in ideas.

Let us examine this dialectical opposition. No one can reasonably deny that following Jesus is impossible without ideas. If no definition of "following Jesus" is available, no identification of Christians is available. There has been no religion, certainly no Christian religion, without a theology. The most anti-philosophical beliefs have still been beliefs. In this thesis we have the truth of the doctrinal tendencies of the Catholic Church from the earliest formulation of the Apostles' creed down to the 1939 Encyclical of Pius XII to the American hierarchy in which he complains of a tendency in American colleges where "Christ is often despised or ignored [and] the explanation of the universe and mankind is forced within the narrow limits of materialism or of rationalism." T. S. Eliot is not wholly wrong when, in *The Idea of a Christian Society*, he identifies Christianity with dogma. Jesus could not well avoid asking the Pharisees, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matt. 22:42), if he and they were to arrive at any mutual understanding. In the absence of any ideas, the best spirit is as empty and formal as are ideas without corresponding life. If following Jesus does not mean something specific, it is a meaningless phrase.

Father James B. Gallagher, O. S. A., in the Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston, as reported in the Boston *Daily Globe* of March 3, 1940, said:

> Wearied by the religious anarchy of our times, men are striving on all hands to effect a reunion of the forces of Christendom. Praiseworthy as all the efforts at the restoration of a reunited Christianity may be, there is only one way that such a desirable result may be effected, and that is by a whole-hearted acceptance of a divinely instituted church, teaching with infallible authority the doctrine of the one infallible Christ.

When the thesis is thus carried to the extreme of Roman Catholic authoritarianism, it turns, for liberal minds, into the antithesis: following Jesus unitedly is impossible if we insist on agreement in ideas. "Whole-hearted acceptance" of "infallible authority" of any kind is impossible for minds whose faith rests on a Protestant's conscience and whose criterion of truth is rational inquiry into growing experience. When Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathered not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30), he was asserting the thesis. But when the disciples carried the thesis to the point of wanting to call down fire from heaven, Jesus, according to one reading, asserted the antithesis, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of" (Luke 9:55); and when they forbade the worker who "followeth not with us," his comment was: "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us" (Luke 9:50). It is sure that we need to know "what manner of spirit" we are of; and equally sure that we must not, as Christians, confine the workings of that spirit to those who follow with us, whether we be Catholics or liberals, pragmatists or personalists, Barthians or activists.

Is there a *synthesis* of these dialectical opposites? If we tarry in the thesis, as Catholics, or as Calvinists, we have authoritarianism. If we tarry in the antithesis, we have anarchy. If we move to a synthesis, we have Christian freedom, which is a genuine bond of unity. Christian freedom is the liberty

of followers of Jesus combined with faith. The principle of this synthesis is that of following Jesus, yet freely interpreting his message, his doctrine, and his relevance to life, in loyalty to our best insights, whether they be Catholic or Protestant, theistic or humanistic. Jesus is then not a fixed model, but seed and soil and sun. Essential Christianity adds to this freedom, faith. First of all, there is the faith that we are moving toward a goal that Jesus sought even when our ideas contradict the ideas of many other Christians. Then, there is the faith that agreement in doctrine, in the nature of the case, is to be sought as an ideal limit of investigation rather than as a present achievement. The inexhaustibility of the spiritual life is better conveyed by a New Testament that contains a Paul and a James, and an American church that contains a Wieman and a Hocking than it would be by the rigid uniformity of Father Gallagher's thesis or by the individualistic anarchy of the antithesis.

IV

Are There Any Ideas on Which Almost All Christians May Agree at All Stages of the Historical Dialectic?

If we look over the actual growth of Christianity and envisage its possible future growth, we find only one belief which it is a priori certain must always remain an essential, namely, the belief in following Jesus. Yet a consideration of the history of our religion reveals a considerable amount of further agreement, even between the most orthodox and the most heterodox. It appears that almost all who have rejected the letter have retained the spirit of a common Christianity at more points than we have been prone to suppose. The following points represent something approximating a common Christian faith in the goal of Jesus. The approximate character of the concepts must be emphasized, for we cannot precisely define the area in which disagreements remain Christian.

1. *Following Jesus.* First of all, as we have said repeatedly, the one vital essential to being a Christian is the desire to follow Jesus. Following Jesus does not mean believing everything that he taught or imitating his behavior. It means rather finding some of life's essential, saving values in or through him.

2. *Faith in divine initiative.* On the basis of the fundamental essential of following Jesus, we next seek the truth in the conceptions most precious to historical orthodoxy. In the doctrines of the divine institution of the church, the atonement, redemption, conversion, regeneration, sanctification, adoption—the doctrines which Paul at once illuminated and obscured by his figures of speech derived from Jewish and Roman law—there is the common faith which comes to sublime expression in Francis Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven.* It is the faith in divine initiative. Man is a creature, dependent on a power unspeakably greater than he. Such aspiration to goodness as he feels could not have risen in the first place, and, having arisen, could not have survived for his salvation, if the Greater Power were not a healing power which took the initiative in seeking his well-being. We

have the treasure in very earthen vessels. No Calvinistic emphasis on the worthlessness of human works can obscure the truth that God actually elects and saves some souls on his sovereign initiative. No humanistic emphasis on naturalistic processes in spiritual growth can obscure the truth that man does not live in a vacuum, but is dependent for his spiritual welfare on adjustment to objective forces which sustain him in his search for values and which harbored the potentialities of that search long before he was born.

Let it, then, be clear that the essential faith in divine initiative is wide enough to include, on the one hand, faith in the atonement as a price paid to the devil for man's redemption, and on the other, faith in impersonal forces resident in nature which make for spiritual growth and value and emanate from nature in so far as it is or contains any object worthy of worship. The first recorded message of Jesus was the appeal: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel." That the kingdom of God, the objective initiative of divine forces, is at hand is an essential of Christian faith, if we are to judge from the history. No one who has wholly denied it has cared to call himself Christian. Pelagians, Arminians, Unitarians, humanists, and naturalists, in so far as they have felt themselves to be Christians, have held to the essential faith in a divine initiative.

3. *Humility*. Humility is a virtue characteristically Christian. "Blessed are the meek; blessed are the poor in spirit." It is true that ὕβρις (wanton insolence) is a vice for Greeks, as is pride for Christians; but the Greeks inferred that the proper course for man was mediocre inconspicuousness rather than humility. The Christian sense of dependence on the divine, and of the consequent tension between a sense of the absolute dependence and the absolute value of the soul, has made Christian humility an almost unique religious ideal, shared as ideal, if not as achievement, by Christians at every stage of the history.

A peculiar phenomenon, resulting from an exaggeration of the uniqueness of this virtue, is the Barthian attack on "the pride of reason," as if reason were somehow hostile to humility. There is no doubt that there is such a vice as dogmatic pride of opinion; yet it is an aberration to connect it with reason. Barthians lack any clear view of what reason is, and Barthians are not alone in this. The true spirit of reason is essentially the spirit of Christian humility engaged in the search for truth. Reason is not proud; it is open to correction, submissive to experience, eager for light, conscious of incompleteness. If reasoners have been proud, so have Christian believers; but pride is equally unreasonable and unchristian. Theologians as a class are not notably humbler than philosophers. But where either has failed, the defect has been in the man's weakness, not in the nature of reason or of Christian faith. Humility may be said to be in a sense the most rational of the Christian virtues. Love of God and love of truth are at bottom indistinguishable; at least, the follower of Jesus will hope and believe that they are indistinguishable. If he distrusts rational love of truth, it will not be because of his Christian humility, but because of a proudly human distrust of God's ability to protect himself from free investigation, which amounts

to a paternalistic protectorate over deity. Yet even where this unchristian and irrational vice exists, the virtue of humility is still honored in the breach as well as in the observance.

4. *The spiritual value of sacrifice and suffering.* It is safe to say that no one at any stage of Christian development has ever read the story of Good Friday and of Easter without seeing in it the drama of faith in the spiritual value of sacrifice. Out of voluntary submission to undeserved suffering come resurrection and redemption. Here is a universal faith essential to all Christians everywhere. He who sees all suffering as wholly evil or hopelessly bad, and rebelliously demands a life of pure pleasure, is no Christian. The follower of Jesus should not say, and usually does not say, that suffering is in itself a good. It is truly an evil; yet it is an evil that can be conquered. Did not Christ conquer it for our salvation? May not we, through him, endure and overcome? In this Christian essential we have something very different from the attitude toward suffering in most Oriental religions, especially in Buddhism. Christianity is essentially a religion of redemption through sacrifice and suffering, however the theological interpretations of this redemption may differ from each other and however revolting the hymnology of "a fountain filled with blood" may be to refined sensibilities. After all, reality is more bloody than refined, and overdelicate souls miss the graver aspects of truth.

5. *Self-respect.* Christians agree almost unanimously with their Master's evaluation of the individual human personality. Jesus taught that, as every sheep is precious to the good shepherd, so every soul is precious to God. In this preciousness of the individual to God, he founded the preciousness of the individual to himself. Christian self-respect is no doctrine of selfishness, no war of all against all. On the other hand, unlike Buddhism, Christianity is a religion of self-valuation. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is a fundamental Christian essential, if following Jesus means anything at all. "As thyself" means that the root virtue is respect for personality in one's own self. Without this qualification, humility ceases to be humble, and becomes "'umble"; for the dignity of Christ is substituted the loathsome "I am so 'umble" of Uriah Heep. Christian self-respect was summarized by the scribe in his account of true love of God, "with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength" (Mark 12:33). Christian self-respect requires the utmost endeavor of all the powers of the soul. It is exemplified not only by a socially responsible sense of being the light of the world (Matt. 5:14), but equally by prayer in secret (Matt. 6:6). It is Christian to "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6:20), because self-respect demands the highest values. In some form—often, it is true, disguised and perverted—the self-respect of the soul is part of the universal heritage of all Christians.

6. *Respect for all persons.* Jesus treats self-respect as a basis for respect for all persons. The Golden Rule indicates this. The maxim of treating all persons as ends in themselves, never as means only, is no invention of Immanuel Kant. Although not unique in Christianity any more than in Kant, it is essential to Christianity. Men universally respect a religious believer

who puts this maxim into practice, and see in his act something that partakes of the divine. This is too obvious to need elaboration.

7. *Love for all persons.* At the cost of seeming to spin out the Golden Rule overminutely, the principle of love is added to that of respect for all persons. Love, as a wider principle, includes respect; yet love is exclusively social, whereas respect is properly directed toward both the *ego* and the *alter*. Furthermore, the teaching of the attitude of love toward one's enemy is perhaps the loftiest and most characteristic of Christian moral insights. "God is love" (ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν—I John 4:8, 16) summarizes the universality of Christian love at its highest religious point. However much the followers of Jesus have found it necessary to interpret, to qualify, or to add to this faith, it is safe to say that no follower of Jesus has intentionally denied it. Ἀγάπη (love) is a Christian essential, regardless of whether Nygren's exact concept of it be accepted or rejected.

8. *Coöperation with man and God.* With the concept of coöperation we take a further step in the definition of the Christian *ethos*. As love is more than respect, so coöperation, if not more than love, is at least to be distinguished from it, as expression is distinguished from attitude. Love for all persons is an attitude; coöperation is the expression of that attitude. In the teaching, "be reconciled with thy brother," the keynote of Christian coöperation is struck. Shortly after the day of Pentecost, "All that believed were together and had all things common" (Acts 2:44). However apologetic some Christians may be about this tendency toward economic radicalism in the early Christian community, and however alert they may be to note that this particular "noble experiment" was an ethical, if not an economic failure, it remains true that the spirit of concrete coöperation then exhibited is one of the most persistent traits of essential Christianity—always in faith, often in practice. Witness the modern Christian interest in coöperatives.

Plato viewed God as a laborer (ὁ δημιουργός, the demiurge, the artisan, the laborer for the people); it remained for Paul to group man and God together as fellow laborers (συνεργοι). Although the conception of man's coöperation with God as necessary to "salvation" is offensive to some types of theology, yet no Christian has in practice believed that his religion consisted entirely of faith in the divine initiative without any obligation to response on his own part. The solitary Christian seemed impossible to John Wesley and is indeed contrary to the essence of Christianity. Some Christians have overemphasized coöperation with the divine; some, coöperation with the human. But no Christian has in any real sense denied either aspect of coöoperative religion.

The coöperative nature of Christianity is further illustrated by the historic development of the church. It is true that Christians, under pressure, have at times tended to restrict their coöperative activities too narrowly to fellow members of the Christian community. "Let us do good," wrote Saint Paul, "unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). In this utterance one wishes for a saving negative—"especially unto them who are *not* of the household of faith." Then Paul

would have been closer to the parables of the lost sheep and the lost son, as well as to the teaching that Christians are to be light, leaven, and salt to the whole of society. Yet Paul's deviation from the level of Jesus was not a rejection of the ideal of coöperation. It was rather an administrator's perception of practical exigencies in its application. Prayer, especially the Lord's Prayer, with its petitions, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," illustrates the coöperative essence of Christianity. If one word besides "following Jesus" were to sum up total Christianity, it might well be the word "coöperation."

9. *The reality of change.* From the first proclamation of Jesus, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15), Christians have held to the reality of change. This insight has assumed many forms other than the simple demand for repentance (μετάνοια). The doctrines of regeneration, the new birth, and sanctifications, all embody the same conviction. The Christian is a changed man. First, that which is natural; then, that which is spiritual. Whether, the change is gradual, like the growth of the mustard seed, or sudden, like Paul's conversion, the experience of a Christian is an experience of spiritual change.

The importance of change for Christianity was pointed out acutely a few years ago by the late Professor David F. Swenson of the University of Minnesota. At a meeting of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, Professor Morris R. Cohen had read a brilliant paper on Spinoza, dwelling on Spinoza's evaluation of the eternal and the changeless. Professor Swenson's comment was to the effect that however conceivable and sublime Spinoza's view might be, it was plainly not Christian, for the simple reason that Christianity asserts change as well as the changeless, and makes change more fundamental. Change in man—conversion—and change in God—change in his activity of revelation, if not in his fundamental purposes—are essentials of Christian faith.

Change in man we have illustrated. Change in God is required by the two covenants, the progressive revelation, and the crucial importance of the life and work of Jesus for God as well as for man. The reality of change may be said to be Part I of the Christian Philosophy of History. Real change, not the treadmill of endlessly self-repeating cycles, is a basis of the Christian view of experience.

10. *Hope.* Faith in the reality of change leads naturally to hope. It is fair to say that the Christian stress on sin and redemption is a fact that makes all thoughtless and light-hearted optimism un-christian. If all is now perfect, and evil is illusory, then, as a philosophical absolutist once remarked, "Why all this zeal for reform? The universe is already perfect." The Christian view is quite other. Demons must be cast out, souls saved from hell, the cross borne in daily life, persecutions endured. Every true Christian has been dissatisfied with the world as it is and with himself as he is. No one can try to follow Jesus and remain a shallow optimist.

On the other hand, Christianity has also rejected pessimism. Its faith in the dignity of personality and in the spiritual value of sacrifice and suffering have always kept Christians from pessimistic despair. Saint Paul would

not have enjoyed Schopenhauer's applause of his picture of how "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:22). The point is that for Schopenhauer the groaning and the travail were the whole truth; for Paul they were but the setting for the climax in which God "giveth us the victory" (I Cor. 15:57); we are saved, Paul says, by hope (Rom. 8:24). Thus Christianity, in its origins and in its historical development, likewise, has been a meliorism rather than either an optimism or a pessimism. The Christian is always hoping for something better which he believes will come, whether in such wise as is intimated in the eschatological myths, or by the immanence of spiritual power in history. Hope, symbolized in the resurrection faith and in every spiritual commitment, is a Christian fundamental. A person who wholly despairs ceases in that very act to be a Christian. . . . .

Some will doubtless say that this is a denatured Christianity—one in which no metaphysical view of God or Jesus is essential, one in which theological realism is watered down. It may be condemned as rationalistic or moralistic.

Yet if this be not accepted as a true picture of the essentials of historic Christianity, it will be necessary to adopt a totally different method from the one we have pursued. Our attempt has been to define Christianity by seeking for beliefs and attitudes held in common throughout the Christian history by all followers of Jesus.

THE ORIGINALITY OF JESUS

Claude G. Montefiore

To CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS the life and character and teaching of Jesus form a whole, and in any estimate of his originality they would affirm that it is this whole which must be considered and appraised. Yet I find myself almost bound to dissociate the teaching from the life, and largely to concentrate upon the teaching, estimating the character more parenthetically than directly or in detail. For I cannot help remembering that to ninety-nine out of every hundred readers of this article, if I have so many, the life and character of Jesus are not merely adorable, but also sacred. Moreover, even to seem to cheapen or criticise any sacred object, or, at all events, an object which has been and is sacred or even dear to a huge number of civilized human beings, is a disagreeable and repellent proceeding, whether the object be Jesus or Mohammed or Buddha, or even an object which is not a man at all. Yet the outsider, and still more the Jew, is bound to be critical in his appraisement of the life of Jesus. He cannot help recalling how very little is known of that life, and for how short a time, how uncertain that little is, and how entirely all that we do know is written by those who reverenced, adored and nearly worshipped their hero, even though you may argue that they did not completely understand him. The Jew would not for a moment deny the heroic or the historic character of the end of that life—of the voluntary martyr's death with which on earth it closed. For Jesus is a worthy representative of the martyr race, which, in proportion to its numbers, and perhaps even absolutely, has the largest roll of martyrs to boast of of any people in the world—of the race whose secular martyrdom is even yet by no means over.

But if I may distinguish between the life and the character . . . . I would venture to suggest that, through the Gospel mists and miracles, a character seems to emerge in many respects unlike that of *any* O.T. or Rabbinic hero, teacher, or saint. . . . .

> When he was come unto Jerusalem, all the city was excited, saying, Who is this? And the crowds said, This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.

"The prophet Jesus." Perhaps he was not original in being a prophet. Other prophets arose. But surely he was original in the *sort* of prophet he was—original in being a sort of new Hosea or Isaiah. To be a prophet of the eighth century B.C. type in the first century A.D. was no small achievement. For the Law and the Sacred Canon of Scripture had come in between; and especially the Law. I doubt whether Jesus stood so independently, and

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with such vivid self-consciousness of independence and authority, over against the Law and the Scriptures generally as some Christian theologians would like to make out. And, therefore, I think that he was not entirely consistent–not so consistent as the Rabbis. But that does not matter. You can be both inconsistent *and* original and this is what Jesus actually was. Moreover, his inconsistency looked forward. It pointed forward to a far-distant enfranchisement from the bondage of the letter, an enfranchisement which the theologians in question have achieved for quite three-quarters of their own Sacred Scriptures, but perhaps scarcely for the whole. It was a fine, a prophetic inconsistency. Here, again, I have to content myself with a bare statement. Criticism and exegesis combined would make it easy to devote a long essay to the subject of "The Attitude of Jesus towards the Pentateuchal and the Oral Law." And at the end of it one would have to confess that many uncertainties remain over: The last word, *e.g.* about the great seventh chapter of Mark, has, even yet, by no means been spoken. As regards the ceremonial laws of the Pentateuch, the teaching of Jesus practically came to this: never let ceremonial law stand in the way of an immediate fulfilment of the moral law, when an opportunity for, or a summons to, such fulfilment presents itself: when the former, however, does not stand in the way of the latter, observe it. I doubt whether Jesus ever in his life ate a hare and a lobster, and I doubt whether he would have recommended his disciples to eat them. I doubt this, in spite of the great Logion, the greatness of which, by the way, is wholly independent of its authenticity, but the authenticity of which I for one would accept, in spite of the very great exegetical difficulties of the matter which surrounds it.

Now, this prophetic, Hosea-like attitude towards the ceremonial law, including the law of the Sabbath and its developments, seems to indicate a high degree of originality. It has been suggested that it was something of both a moral and an intellectual fault on the part of the Rabbis that they did not appreciate and sympathise with Jesus' point of view about the Sabbath directly it was clearly explained to them. I can hardly agree with this suggestion. The Rabbis were, in truth, more consistent than Jesus, and if you take the Law at its face value, as the perfect will of God, there is a great deal to be said for the Rabbinic view as to how conflicts between Sabbath law and moral law are to be decided. The conception of the Law and of Scripture, to which the attitude of Jesus points forward, was not theoretically reached till modern times. One could hardly expect the Rabbis to be 1900 years before their time, and if the suggestion were right, the high originality of Jesus and of his glorious inconsistency would, perhaps, even be diminished. It may be noticed that Jesus does not appear to argue that healing is *not* "labour." He appears to accept the view that healing is "work," but his line seems to be that to do good comes before the Sabbath; he does not argue whether life is in peril or not, whether the healing could easily be put off twenty-four hours or not; he brushes such casuistry–I use the word in a good sense–entirely aside, and in the spirit of Hosea, and of "I desire love, and not sacrifice," he heals at once, Sabbath or no Sabbath. That was daring and original. . . . .

Here I need hardly waste time in dealing with, and disposing of, certain old oppositions such as that to the Rabbis God is a King, to Jesus He is a Father, that the Rabbis fear God, Jesus loves Him, that to the Rabbis God is far, to Jesus He is near, that the Rabbinic religion is one of vengeance and severity, the Gospel religion one of love and pity, and so on. Serious students have happily advanced beyond such crude and sweeping contrasts. On the other hand, it is apparently a fact that Jesus thought of God as his (and our) Father, and used the term Father for God more habitually and constantly than is the case with any one Rabbi of whom we know. And this regular conception of God as Father, in proportion to the intensity and vividness of the feeling which suggested it, was something which may fitly be called original.

In my enumeration of particular doctrines I must just allude to some which, by implication, have been touched on before. Thus I have already referred to the prophetic teaching of Jesus, how he takes up again the message of the older prophets and applies it to the needs of his own time. The great Logion of Mark vii. is quite on the lines of Isaiah and Hosea, but is a new development relative to the new developments of the ceremonial law. The conceptions of service and of seeking out and healing the morally sick are a fresh application and a fresh development of seeds and germs which we may find in Ezekiel. For Ezekiel was, to some extent, a pastor as well as a prophet, and the famous verse in which Ezekiel describes the coming action of God is the pattern, and perhaps partially the inspiration, for the conduct and the teaching of Jesus.

> I will seek that which is lost; I will bring again that which is driven away; I will bind up that which is broken; I will strengthen that which is sick.

It was left for Jesus to turn this picture of divine activity into an ideal of human activity, and it is amazing to think what marvellous and fruitful results have followed from the dozen or score of verses in which this ideal is set forth and driven home. With this teaching of service may be associated in close connection the doctrine of the hard life, and of deliberate self-sacrifice. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me." Here we have not only teaching of the highest originality, but also pregnant with the most astonishing issues. I do not develop the subject, for it is needless. It is customary, and especially customary with certain semi-Christian philosophers, to fasten upon the verse which, in all the three Synoptics, follows the one I have quoted, and to find in it, not only profound originality, but also the most distinctive note of Christianity. I suppose they fasten upon it thus because, as they interpret it, it suits and fits in with their philosophy, and because it has nothing to do with any tiresome and intractable miracle. But I very much doubt whether losing life to save it, and saving life to lose it, meant to Jesus anything more than: "Secure eternal beatitude by a willingness to think little of, and give up, the brief life of earth." "Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross." Shakespeare knew what Jesus meant better than the philosophers, who do not much like this clear-cut contrast between earth

and heaven. Now though the words, as thus interpreted, are exquisitely phrased and chosen, they are not deeply original like those which precede them. The Rabbis believed the same; indeed, they always said that that was precisely why the Jews had such a bad time of it upon earth, and should not mind having it, in order that they might win through to and inherit the glories of "the world to come." "If thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off." The newness here is rather in the trenchant absoluteness of the bidding than in the general tendency, and the motive is the same as before: to avoid the flames of hell and to acquire the felicities of heaven. About all such matters, heaven and hell, eternal joy and eternal perdition, there is little to choose between the Rabbis and their great antagonist.

I shall have to speak about the trenchant absoluteness, the uncompromisingness of the teaching of Jesus again. In some examples of it Jesus seems to be original, in that he tends to go off the Jewish line, and not merely to develop Jewish teaching or to "fulfil" it. Rabbinic doctrine, as regards what may roughly be called asceticisms, is balanced. On the one hand, you have passages like—

> A morsel of bread with salt thou must eat, and water with measure must thou drink, thou must sleep upon the ground, and live a life of pain, the while thou toilest in the Torah.

On the other hand, you have such teaching as that to avoid an innocent pleasure which is within one's grasp is not right, but wrong. But for Jesus the time was short, the end was nigh. The wind blew strongly, and only in one direction. There was hardly any time left for earthly enjoyment—at least for those who would be disciples in the best and fullest sense. Hence, perhaps, the not infrequent touch of sexual and family asceticism which, in spite of Deuteronomy xxxiii. 9 ("who said of his father and of his mother, I have not seen them, neither did he acknowledge his brothers, nor knew he his own children"), is off the Jewish and Rabbinic line. . . . .

As further examples of "extreme" doctrine, I ought now to deal in some detail with the paradoxes of the Sermon on the Mount, and especially with "Resist not wickedness," and "Love your enemies." But I have no space adequately to assess their degree of originality. That they do possess a degree of originality, and also (here I differ from current Jewish criticism) a degree of excellence, I am convinced.

Two other doctrines must also be summarily mentioned, whereon we may, I think, also find originality. The one is the doctrine of divorce. However exegesis may settle (if it ever does) what Jesus exactly meant in this matter, and giving full credit to Shammai, I am yet inclined to believe that Jesus went beyond Shammai, and that he may even have deliberately wished to put woman on a footing of greater equality with man. But, here again, the subject is so intricate, and the critical and exegetical questions involved are so puzzling, that it is impossible to deal with it. The other doctrine concerns retribution and requital (tit for tat and measure for measure), both as regards God and man. So far as man is concerned, Jesus speaks with no uncertain voice in his strong opposition to any tit for tat ethic. "Overcome

evil with good" is spoken in his spirit. Yet here it may not unjustly be said that he follows the best Jewish teaching, both of the O.T. and of the Rabbis; follows it and deepens it by his categorical and unqualified injunctions. As regards God, while, on the one hand, we have "with what measure ye mete" and "He shall render unto every man according to his deeds," on the other hand, we have the Labourers in the Vineyard and that passage in Luke xvii. 7-10, which the A.V. described as "How we are bound to God and not He to us." Nevertheless, immensely as we may value and admire these passages in Matthew and in Luke, one has to admit two things: first, that their meaning is not entirely beyond dispute; secondly, that the Rabbinic parallels are here very close and forcible. I wish I had space in which to quote them, for they are not well known. Yet one may, perhaps, go so far as to say that the doctrine of the two parables is more central in the teaching of Jesus than it is among the Rabbis.

There are many doctrines in the Gospels which an ordinary Christian commentary would speak of as highly original, but which I either cannot admit to be so, or which I could only admit to be so with tedious qualifications. Such would be the combination of love for God and love of man in Mark xii. 30, 31, the denial of the doctrine that suffering betokens sin, the positive form of the Golden Rule, a deliberate universalism, and faith. Omitting the first and third of these five, I would observe as to the second that the Tower of Siloam passage in Luke can only be interpreted to mean that Jesus denied the sequence of sin and suffering by making the words bear more than they legitimately can. Here, as so often in the New Testament exegesis, the current interpretation is a child of desire. In Mark ii. 5-11 Jesus shows no opposition to the old hypothesis. On the other hand, I feel convinced that Jesus would have repudiated that definite allocation of certain punishments for certain sins in which many of the Rabbis so foolishly indulged; I am sure he would have indignantly repudiated the odious passage, which is still allowed to disfigure the orthodox Jewish prayer-book, about women who die in child-birth and the reasons for their death. As to the fourth doctrine, while I would predicate not merely nobility and beauty, but also originality, of the parable of the Good Samaritan, it is going much too far to say that Jesus deliberately and consciously "freed the conception of neighbour from its Jewish limitations." If he had wished to effect such enfranchisement, he had every opportunity and temptation to do so in the Sermon on the Mount, but no word is there uttered to the effect that neighbour and enemy include the Gentile. If it be true that to a Jew of the first century A.D. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" meant only "Thou shalt love thy fellow Jew and the proselyte," and if it be true that the "enemy" of whom Jesus was thinking was, or included, the Gentile, why did he not say "I tell you to love all men, whether Jews or Gentiles; I tell you to love all your enemies, whether Gentiles or Jews"? Such lucidity and definiteness were, *ex hypothesi*, badly needed, but they are entirely wanting. As regards the fifth doctrine, faith, the matter is very complicated, and I am compelled to leave the question of originality in suspense.

Even with these limitations, hesitations and reservations, I do not see how it can be illegitimate to credit the teaching of Jesus with a high degree of originality. We have to remember, and to bring together into our minds, both the general points which I mentioned in the beginning—the comparatively homogeneous body of doctrine, all attributed to one man, the unity of spirit, the beauty of form, what Jesus does not say as well as what he does, the passion and intensity of the whole—and then the particular points which I have since enumerated. If we combine the general and the particular, the total impression of originality seems great. Such an impression is no mirage. I would like to illustrate my meaning by a short reference to the Beatitudes, especially as we find them in Matthew, without considering whether they are more or less authentic in Matthew than in Luke. The Beatitudes as a whole seem more than each one taken separately. There is a certain glow and intensity about them which seems new and distinctive. We can find Rabbinic parallels to each of them, but as a whole they seem original. If I be asked, "In what does the impression left by the Beatitudes in Matthew seem to you peculiar and original?", I find it very hard to put that impression into words. Perhaps it is a feeling as if all religion were concentrated and expressed in a certain condition of soul, which manifests itself in gentleness and pity and love and the patient endurance of wrong; in a certain peacefulness, which is also capable of utmost heroism and sacrifice, in a certain glow and enthusiasm, which produce a peculiar and indomitable happiness. Before the ideal of this religion all else appears to fade away; all that is external and institutional; all that is civic and political; all that has to do with beauty and knowledge; all that makes for the careful and orderly and gradual removal of evils by intelligent forethought or wise legislation; all conceptions of progress. All these things are good and are necessary, and yet the Beatitudes seem to teach the one thing needful which is more needful than any of them, and which goes both before them and after them. The Beatitudes seem to illustrate the unqualified absoluteness of the teaching of Jesus on which, as my last point, I would like for a few moments to dwell. In doing so I would like to call attention to a remarkable book of the younger Kittel—Gerhard Kittel, now Professor in Tübingen—published in 1926, and called *The Problems of Late Palestinian Judaism and of Earliest Christianity* (*Die Probleme des palästinenischen Spätjudentums und das Urchristentum*). Kittel is, I should imagine, a very fairly orthodox Lutheran, and he has learnt a great deal of Rabbinic literature. He tries hard to be fair, and if he does not always appreciate the full and true nature of Rabbinic religion, one has to remember how especially difficult it is just for a Lutheran to do so. That he still cannot avoid some sweeping contrast to the disadvantage and detraction of the Rabbis only shows how hard it is to get rid of a false methodology. But Kittel points out how, in an earlier book, he had tried to show the peculiarity (and therefore to him the superiority) of the religion of Jesus in certain special teachings and sayings. He has now, however, come to the conclusion that he was on a wrong track. If you take, he says, each ethical utterance of Jesus separately, there is hardly one to which you cannot find a Jewish or Rab-

binic analogue, or of which you can say that such an analogue it would be impossible for unadulterated Judaism to have produced. He then goes on to give his own explanation of wherein the immense greatness and the complete originality of the teaching of Jesus consist. I shall not attempt to transcribe his explanation, but it lies partly in the intensity, the absoluteness, and the unqualifiedness of the religious demand—that religious demand which embraces the ethical demand and substantiates it. And here, I think, at least as regards the distinctiveness of the teaching—I am not out to assess comparative merits—he is not far wrong. The absoluteness of the demand looks away from, and gives no heed to, difficulties and problems of circumstance; it is not relative at all. That the demand is of this kind is, Kittel thinks, due to the other element in the high originality of Jesus, his sense of authority, his consciousness of sonship, his central and unique position and the conviction thereof, as embodying in himself the very actuality and presence of the Kingdom of God, what Origen called the αὐτοβασιλεία. And this, too, may be, at least partially, true. Hence, says Kittel, the religious demand of Jesus is not, as it were, limited to earth. This world, this aeon, is not its veritable sphere. Its true place is the sphere into which the consciousness of Jesus lifts him up. The demand is eschatological; that is, it is always thinking of the other, the second aeon, which was so soon to be revealed. And this, too, may be not inaccurate. But if so, and if these characteristics do largely make and mark the originality of Jesus, then the ethical and religious demands of the teacher from Nazareth leave a place for the ethical and religious demands of the Rabbis. For this aeon, too, has its claims, its duties and its problems; this world, too, has its true joys, its true beatitudes, and even its true prosperities. The more I study the religious and ethical teaching of the Rabbis and of Jesus, the more I realise that the originalities and peculiarities of the one are complementary to the originalities and peculiarities of the other. There is a place, *e.g.*, for the absoluteness of "sell all that thou hast"; there is also a place for the careful injunctions of the Rabbis, which consider circumstance and occasion, the results of the action upon others as well as its fitness or urgency for the soul of the doer. There is a place for the unqualified demand of Jesus; there is a place also for the many-detailed delicacies of the Rabbis. There is a place for principles; there is a place also for their applications and for laws. He who only knows, cares for and appreciates the teaching of either Jesus or of the Rabbis is certainly poorer than he who knows, cares for and appreciates both.

It may even be that the invectives and fierce denunciations of Jesus are the humanly necessary counterpart of his unqualified urgencies. I sometimes think that if Jesus had given a little of the gentleness and love which he displayed for the tax-collectors and the outcast to his Rabbinic antagonists, some of them might have been won over to his cause. And, after all, they too were human beings, and they, too, from his point of view, were sinners; they, too, had souls to save. I remember that somewhere in the introduction to his commentary on Ezra iv., Gunkel, who is, I should think, a fairly orthodox Christian, remarks that "pity for sinners who remain sin-

ners to the end is foreign to strong, ethical religions, and therefore, foreign also to the Gospel." Thus it is, I suppose, foreign to Jesus. Such religions and their teachers, I suppose, do ethically commit Hell's destined to Hell without shrinking or compunction. I conclude, therefore, that I must take my "vipers," my "children of hell," my "accursed" and my "everlasting fire," as the Germans would say, "mit im Kauf." They are the price which I must pay for the undoubted fact that no one would ever think of accusing the hero of the Gospels of flabby sentimentality. His love and his demand for love, his love of many human beings and his love of God, were the love of the strong man, the hero. The hero, humble and self-sacrificing, tender and severe, with a convinced consciousness of inspiration and of mission, the servant and helper of his brethren, but always also the leader and the lord; it is a fine and original personality.

JESUS—AN IMPERIOUS RULER

Albert Schweitzer

THOSE WHO ARE fond of talking about negative theology can find their account here. There is nothing more negative than the result of the critical study of the Life of Jesus.

The Jesus of Nazareth who came forward publicly as the Messiah, who preached the ethic of the Kingdom of God, who founded the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and died to give His work its final consecration, never had any existence. He is a figure designed by rationalism, endowed with life by liberalism, and clothed by modern theology in an historical garb.

This image has not been destroyed from without, it has fallen to pieces, cleft and disintegrated by the concrete historical problems which came to the surface one after another, and in spite of all the artifice, art, artificiality, and violence which was applied to them, refused to be planed down to fit the design on which the Jesus of the theology of the last hundred and thirty years had been constructed, and were no sooner covered over than they appeared again in a new form. The thoroughgoing sceptical and the thoroughgoing eschatological school have only completed the work of destruction by linking the problems into a system and so making an end of the *Divide et impera* of modern theology, which undertook to solve each of them separately, that is, in a less difficult form. Henceforth it is no longer permissible to take one problem out of the series and dispose of it by itself, since the weight of the whole hangs upon each.

Whatever the ultimate solution may be, the historical Jesus of whom the criticism of the future, taking as its starting-point the problems which have been recognised and admitted, will draw the portrait, can never render modern theology the services which it claimed from its own half-historical, half-modern, Jesus. He will be a Jesus, who was Messiah, and lived as such, either on the ground of a literary fiction of the earliest Evangelist, or on the ground of a purely eschatological Messianic conception.

In either case, He will not be a Jesus Christ to whom the religion of the present can ascribe, according to its long-cherished custom, its own thoughts and ideas, as it did with the Jesus of its own making. Nor will He be a figure which can be made by a popular historical treatment so sympathetic and universally intelligible to the multitude. The historical Jesus will be to our time a stranger and an enigma.

The study of the Life of Jesus has had a curious history. It set out in quest of the historical Jesus, believing that when it had found Him it could bring Him straight into our time as a Teacher and Saviour. It

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loosed the bands by which He had been riveted for centuries to the stony rocks of ecclesiastical doctrine, and rejoiced to see life and movement coming into the figure once more, and the historical Jesus advancing, as it seemed, to meet it. But He does not stay; He passes by our time and returns to His own. What surprised and dismayed the theology of the last forty years was that, despite all forced and arbitrary interpretations, it could not keep Him in our time, but had to let Him go. He returned to His own time, not owing to the application of any historical ingenuity, but by the same inevitable necessity by which the liberated pendulum returns to its original position.

The historical foundation of Christianity as built up by rationalistic, by liberal, and by modern theology no longer exists; but that does not mean that Christianity has lost its historical foundation. The work which historical theology thought itself bound to carry out, and which fell to pieces just as it was nearing completion, was only the brick facing of the real immovable historical foundation which is independent of any historical confirmation or justification.

Jesus means something to our world because a mighty spiritual force streams forth from Him and flows through our time also. This fact can neither be shaken nor confirmed by any historical discovery. It is the solid foundation of Christianity.

The mistake was to suppose that Jesus could come to mean more to our time by entering into it as a man like ourselves. That is not possible. First because such a Jesus never existed. Secondly because, although historical knowledge can no doubt introduce greater clearness into an existing spiritual life, it cannot call spiritual life into existence. History can destroy the present; it can reconcile the present with the past; can even to a certain extent transport the present into the past; but to contribute to the making of the present is not given unto it.

But it is impossible to over-estimate the value of what German research upon the Life of Jesus has accomplished. It is a uniquely great expression of sincerity, one of the most significant events in the whole mental and spiritual life of humanity. What has been done for the religious life of the present and the immediate future by scholars such as P. W. Schmidt, Bousset, Jülicher, Weinel, Wernle—and their pupil Frenssen—and the others who have been called to the task of bringing to the knowledge of wider circles, in a form which is popular without being superficial, the results of religious-historical study, only becomes evident when one examines the literature and social culture of the Latin nations, who have been scarcely if at all touched by the influence of these thinkers.

And yet the time of doubt was bound to come. We modern theologians are too proud of our historical method, too proud of our historical Jesus, too confident in our belief in the spiritual gains which our historical theology can bring to the world. The thought that we could build up by the increase of historical knowledge a new and vigorous Christianity and set free new spiritual forces, rules us like a fixed idea, and prevents us from seeing that the task which we have grappled with and in some meas-

ure discharged is only one of the intellectual preliminaries of the great religious task. We thought that it was for us to lead our time by a roundabout way through the historical Jesus, as we understood Him, in order to bring it to the Jesus who is a spiritual power in the present. This roundabout way has now been closed by genuine history.

There was a danger of our thrusting ourselves between men and the Gospels, and refusing to leave the individual man alone with the sayings of Jesus.

There was a danger that we should offer them a Jesus who was too small, because we had forced Him into conformity with our human standards and human psychology. To see that, one need only read the Lives of Jesus written since the 'sixties, and notice what they have made of the great imperious sayings of the Lord, how they have weakened down His imperative world-contemning demands upon individuals, that He might not come into conflict with our ethical ideals, and might tune His denial of the world to our acceptance of it. Many of the greatest sayings are found lying in a corner like explosive shells from which the charges have been removed. No small portion of elemental religious power needed to be drawn off from His sayings to prevent them from conflicting with our system of religious world-acceptance. We have made Jesus hold another language with our time from that which He really held.

In the process we ourselves have been enfeebled, and have robbed our own thoughts of their vigour in order to project them back into history and make them speak to us out of the past. It is nothing less than a misfortune for modern theology that it mixes history with everything and ends by being proud of the skill with which it finds its own thoughts—even to its beggarly pseudo-metaphysic with which it has banished genuine speculative metaphysic from the sphere of religion—in Jesus, and represents Him as expressing them. It had almost deserved the reproach: "he who putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is not fit for the Kingdom of God."

It was no small matter, therefore, that in the course of the critical study of the Life of Jesus, after a resistance lasting for two generations, during which first one expedient was tried and then another, theology was forced by genuine history to begin to doubt the artificial history with which it had thought to give new life to our Christianity, and to yield to the facts, which, as Wrede strikingly said, are sometimes the most radical critics of all. History will force it to find a way to transcend history, and to fight for the lordship and rule of Jesus over this world with weapons tempered in a different forge.

We are experiencing what Paul experienced. In the very moment when we were coming nearer to the historical Jesus than men had ever come before, and were already stretching out our hands to draw Him into our own time, we have been obliged to give up the attempt and acknowledge our failure in that paradoxical saying: "If we have known Christ after the flesh yet henceforth know we Him no more." And further we must be prepared to find that the historical knowledge of the personality and life of Jesus will not be a help but perhaps even an offence to religion.

But the truth is, it is not Jesus as historically known, but Jesus as spiritually arisen within men, who is significant for our time and can help it. Not the historical Jesus, but the spirit which goes forth from Him and in the spirits of men strives for new influence and rule, is that which overcomes the world.

It is not given to history to disengage that which is abiding and eternal in the being of Jesus from the historical forms in which it worked itself out, and to introduce it into our world as a living influence. It has toiled in vain at this undertaking. As a waterplant is beautiful so long as it is growing in the water, but once torn from its roots, withers and becomes unrecognisable, so it is with the historical Jesus when He is wrenched loose from the soil of eschatology, and the attempt is made to conceive Him "historically" as a Being not subject to temporal conditions. The abiding and eternal Jesus is absolutely independent of historical knowledge and can only be understood by contact with His spirit which is still at work in the world. In proportion as we have the Spirit of Jesus we have the true knowledge of Jesus.

Jesus as a concrete historical personality remains a stranger to our time, but His spirit, which lies hidden in His words, is known in simplicity, and its influence is direct. Every saying contains in its own way the whole Jesus. The very strangeness and unconditionedness in which He stands before us makes it easier for individuals to find their own personal standpoint in regard to Him.

Men feared that to admit the claims of eschatology would abolish the significance of His words for our time; and hence there was a feverish eagerness to discover in them any elements that might be considered not eschatologically conditioned. When any sayings were found of which the wording did not absolutely imply an eschatological connexion there was great jubilation—these at least had been saved uninjured from the coming *débâcle*.

But in reality that which is external in the words of Jesus is due to the very fact that they are based on an eschatological world-view, and contain the expression of a mind for which the contemporary world with its historical and social circumstances no longer had any existence. They are appropriate, therefore, to any world, for in every world they raise the man who dares to meet their challenge, and does not turn and twist them into meaninglessness, above his world and his time, making him inwardly free, so that he is fitted to be, in his own world and in his own time, a simple channel of the power of Jesus.

Modern Lives of Jesus are too general in their scope. They aim at influencing, by giving a complete impression of the life of Jesus, a whole community. But the historical Jesus, as He is depicted in the Gospels, influenced individuals by the individual word. They understood Him so far as it was necessary for them to understand, without forming any conception of His life as a whole, since this in its ultimate aims remained a mystery even for the disciples.

Because it is thus preoccupied with the general, the universal, modern theology is determined to find its world-accepting ethic in the teaching of

Jesus. Therein lies its weakness. The world affirms itself automatically; the modern spirit cannot but affirm it. But why on that account abolish the conflict between modern life, with the world-affirming spirit which inspires it as a whole, and the world-negating spirit of Jesus? Why spare the spirit of the individual man its appointed task of fighting its way through the world-negation of Jesus, of contending with Him at every step over the value of material and intellectual goods—a conflict in which it may never rest? For the general, for the institutions of society, the rule is: affirmation of the world, in conscious opposition to the view of Jesus, on the ground that the world has affirmed itself! This general affirmation of the world, however, if it is to be Christian, must in the individual spirit be Christianized and transfigured by the personal rejection of the world which is preached in the sayings of Jesus. It is only by means of the tension thus set up that religious energy can be communicated to our time. There was a danger that modern theology, for the sake of peace, would deny the world-negation in the sayings of Jesus, with which Protestantism was out of sympathy, and thus unstring the bow and make Protestantism a mere sociological instead of a religious force. There was perhaps also a danger of inward insincerity, in the fact that it refused to admit to itself and others that it maintained its affirmation of the world in opposition to the sayings of Jesus, simply because it could not do otherwise.

For that reason it is a good thing that the true historical Jesus should overthrow the modern Jesus, should rise up against the modern spirit and send upon earth, not peace, but a sword. He was not teacher, not a casuist; He was an imperious ruler. It was because He was so in His inmost being that He could think of Himself as the Son of Man. That was only the temporally conditioned expression of the fact that He was an authoritative ruler. The names in which men expressed their recognition of Him as such, Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God, have become for us historical parables. We can find no designation which expresses what He is for us.

He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lakeside, He comes to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: "Follow thou me!" and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfill for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is.

CHRIST HIMSELF PRIMARILY CHARISMATIC

Rudolf Otto

THE KINGDOM OF GOD, as already at hand, is dynamis, the inbreaking miraculous power of the transcendant. As such, it is operative in the exoristic dynamis of its messenger, and equally in the exousia and the charis of his preaching. He himself is charisma. The messenger is not only preacher and announcer of this kingdom, but is an integral part of the inbreaking miracle of the eschatological order itself. Thus it was not by a strange coincidence, but of essential necessity that he should possess the gift of healing. He was a charismatic in accordance with the self-consistent meaning of the whole. The fact that he was a charismatic integrates and confirms in turn our belief that we have rightly grasped the meaning of his person and message. The whole confirms the impression of the parts of the picture; the parts confirm the whole. . . . .

The original tradition describes Christ as a charismatic. We submit that this description is genuine, for in this way and only in this way can we explain the historical consequence, viz. the production of a spirit-led, enthusiastic church. It is genuine, again, because its individual traits harmonize into a unity of the charismatic type. Yet, again, it is genuine because this whole charismatic type harmonizes with, and has the same meaning as, the message of the kingdom of God which is already breaking in, and which has been experienced as dynamis.

Paul traced the charismatic gifts back to the pneuma, Jesus himself equated the secret power of the divine kingdom with the pneuma, by applying Isaiah's prophecy to himself:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Lk. iv. 18).

We note that here again we have a typical little catalogue of charismatic gifts, and indeed the very gifts characteristic of Jesus himself:

the gift of besorah, the exousia of preaching (and of indeed preaching the acceptable year of the Lord, which is exactly the same as preaching the final dawning of the hoped-for time of salvation);
the gift of exorcism: proclaiming release to the captives (which on Jesus' lips and in Jesus' time could only mean release from the captivity of demons);
the gift of healing generally: giving sight to the blind.

While in the Beelzebub incident the gift is the dynamis of the present kingdom, here it is explained as being anointed with the divine spirit. Correspond-

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From *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man*, Grand Rapids, 1938, pp. 334, 344-56. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Zondervan Publishing House.

ingly another passage says that Christ uttered warnings about blasphemy against the spirit which is working in him. The dynamis of the kingdom was the same as the spirit even for Christ. Already the operative eschatological order was pneuma, and the later pneuma remained, even in Paul's case, the gift of the final age, i.e. the very fact of the eschatological order at work in advance.

The passage Christ quoted from Isaiah was only a compact summary. But partly in manifest traits, partly in traits scarcely noted or suggested by the tradition, as soon as our sight has become keen, we can see ever more clearly that Christ embodied comprehensively the characteristics of a charismatic, and they round out into a coherent picture which by its very consistency bears the stamp of genuineness.

In ancient Israel one would have recognized and classified him as the typical ish Elohim, as a "man of God." Such a man of God was a holy one of God: I presume that in Christ's time the name of the typical holy man was "the holy one of God," and that as such it meant not the Messiah but simply an acknowledged holy man.

We find this title in the mouth of sick persons whom Christ healed. It is almost a matter of course that such a title, which in itself perhaps only meant the ish Elohim, was afterwards heightened to Messianic significance, and then regarded as a testimony to Jesus' Messianic rank on the part of the demons possessing the sick person (which testimony he naturally had to reject as coming from the devil).

The individual traits of such an ish Elohim we must examine briefly in the following paragraphs.

In I Cor. xii. 4 ff. Paul names the energēmata as charismatic gifts and explains them in v. 10 as energēmata dynameōn (workings of powers). The Synoptists apply the same concept of dynamis to Jesus' own activity, and they say of him that he bestowed upon his disciples the dynamis [power] in addition to the exousia [authority].

Paul connects the iamata closely with them. The iamata are the gift of healings, the spiritual gift so characteristic of Jesus. In Mt. iv. 24 the character of these healings is clear. No case is related, e.g., of the cure of bodily injuries, broken limbs, and the like, the healing of which would be a real miracle. Rather the verse refers to manifold sicknesses and painful ailments, with specific mention of demoniacs, lunatics, and paralytics. In other words, they were ailments which go back to essentially nervous and psychic causes, disturbances, and inhibitions, i.e. just the paralytic manifestations which today are often traced back to nervous disturbances and specifically to psychic complexes, and which often vanish when such complexes are resolved. We must also mention women suffering from haemorrhage, a phenomenon which is hysterically conditioned. Even blindness, deafness, and dumbness are often hysterically and nervously conditioned. With regard to healings of this sort, there is much to be learned from the authentic autobiographical record written by Blumhardt shortly after the healing of a blind and dumb child.

That such healings can also happen outside the charismatic sphere, by simple psychic influence, has long been known. A physician related to me healed a blinded woman in this way. F. von Edelsheim wrote in *Das Evangelion nach Markos*, 1931, p. 249:

Last year Professor Stock, director of the University Clinic at Tübingen, by a few minutes of suggestive command restored the sight of a man blinded by a powder explosion, and healed him.

More difficult to believe are the healings of lepers. But as D. Frankenburg informs me, leprosy in South Arabia is actually called the "royal sickness." "Royal sickness" means the sickness which only a king can heal by the charismatic gift of his particular position. The name points at least to a general widespread belief that there were such healings. F. von Edelsheim says on p. 57:

Leprosy is called saraat in Aramaic. There were two kinds, the ordinary saraat and the naga saraat. It is not lepra, but a sickness known to-day under the name vitiligo. A nervously occasioned form of the same disease is known. It is characteristic of this sickness that the skin appears snow-white at a certain stage.

Of all healings perhaps the healing of "possession," of demoniac control, appears to us most intelligible to-day. It was compounded of elements of schizophrenia and domination by fixed ideas, was rooted in religious ideas, and, for the latter reason, was particularly and most easily accessible to the spiritual power of a "holy one of God."

To the charismatic gift of healing one must add the charismatic's power to bless a little food, in itself too little to satisfy hungry people, and make it sufficient to satisfy the hunger of many who receive a portion from his hands. Similar tales occur even in the narratives from Bad Boll, and they are also found in the life of St. Francis. In Christ's life the "miraculous feeding" is in place here. The miracle-loving phantasy of those who handed down the tradition developed out of it a miraculous increase of the bread. However, a record in the apocryphal Acta Johannis helps us to conjecture what it was originally. (*Texts and Studies*, p. 9) In ch. viii we read:

When Christ was invited and went to a meal, we went with him. Before each of us a loaf was then laid, and Christ also received a loaf. He then blessed his loaf and divided it among us. And from the little (which each received as part of the bread blessed by Christ) each one of us was satisfied. But our own loaves remained whole (and uneaten).

This story may show us what was meant originally in the gospel narratives, viz. the power of the charismatic to satisfy the hunger of the recipients by a small gift which he had blessed. The manner of the working is analogous to that of healing.

In later tradition, these mighty deeds of Christ's are conceived in the special sense of proofs of Messiahship. Hence, later tradition was influenced by the later Christology, according to which Jesus had come as the full Messiah, and from the outset had appeared and revealed himself as Messiah. His charismatic acts are now fused with the pragmatism of the epiphany of the Messiah. They were certainly not so conceived in the mind of Christ and our narratives still show it. His charismatic acts were not done by him

in order to supply proofs of his Messianic rank or the like. They were not carried out in accordance with some plan; rather they flowed spontaneously from the love-filled disposition of him who knew that he was sent to seek and to save that which was lost. In the fact that they took place, they confirmed what Jesus had taught, viz. that the kingdom was in the act of dawning as God's power, but they were not done in order to afford that proof.

Some of the traits used in performing an exorcism may seem strange, but to test their historicity the thing needed is not to look for some floating fairy tales as the basis, but to study how exorcists really proceed and what sort of phenomena occur, whether hallucinatory or genuine, as applied to the case of the sick person or that of the onlookers. In this respect Blumhardt's own account of the healing of Miss Gottliebin Dittus is instructive.

The lady was said to be possessed, and the process of healing took two years. An eye-witness, whose veracity is undoubted, describes features which reduce almost to insignificance those in the gospel narratives which are said to be incredible. The problem still remains, however, as to what extent they took place objectively. The important point is to establish the nature of that which people in a charismatic milieu are subjectively convinced they have heard or seen. One feature of Christ's practice in exorcising is significantly illuminated when Blumhardt writes expressly "I never permit the demons to speak. I command them to be silent." That is how a typical charismatic actually proceeds. If Wrede had taken the charismatic milieu and the typical charismatic procedure into account, he would hardly have made the assertions that he did.

Among the healings which Jesus performed are those which took place at a distance, e.g. the case of the centurion of Capernaum. The sceptic's comment is: Surely no one can believe in an operation at a distance like this. We reply: Quite so if it were not better, instead of passing facile judgment, to study for once the matter itself and its actual setting, i.e. in actual and attested experiences. Blumhardt's narratives provide material enough. How the phenomena may be explained is another matter, but that they occur as actual phenomena is to-day no longer a question. A more thorough examination of the whole subject of charismatic phenomena might lead to circumspection. Macdonald was a thorough expert in the charismatic milieu of Islam, and as early as 1908, in his introduction to *The Religious Attitude and Life of Islam* (Chicago, 1908), he expressed his view that:

> I am driven to regard telepathy as proved.

Moreover, it is not in accordance with sound method to ask first: Did the word of the charismatic, who promised a healing at a distance, produce objective results? The results might have been fortuitous or interpolated by the narrator. The first question is: What was the charismatic confident that he could do in certain circumstances? Is it credible the Christ dared to say and actually uttered a word of power in such and such a form? Can that be confirmed by analogies? It can be confirmed, and the analogy is again offered us by the charismatic Paul. In all reality and without hesitation he believed

that he was capable of operating spiritually at a distance. He wrote from Ephesus about the case of incest in Corinth:

> For I verily, being absent in body (i.e. remaining in Ephesus) but present in spirit (i.e. in Corinth), have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing; in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus, to deliver (the incestuous person) unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

Acting together with that of the Corinthians while far away across the sea, Paul's spiritual power was to exercise a physical effect—in this case not a healing, but a disturbing effect—on the wrongdoer. Of the result we know nothing; there is no doubt that it would have been ascribed in a "saint's life" of Paul. The sceptic may stick to his scepticism but he has no historical justification for raising a doubt that Christ intended to act in this way.

In close connection with the other charismatic gifts, Paul mentions that of the logos, i.e. preaching. He regards it as a spiritual gift. It is the fundamental charisma of Christ and is explicitly conceived in the Synoptists as a charismatic gift. Thus Lk. iv. 18 gives the quotation from Isaiah as used by Jesus himself:

> The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach to the poor.

The gift of preaching, as we have said already, is here regarded as an effect of being anointed with the spirit, and Jesus as a preacher is the charismatic bearer of the spirit. In his preaching the charismatic gift is operative. As a consequence, the hearers exclaim:

> What is this? A new teaching with exousia.

Exousia is at times translated by "full authority." But that is too limited a meaning. Exousia is a late Greek word, which Delitzsch reproduces by geburah, mighty power. Thus Lk. xii. 5 uses it of God Himself: exousian echonta [having power], and similarly, therefore, in Mk. i. 27:

> he commandeth even the unclean spirits.

Preaching and power over the demons are regarded here as on the same level, i.e. the level of supernatural charismatic power. Compare also Mt. xiii. 54:

> Whence the wisdom and the dynamesis?

We have already discussed the term charis=charisma in Lk. iv. 22. Charis means grace, and hence blessing as a gift of grace. In this way it becomes a synonym of dynamis. Compare Acts vi. 8:

> Stefanos pleres charitos kai dynameos [Stephen, full of grace and power].

Stephen does "signs and great wonders" as a charismatic; his gift is characterized by charis and dynamis.

Probably the strangest of all the charismatic gifts is the distinguishing of spirits, the diakrisis pneumatōn, the discriminatio spirituum. As the very name indicates, the conception and the thing itself come from the sphere of second sight and necromancy, and are related to the gift of exorcism. No wonder therefore that this gift was found in Jesus. In it, again, we find the typical interrelation of characteristics, and hence a unity which is itself a criterion of genuineness.

The gift is primarily that of being able to distinguish spirits, i.e. evil spirits from good ones, in order to lay the former and call forth the latter. Secondly it is, in particular, the gift of discerning whether an evil or a good spirit impels a man who is possessed. From this point the meaning widens; it now becomes the capacity of being able to look into another person, to read his inner state, to read his evil or good thoughts. In Arabic, diakrisis is called firasa, from farasa=to distinguish. The gift of firasa plays the same role in legends of Arabian saints as diakrisis in Christian legends. The expression firasa may finally lose its original charismatic and supernatural meaning; it then signifies in general the gift of intuitive knowledge of men, and particularly the gift of reading a man's conduct and features so as to understand his inner being, his good or bad character, his nature generally. Thus firasa finally becomes a name for physiognomy and the study of character.

But in a charismatic milieu, the gift of discrimination and firasa always retain their original meaning of a gift of grace peculiar to the charismatic. Among the walis and the sufis of Islam, this gift is particularly characteristic. It is reported of nearly every great master among them. It was likewise characteristic of the charismatic circles of early Christian monasticism, where it received the special name of charisma dioratikon, the power of penetrating vision, a favourite subject in the lives of the great monks. The gift of discrimination as gift of "penetrating vision," of dioratikon, is a capacity which has its analogies in peculiar occurrences which are beginning to be seriously investigated to-day in so-called mediums. French psychologists call it *lucidité!*

With such a gift of penetration is connected at times a capacity of second sight, that is, the ability to scent, have a foreboding of, become aware of, at times actually to see, things or events at a distance. In Arabic this also is reckoned as firasa. This gift of second sight is one of the oldest of all charismatic gifts, and is the thoroughgoing characteristic of the primitive charismatic. The name of such a person in Israel was choseh, seer or visionary, like Samuel. A quite primitive form of this gift appears as the capacity of seeing and finding stray animals at a distance. Such persons are still found among primitive tribes. In Sanskrit there was the particular name govinda, cowfinder, for those thus endowed. It was an important gift for nomadic cattle-breeders. In the Old Testament the gift retains this form in the great early seer of Israel, Samuel, who finds Saul's stray asses for him.

Jesus' charismatic gift of diakrisis is recorded only as it were in hidden corners of our tradition. The narratives about it might in themselves seem to have no importance, but the very fact of their incidental character is historically important because it enables us to recognize the type, to per-

ceive how coherent it is, and how one trait supplements, furthers, and confirms another.

Hence, the narratives abound in such statements as:

> But he knew what was in men.

Or again:

> But when he perceived their thoughts.

A particularly typical firasa narrative (as penetration and likewise as second sight) is Jn. i. 47. Nathanael comes to Christ, and Christ says to him without sounding or questioning him:

> Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

That is the capacity of dioratikon, of firasa, which is in process of becoming an intuitive knowledge of the inner man. He proceeds:

> Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

At first the words seem to constitute an isolated, enigmatic hieroglyph, the story of a miracle that just happens to have been preserved. But to be content with that impression and to write the matter off in this way would be perverse. To deal with it methodically and historically, we must first determine quite definitely the class of the event which is itself at least alleged to have occurred, and we must find in the event the typical characteristics of the class. In the above case, we have to do with the well-known firasa which can be studied as a category. We have to do with a trait which is almost regularly repeated, e.g. in the biography of the Islamic saints. We may read how a wordly person mocks him or comes to him with doubt. He reveals to that man his innermost thoughts, reads his soul, or even relates an incident from his life. The mocker is overcome and recognizes his master, just as in Nathanael's case. Later, these features become conventional elements in the record, and as such are almost naturally and automatically applied to the saints as a class. But that does not raise doubts about their historicity generally nor that these stories originated in some historical event.

A trait characteristic of the primitive firasa is also reported of Jesus when he saw by second sight the water carrier who was to lead the disciples to the house of the Last Supper. Compare on this point the story of Samuel in I Sam. x. 3 which belongs to the same class. If Samuel had not really been able to find distant asses, Saul would not have gone to him and would not have paid him a quarter of a silver shekel. But if Samuel had this gift of second sight, one cannot perceive why a greater charismatic should not have had it. Even if the story that he saw the distant water carrier be a legend, we must nevertheless recognize the importance of understanding the kind of notions which formed the original environment of Jesus' miracles. These notions reveal the elements typical of charismatic endowment and behaviour.

One further trait, preserved by pure accident and scarcely observable, is that of charismatic metonymy, i.e. the descriptive renaming of disciples on the basis of firasa. Simon becomes Peter; the sons of Zebedee become Boanerges, sons of thunder.

Taken by itself and in isolation, metonymy looks like another curiosity, a personal idiosyncrasy. It loses this aspect when one sees it in the context of charismatic firasa. When I was a young man, and visited the east for the first time, I was invited to a notable ceremony in the house of the Sheikh el Bakri. The venerable old man sat on an elevated seat. Men of different ages were brought to him. He whispered something into their ears, whereupon they retired and were congratulated by those standing around. They had received a new name which they henceforth bore. The sheikh was the head of the descendants of the Caliph Abu Bakr, and also of the dervish orders. The hereditary charisma of the Bakrids united in him with that of the sufis. The whole ceremony was a crystallized form of what was originally a firasa in the form of a metonymy and had a charismatic purpose.

One further remark may be made in regard to the charismas generally, and especially to that of healing. Here, as in the case of other charismas, is an unusual gift, without doubt. But this gift is not an absolutely new faculty of the soul and its exercise is not *absolutely* distinguished and separated from ordinary activities and capacities. So it is also with the gift of firasa; it surpasses while it includes the natural gift of feeling what is going on in the soul of another. So it is with prophecy; it surpasses ordinary foresight, deliberation, and mere conjecture, but it undoubtedly takes these into its service. And so it was with Christ's healing; it went beyond the exercise of mere skill in healing; he was a miraculous physician.

THE AUTHOR OF SALVATION

W. A. Smart

I AM INDEBTED to Dean Shirley Jackson Case for two words whose religious significance lies largely in the fact that they have never become parts of a conventionalized theological vocabulary. In a class some years ago, he suggested that religions could be divided into religions of achievement and religions of rescue. The distinction is all the more apparent because we are not familiar with the terms.

In a religion of achievement, man saves himself. The standard is set, whether by a god or otherwise; if a man conforms to it he is religious, and if he fails to do so he sins. The functions of God in such a religion are first to set the standard, and then to act as judge and bestow rewards and punishments in proportion to merit. Pharisaism is a good illustration. According to the Pharisees, God had once taken Moses up into a mountain and kept him there some six weeks while he told him how he wanted people to live. This law of Moses—or law of God given through Moses—covered not only what we would call religion, but all the essential features in a complete culture. Man's part was simply to obey, for Jehovah would by no means justify the wicked nor condemn the righteous.

But it is unfair to the Pharisees that their name has come to represent the least attractive features in a type of religion which has many other examples. For there are other examples of religions of achievement. The Stoic philosophy, which took on many of the characteristics of religion in its later Roman form, was of the same type. Stoic teachers pictured the ideal life—for their interest was much more in ethics than in metaphysics at this stage—and they bade people achieve it. Those who undertook to do so and were successful would find life rewarding, and those who disregarded the teachings of the wise would find life disappointing. Man could either save himself or not as he chose. It has already been suggested in these chapters that Christianity in our day, as in other days, has in similar fashion depended very largely on man's ability to save himself. Religious humanism is a perfect example. This is a natural development from our modern emphasis on man's self-sufficiency and our loss of the sense of God.

Religions of rescue, on the other hand, start from an awareness of man's inadequacy and his need of some superhuman aid. If a man is overboard in the middle of the Atlantic, it is useless to instruct him in the best methods of swimming ashore. He cannot achieve anything in his own strength. Left to himself, he is doomed; and his only hope is in something or somebody outside himself who can rescue him.

From *The Contemporary Christ*, New York and Nashville, 1942, pp. 139-64. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.

Here too illustrations abound. Next to the Pharisaism in which Paul was trained, he was possibly more influenced by the many mystery religions which abounded in his world than by any others; and the very name by which these are often called, "religions of redemption," indicates their basic nature as religions of rescue. Man was inadequate to meet the miseries and the frustrations of that postwar world, and especially his final conflict in the battle with death; but through the techniques which the mysteries provided he was able to identify himself with the god of the cult and share in that god's victory.

Similarly, all the nature religions were testimonies to man's helplessness and his need of superhuman aid. The fertility of the soil, the storms on the sea, the rising of the sun, and the recurrence of the seasons—man could not control such things, and yet life and death were determined by them. He could only worship the gods in charge of these various functions, and hope.

We recognize in this distinction between religions of achievement and religions of rescue our old friends of the New Testament, salvation by works of the law and salvation by faith; and what we call Paul's conversion was a transfer from the one to the other. As a conscientious Pharisee, Paul thought to be religious by doing the things which God had commanded, but he failed. Deeper experience of life and an uncompromising conscience made him aware of the inevitable tension between the demands of a perfect God and any possible achievement of sinful man. Like our instruction to the drowning man to save himself by swimming ashore, he found that the commandment telling him how to live was really a sentence to death. He was utterly inadequate, and cried out in despair, "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?"

Christianity met him as the answer, as rescue for a drowning man. It was not a higher ideal that he discovered, for he already had the law which was "holy, and just, and good." His high ideals were already proving his doom. And it was not merely a decision to be more conscientious in the discharge of his religious obligations. His conscience had already driven him to distraction. It was what he called it, salvation, or rescue, by God through Christ because he was unable to save himself. Christianity was for Paul very definitely the process through which God reached down into the world to rescue helpless men.

> "I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
> He moved my soul to seek him, seeking me;
> It was not I that found, O Saviour true;
> No, I was found of thee."

All this reminds us that originally the Christian message was a gospel of salvation. The early Christians were sure that in the person of Christ God had broken into history to do something for men which they were powerless to do for themselves. Their preaching was not merely repeating the moral maxims of Jesus and urging men to conform to them. It was a call to accept the power which God had released in Christ. For Paul the gospel

was primarily power—not teaching, not reform, but power. It was the power of Christ, or rather the power of God made available through Christ. He was not ashamed of the gospel, because it was the power of God unto salvation. He prayed for himself that he might share the power of the resurrected Christ. He was not afraid of death and the grave because God had given him the victory over them. He defied Satan and the spiritual powers in high places because the power of Christ had conquered them. And he now had victory over sin; for that power had remade him, and he was now a new creation in Christ Jesus. A careful reading of Paul will reveal a surprising amount of emphasis on this idea that through Christ the power of God had entered into the world to rescue men.

This is at least one reason why Christological thought took the direction it did. Convinced that the power of God had been released through Christ, the church was from the first insistent on the closeness of relation between him and the Father. If it had wanted primarily teaching about God and righteousness, a prophet speaking in the name of God would have been adequate; but it wanted more than that. It wanted contact with God himself. By the time the Fourth Gospel was written, the old Jewish idea of messiahship had already become inadequate; and Jesus was interpreted as the temporary expression in human form of that eternal Logos which had been the agency of God's activity from the beginning, the power through which God created all things at the beginning, and through which he was still creating. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Later, the same theological interest produced the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine that Christ was not someone telling us about God, but was himself one Person in the God-head; and even the theory that was of *similar* substance with the Father was not satisfactory; he was declared to be of the *same* substance. Theologically all this is of antiquarian interest to us, for it is based on philosophic presuppositions which are no longer valid. But religiously we can feel the force of the contention for which the fathers fought so valiantly, that in having dealings with Christ they were actually having dealings with God, for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

We need not stop to ask what those early Christians desired to be saved from. Sometimes salvation was to "free from their slavery men who had always lived in fear of death." Sometimes they hoped to escape the horrors of a burning hell. Sometimes, as in the case of Paul, the need was more ethical, and they sought a power to break the hold which sin had on their lives. Sometimes, more mystically, they sought for a feeling of at-home-ness with God. But in any case, it was the good news of Christians that the grace which came through Jesus Christ was sufficient for them. They were sure of the power of their gospel to save to the uttermost any man from the illiterate slave to the profoundest philosopher, for it was the power of God and the wisdom of God.

But if the earliest gospel was the good news of rescue, it is certainly true that in recent years that note has been almost completely silenced. A perfect complex of reasons can be assigned, all of them probably interrelated. In the first place, of course, we have lost hell; and the loss has been serious.

The old preachers never were able to make heaven very appealing, but they could make hell horrible. Gates of pearl and pavements of gold, with angels playing harps and everyone wearing a crown, never did make the heart beat fast with excitement. A day on this earth was more exciting and more venturesome than a day in that static, uneventful golden city. But the licking of the sulphurous flames of hell was so real and so terrible that we read of people fainting in the congregations, while others cried out to the preacher to stop because they could not stand it. The point is not that people no longer believe in hell and the devil, but that they are no longer afraid of them, and do not motivate their conduct with them in mind. The famous Rev. Billy Sunday in one of his sermons delivered a blistering attack on the devil, and as he finished the delighted audience broke into spontaneous applause. Contrast that applause with the consternation of Jonathan Edwards' audiences, and you will see to what an extent the devil has lost his power to terrify. People are simply not interested in being saved from hell and the devil.

I am in earnest when I say that this loss is serious, not because I would recover His Satanic Majesty, but because we have found nothing to put in his place. Hell dramatized the evil in this world, and man's need of being rescued. It stood for the sinfulness of man, and for the inevitable results of sin in a moral world. So long as man really believed in a hell of eternal suffering and a grinning devil waiting to snatch him down into it, it was not necessary to argue with him about the fact that this is a moral universe and that immoral conduct is ruinous. One of the things which our preaching needs is a modern substitute for hell, something which will make us feel the terrible effects of conduct today as vividly as our fathers felt it. Men will not be concerned about being saved so long as there is nothing to be saved from.

The other side of this is the roseate, unbiblical picture of God which has grown up in the name of a God of love. God has been made, not Father, but Santa Claus. He has been represented, in spite of the facts of life, as being too sentimental to be willing to see his precious children suffer. Love has been interpreted, not as passion for the highest possible development of the one loved, but as weak and silly sentimentality. We have forgotten that the love of God is moral, and therefore is judgment. We have forgotten the God of Jesus, the God who could cast both soul and body into hell, who closed the door on the foolish virgins, who cast the sinner into a gehenna of fire where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. It was Jesus who told of a God to offend whom was worse than to be drowned in the lake or to lose the right eye. A moral God allows men, if they will, to crush themselves against his laws, and a civilization to ruin itself in its unrighteousness.

With the element of judgment left out of the character of God, it is not surprising that we have not had a gospel of salvation. Sin, repentance, forgiveness—these moral notes have not been sounded, and in their place has been pictured a flowering of our natural goodness in the warm, congenial

atmosphere of the gentle God. No need for a gospel of rescue here while we are sunning ourselves comfortably in the Father's house.

Not to labor analysis with too great detail, we may mention as one other reason for the disappearance of the gospel of rescue our idea of progress, or evolution. We have been told that every today grows out of yesterday and grows into tomorrow, and the idea has been repeated in a way to make us cease to expect anything to happen to disturb the rather monotonous chain of causation. No new beginnings, no radical change, no about-face, for the process works itself out almost mechanically. The most that preachers can do is to add a bit from time to time the sum of forces which are pushing the process away from evil and toward the good, and to get people to connect themselves with the church so that they will be exposed to these influences. There is no yawning chasm to be avoided, no day of judgment to be faced, no release from sin to be sought. By some law inherent in things themselves they are supposed gradually to get better with the passing of time, and we are saved by tearing pages from the calendar. If there are temporary setbacks, they will be made up in the general progress. Faith in God means faith that he will make everything come out right.

It is quite in harmony with this that we have so largely placed our hope in instruction. Not in education, but in instruction; for education has a wider connotation and can include the proper development of the entire personality, the will and feelings and motives as well as the mere matter of instruction. But we have indulged a rather naïve faith that salvation is in ideas. Our sermons have been instructive, but we have scarcely expected them to change people very radically, or expected God to change people through them. We have been timid about asking people to "accept Christ," or to "come to Christ," or about using any more modern phraseology to indicate a real change in life, the change from a life centered in self to a life centered in God.

And in our church schools, or Sunday schools, the chief emphasis has likewise been on instruction. We have assumed that conduct was motivated by information and by reason, in spite of the constant reiteration of the psychologists to the contrary. We have launched out on a campaign of character building, and the very phrase unconsciously suggests that we can do it without much help from God. We are the architects and the contractors, and the characters will be our buildings. We have been rightly insistent on right materials and right methods. The one thing which we are most apt to forget is to bring the child consciously face to face with God, and to teach him the place of God in the working out of his life's problems.

We may well remind ourselves that so far as *ideas* about religion are concerned, the Jews had everything that Jesus had. They called God "Father" before he did, wrote poems about his lovingkindness and mercy, and insisted that only the righteous would enter his kingdom. It has been said before that practically all the teachings of Jesus can be matched in the teachings of the rabbis before his time. The fact is often used to prove that

there was not much difference between them, but exactly the opposite deduction may just as logically be drawn. Possessed of the same ideas, they were utterly unable to bring God into the souls of people and recreate their lives as Jesus did. The rabbis taught people, but Jesus saved them. The rabbis could give them new ideas, but Jesus gave them new birth.

Before Paul's conversion, while he was still a Pharisee going beyond those of his own age in his zeal for the law, he had practically all the information about religion that he had later, except an experiential knowledge of its saving power. His contact with Christ brought him, not new ideas, but new power, a completely new orientation of his life around a new center.

It is a significant fact that the philosophers, who have been the teachers of the race, have seldom been able to influence the masses. The ethics of Stoicism reads in some places like the moralizings of Paul, but while the Stoics were pursuing their interesting ethical speculations the people went on a debauch. Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* still grace the center tables of many Christian people, and many of the interpretations of life found in them are worthy of high place in any age. And yet in spite of the fact that he combined the prestige of an emperor with the insights of a really great moralist, he did very little to lift his people toward the ideals which he saw. There is no church of the Great Rabbi Gamaliel, and no salvation through the Great Moralist Aurelius.

It was here that Judaism and Christianity finally parted. One found salvation in a system and the other in a person. Judaism offered loyalty to the law, which was a high ethical system, the noblest revelation of God which antiquity had produced. It is interesting to notice to what extent the Jew said the same things about his law which the Christians later said about Christ. It was the revelation of God. It was the standard of right and wrong. It was the center around which the Jewish church was united. It was the hope of final salvation in the day of judgment. He sang inspired and inspiring songs about his love for it. And long after he had become a Christian, Paul could still say that it was holy and just and good. So the Jew followed his system, and has justified his existence through the ages in terms of loyalty to it.

But Christianity found its salvation not described in a book, but incarnate in a life, the Christ who was the power of God and the wisdom of God.

That was the natural way for God to bring men to himself, by expressing himself in a man. Goodness does not really exist until it exists in a life, just as color does not exist except as it exists in colored objects. There is no such thing as love except as someone actually feels love for someone else. Until then it is merely an abstraction. There is no truth nor honor, no gentleness nor strength, except as qualities of someone who actually experiences them in life. Otherwise they are as far from reality as an architect's drawing is from a completed building. Such things are qualities of God because God is Person; and he could never make them either real or winsome to us except by making them express themselves in another Person, a Person whom we could see and appreciate. We are not saved by ideas,

but by persons; and so God's great idea, his Word, became flesh and dwelt among us.

When we see this Word of God incarnate we see what God meant, for he is the final commentary on everything that he said. The best way to understand the Beatitudes, for instance, is to take them as a sketch of his character and illustrate them from his life. He could talk of love because love was the very essence of his being. He could talk of God because he and the Father were one, and to see him was to see the Father. If the words of Jesus had come to us through a phonograph record, with no life to incarnate them, they would rank with the exalted teachings of all times, but they would not have the redeeming power which radiates from the Word of God incarnate. We must have "ideal manhood clothed in real man" to make the ideal real to us, and we must have "God seen in Christ" if God is to be a Redeemer. God could reach us in no other way as he has reached us through a life. . . . .

The contemporary Christ! At times we think that we have him securely shut up in his first century Palestine, and then we discover him walking beside us. The things he says are so simple, and so contemporary, and so impossible. He seems not to fit into this world we know so well; but when we stop long enough to hear what he is saying, we feel that there is no hope for the world unless it will listen to him. He speaks with Palestinian accent the homely things that were true in his world so long ago, and all at once it dawns on us that they are also the things by which our world must live if it would escape the abyss.

APPENDIX

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BACON, BENJAMIN W.: Born Litchfield, Conn., 1860; died 1932. Educated in Germany and Switzerland, Yale Univ. (A.B. 1881, B.D. 1884, A.M. 1892). Ordained Cong. ministry 1884. Pastor Old Lyme, Conn., 1884-1889, Oswego, N. Y., 1889-1896; instr. New Testament Greek 1896-1897, prof. New Testament criticism and exegesis after 1897, Yale Univ. Among his books are *An Introduction to the New Testament* (1900), *The Story of St. Paul* (1904), *Beginnings of the Gospel Story* (1909), *The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate* (1909), *Jesus the Son of God* (1911), *The Making of the New Testament* (1912), *Is Mark a Roman Gospel?* (1919), *Jesus and Paul* (1921), *The Gospel of Mark, Its Composition and Date* (1925), *The Apostolic Message* (1925), *The Story of Jesus* (1927), *Studies in Matthew* (1930). In the preface to the article contained in this volume, written a few weeks before his death, Professor Bacon wrote: "Only in proportion as the results of historical criticism and of such newer inquiries and techniques are brought to bear upon the problem, may we hope to bring to the religious needs of today in fuller measure than hitherto, the rich resources of the Gospel of the Hellenists." Such a statement expresses his general constructive attitude toward New Testament scholarship.

John and the Synoptists, from *The Gospel of the Hellenists* 115

BAILLIE, JOHN: Born Gairloch, Scotland, 1886. Educated in Inverness Royal Academy, Edinburgh Univ. (A.M. 1908), Univ. of Jena, Univ. of Marburg. Richards prof. Christian Theology, Auburn Theol. Sem. 1919-1927; prof. systematic theology, Emmanuel Col., Univ. of Toronto, 1927-1930; Roosevelt prof. systematic theology, Union Theol. Sem., 1930-1934; prof. divinity, Univ. of Edinburgh, since 1934. Moderator, General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1943. He is author of *The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul* (1926), *The Interpretation of Religion* (1928), *The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity* (1929), *And the Life Everlasting* (1933), *A Diary of Private Prayer* (1936), *Our Knowledge of God* (1939). As a Christian theologian teaching in several countries, he has compelled not only a large, but an eager, audience.

Was He Really the Founder? from *The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity* 33

BENNETT, JOHN C.: Born Kingston, Ont., Can., 1902. Educated Phillips Exeter Acad., Williams Col. (A.B. 1924), Mansfield Col., Oxford Univ. (A.B. 1926, A.M. 1930), Union Theol. Sem. (B.D. 1927, S.T.M. 1929). Instr. theology, Union Theol. Sem., 1930-1931; assistant prof. Christian theology, Auburn Theol. Sem., 1931-1935, asso. prof. 1935-1938; prof. Christian theology and philosophy of religion, Pacific School of Religion, 1938-1943; prof. theology, Union Theol. Sem., since 1943. Ordained Cong. ministry 1939. He has given lectures at many seminaries and universities, including the Nathaniel W. Taylor lectures at Yale. He is author of *Social Salvation* (1935), *Christianity—and Our World* (1936), *Christian Realism* (1941). Among the socially minded theologians in America he has held a place of prominence through his books, lectures, and editing of the Hazen Books on religion.

Christianity and Secularism, from *Christianity—and Our World* 314

BERDYAEV, NICHOLAS A.: Born Kiev, Russia, 1874. Educated in Germany and Russia; driven from Russia, 1922, because of his opposition to Communism. Teacher Moscow Univ. and Russisches Wissenschaftliches, Berlin. In recent years he has lived in Paris. His writings include *Un nouveau Moyen-Age* (1927), *Von der*

Würde des Christentums und der Unwürde der Christen (1937), *Le Christianisme et la lutte des classes* (1932), *Le Marxisme et la religion, L'esprit de Dostoievsky, Esprit et liberté* (1933), *Le problème du Communisme* (1933), and other untranslated Russian books. In English his viewpoints have been expressed mainly through magazine articles. After his adieu to Marxian Socialism he became a neo-Kantian idealist. He views the bourgeois mentality as the antichrist; hopes to restore Christianity to its original symbols in contrast to its endangered place in a naturalistic culture; is somewhat of a gnostic mystic, as influenced by Solovev; is a broad international figure who is a "Russian religionist, trained in German philosophy, writing in French," and appreciated by English and American students.

Christian Optimism and Pessimism 209

BRANSCOMB, B. HARVIE: Born Huntsville, Ala., 1894. Educated Birmingham-Southern Col. (A.B. 1914), Oxford Univ. (Rhodes scholar A.B., A.M.), Columbia Univ. (Ph.D. 1924). Guggenheim fellow, 1931-1932. Adjunct prof. philosophy, Southern Methodist Univ., 1919-1920, asso. prof. New Testament 1920-1921, prof. 1921-1925; prof. New Testament, School of Religion, Duke Univ., since 1925, also director of libraries since 1934, chairman division of ancient languages and literatures since 1937. Member advisory council, *Religion in Life*. He has written *Jesus and the Law of Moses* (1930), *The Teachings of Jesus* (1931), *The Gospel of Mark* (1937), *Teaching with Books* (1940). A leading New Testament interpreter from the Southern states, whose scholarship rapidly came to the fore through the appearance of *The Teachings of Jesus*. No book on the teaching ministry of Jesus has superseded this volume.

Did Jesus Regard Himself as the Messiah? from *The Gospel of Mark* 355

BRIGHTMAN, EDGAR SHEFFIELD: Born Holbrook, Mass., 1884. Educated Brown Univ. (A.B. 1906, A.M. 1908), Berlin Univ., Marburg Univ., Boston Univ. (S.T.B. 1910, Ph.D. 1912). Teacher philosophy and psychology, Nebraska Wesleyan Univ. 1912-1915; asso. prof. 1915-1917, prof. 1917-1919, ethics and religion, Wesleyan Univ., Conn.; since 1919 Borden P. Bowne prof. philosophy, Boston Univ. His chief writings are *Sources of the Hexateuch* (1918), *An Introduction to Philosophy* (1925), *Immortality in Post-Kantian Idealism* (1925), *Religious Values* (1925), *A Philosophy of Ideals* (1928), *The Problem of God* (1930), *The Finding of God* (1931), *Moral Laws* (1933), *Personality and Religion* (1934), *A Philosophy of Religion* (1940), *The Spiritual Life* (1942). He has been a leading exponent of the philosophic view known as "Personalism," in which coherent thinking is the test of truth and personality is the key to the nature of reality; in such a scheme of thinking, Jesus as the central figure of Christianity is rationally seen as the highest concept of personality.

The Essence of Christianity 368

BRUNNER, EMIL: Born 1889. Prof. systematic and practical theology, Univ. of Zurich, Switzerland. Holds degree D. Theol. Among his many books are *The Word and the World* (1931), *The Mediator* (1934), *The Theology of Crisis* (1935), *The Divine Imperative* (1937), *Philosophy of Religion* (1937), *Man in Revolt* (1939). As a member of the European neosupernaturalists also allied with the crisis theological movement, he with Karl Barth has been stimulating to American religious thinkers.

The Problem of Ethics, from *The Theology of Crisis* 253

BULTMANN, RUDOLF: Born Wiefelstede, Oldenburg, Germany, 1884. Educated universities of Tübingen, Berlin, Marburg; holds degree D. Theol. Teacher New Testament theology and criticism at Breslau Univ., Giessen, 1920-1921; Marburg Univ. 1912-1916, since 1921. Among his writings *Jesus* has been translated into English as *Jesus and the Word*. Other important books are *Die Geschichte der*

synoptischen Tradition and *Glauben und Verstehen*. He has identified himself as a neosupernaturalist in his theology, but he is especially a virile New Testament critic deeply influenced by the critical schools of "history of religions" and form criticism.

The Kingdom of God, from *Jesus and the Word* 301

BURKITT, FRANCIS C.: Born London, England, 1864; died 1935. Educated Harrow and Trinity Col., Cambridge Univ. Lecturer in paleography 1904-1905, Norrisian prof. divinity after 1905, Cambridge Univ. Among his more recent writings are *Christian Beginnings* (1924), *Christian Worship* (1930), *Church and Gnosis* (1932), *Jesus Christ: An Historical Outline* (1932), "The Debt of Christianity to Judaism" in *The Legacy of Israel* (1927), "The Prophets of Israel" in the *S.P.C.K. Commentary* (1928), "The Life of Jesus" in *The History of Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge* (1929). Interested in the Latin and Syriac versions of the New Testament, deeply concerned with Christian origins, loyal son of the Church of England, he was "almost the last of a generation of English scholars which substantially advanced the critical investigation of early Christianity."

The Man of Divine Fire, from *The History of Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge* 339

CADOUX, CECIL JOHN: Born Smyrna, Turkey, 1883. Educated Stamford House School, Croydon; St. Dunstan's Col., Catford; Strand School, King's Col., London; Mansfield Col., Oxford. Ishewood fellow and lecturer in Hebrew, Mansfield Col., Oxford, 1914-1919; prof. New Testament criticism, exegesis, and theology, and Christian sociology, Yorkshire United Independent Col., Bradford, 1919-1933; since 1933 Mackennal prof. church history and vice-principal, Mansfield Col., Oxford. His writings include *The Early Christian Attitude to War* (1919), *The Early Church and the World* (1925), *The Resurrection and Second Advent of Jesus* (1927), *The Case for Evangelical Modernism* (1938), and articles in religious and theological periodicals. No recent volume has more realistically portrayed the viewpoint of constructive liberalism in New Testament appreciations than the volume quoted in this article.

The Way to the Real Jesus, from *The Case for Evangelical Modernism* . 195

CASE, SHIRLEY JACKSON: Born Hatfield Point, N.B., Can., 1872. Educated Acadia Univ. (A.B. 1893, A.M. 1896), Yale Univ. (B.D. 1904, Ph.D. 1906), Univ. of Marburg. Instr. New Testament Greek, Yale Univ., 1905-1906; prof. history and philosophy of religion, Bates Col., Lewiston, Me., 1906-1908; assistant prof. New Testament interpretation 1908-1919, asso. prof. 1913-1915, prof. 1915-1917, prof. early church history and New Testament interpretation 1917-1925, prof. history of early Christianity 1925-1938, chairman dept. of church history 1923-1938, dean Divinity School, 1933-1938, dean emeritus since 1938, Univ. of Chicago, prof. religion and dean of School of Religion, Florida Southern Col., since 1939. Managing editor *American Journal of Theology*, 1912-1920; editor *Journal of Religion* 1927-1939. Among his more recent writings are *Jesus—A New Biography* (1927), *Studies in Early Christianity* (1928), *Jesus Through the Centuries* (1931), *The Social Triumph of the Ancient Church* (1933), *Makers of Christianity from Jesus to Charlemagne* (1934), *Highways of Christian Doctrine* (1936), *The Christian Philosophy of History* (1943). He is one of the pioneers in attempting to show the intimate relationship of the gospel to the social culture in which it grew, a viewpoint to which form criticism has given special stress in the last twenty-five years.

The Return to the Historical Jesus, from *Jesus—A New Biography* . . . 64

COLWELL, ERNEST CADMAN: Born Halstead, Pa., 1901. Educated Emory Univ. (Ph.B. 1923, B.D. 1927); Univ. of Chicago (Ph.D. 1930). Instr. English literature and Bible,

Emory Univ., 1924- 1928; assistant prof. New Testament literature 1930-1938, asso. prof. 1938-1939, prof. and dean of Divinity School since 1939, Univ. of Chicago. He is author of *The Greek of the Fourth Gospel* (1931), *John Defends the Gospel* (1936), *The Study of the Bible* (1937), *The Four Gospels of Karahissar* (Vol. I, 1936), *Elizabeth Day McCormick Apocalypse* (Vol. II, 1939); editor of *Prolegomena to the Study of Lectionary Text of the Gospels* (with D. W. Riddle, 1933), *A Greek Papyrus Reader* (with J. R. Mantey, 1939); book review editor *Journal of Biblical Literature*. He is a versatile scholar whose creative ability has been widely appreciated, especially through his work on Greek manuscripts, the lecture platform, and his administrative activities.

The Evangelist's Purpose, from *John Defends the Gospel* 30

CRAIG, CLARENCE TUCKER: Born Benton Harbor, Mich., 1895. Educated Morningside Col. (A.B. 1915), Boston Univ. (S.T.B. 1919, Ph.D. 1924), Harvard Univ., Basel Univ., Switzerland, Univ. of Berlin. Teacher Anglo-Chinese Col., Foochow, China, 1915-1916. Ordained Meth. ministry 1918. Pastorates in Massachusetts, Indiana, Ohio, New York 1918-1928; prof. New Testament language and literature, Oberlin School of Theology, since 1928. Teacher Garrett Biblical Inst., 1931, 1934. His writings include *The Christian's Personal Religion* (1925), *Jesus in Our Teaching* (1931), *We Have an Altar* (1934), *The Study of the New Testament* (1939), *The Beginning of Christianity* (1943). Among the liberal, constructive New Testament scholars he holds a place of high rank as a lecturer before ministers. His interpretation of the eschatogoical problem as related to Jesus has been one of the most stimulating.

Sacramental Interest in the Fourth Gospel 149

DIBELIUS, MARTIN: Born Dresden, Germany, 1883. Educated universities of Neuchatel, Leipzig, Tübingen, Berlin. Teacher of New Testament at Berlin 1910-1915, Heidelberg since 1915. Among his many books the following have won admirable attention in their English translations: *From Tradition to Gospel* (1935), *A Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature* (1936), *The Message of Jesus Christ* (1939), *The Sermon on the Mount* (1940). Of contemporary German New Testament critics he holds a place of foremost importance among English and American students, being particularly known through his constructive development of form criticism.

The Sermon on the Mount and Christ's Mission, from *The Sermon on the Mount* 267

DODD, CHARLES H.: Born Wrexham, Denbighshire, 1884. Educated Wrexham; University Col., Oxford; Berlin; Magdalen Col., Cambridge; Manchester; Mansfield Col., Oxford. Ordained Cong. ministry 1912. Minister Cong. Church, Warwick, 1912-1915, 1918-1919. Rylands prof. Biblical criticism and exegesis, Manchester, 1930-1935; Norris-Hulse prof. divinity, Cambridge Univ., since 1935; fellow of Jesus Col., Cambridge, since 1936. He has given many series of lectures at colleges and universities in England and U. S. His writings include *The Meaning of Paul for Today* (1920), *The Gospel in the New Testament* (1926), *The Authority of the Bible* (1928), *The Bible and Its Background* (1931), *The Epistle to the Romans* in "The Moffatt Commentary" (1932), *There and Back Again* (1932), *The Bible and the Greeks* (1935), *The Parables of the Kingdom* (1935), *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (1936), *The Present Task in New Testament Studies* (1936), *The Communion of Saints* (1936), *History and the Gospel* (1937). No New Testament scholar today has done more than he to wed New Testament criticism to a constructive note. Nor has any scholar created more lively interest in the eschatological problem than he because of his stress on "realized eschatology."

Realized Eschatology, from *The Parables of the Kingdom* 263

FERRÉ, NELS F. S.: Born Lulea, Sweden, 1908; came to U. S. 1921. Educated Boston Univ. (A.B. 1931), Andover Newton Theol. Sem. (B.D. 1934), Harvard Univ. (A.M. 1936, Ph.D. 1938), universities of Uppsala and Lund as Sheldon traveling fellow from Harvard. Instr. philosophy, 1937-1938, assistant prof. philosophy of religion, 1938-1940, Abbot prof. Christian theology since 1940, Andover Newton Theol. Sem. He is author of *Swedish Contributions to Modern Theology* (1939), *The Christian Fellowship* (1940), *The Christian Faith* (1942). Through both his own books and his translation of Swedish writings he has opened up new vistas regarding the meaning of *agape*, a unique feature of the Christian faith.

God as Agape, from *Swedish Contributions to Modern Theology* 293

FILSON, FLOYD V.: Born Hamilton, Mo., 1896. Educated Park Col. (A.B. 1918), Presby. Theol. Sem. (B.D. 1922), Univ. of Basel, Switzerland (Th.D. 1930). Ordained Presby. ministry 1922. Instr. New Testament Greek, Presby. Theol. Sem., 1923-1930, prof. New Testament literature and history since 1930. He is author of *St. Paul's Conception of Recompense* (1931), *Origins of the Gospels* (1938), *Pioneers of the Christian Church* (1940), *One Lord, One Faith* (1943); co-translator of Rudolf Otto's *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man* (1938). Two primary contributions come from his labors: (1) his co-translating of Otto's book on Jesus; (2) his making the results of gospel research of recent years available in succinct form for ministers.

Form Criticism, from *Origins of the Gospels* 69

GOODSPEED, EDGAR J.: Born Quincy, Ill., 1871. Educated Denison Univ. (A.B. 1890), Yale Univ., Univ. of Chicago (B.D. 1897, Ph.D. 1898), Univ. of Berlin. Instr. biblical and patristic Greek, 1902-1905, assistant prof., 1905-1910, asso. prof., 1910-1915, prof. 1915-1937, secretary to the president, 1920-1924, chairman New Testament dept., 1923-1937, distinguished service prof., 1933-1937, prof. emeritus since 1937, Univ. of Chicago; lecturer in history, Univ. of Calif., 1938-1941; lecturer in biblical literature, Scripps Col., 1941. He is author of *The Story of the New Testament* (1916), *Harmony of the Synoptic Gospels* (with E. D. Burton, 1917), *The New Testament—An American Translation* (1923) *The Making of the English New Testament* (1925), *The Formation of the New Testament* (1926), *New Solutions of New Testament Problems* (1927), *Strange New Gospels* (1931), *The Meaning of Ephesians* (1933), *The Story of the Old Testament* (1936), *An Introduction to the New Testament* (1937), *New Chapters in New Testament Study* (1937), *The Apocrypha—An American Translation* (1938), *Christianity Goes to Press* (1940), *Four Pillars of Democracy* (1940), *How Came the Bible?* (1940), *History of Early Christian Literature* (1941). One of America's most prolific writers in the New Testament field, especially noted for his New Testament translation, he is an articulate scholar whose clear literary style has made extremely readable a very broad field of New Testament studies.

The Original Language of the Gospels 58

GRANT, FREDERICK C.: Born Beloit, Wis., 1891. Educated Lawrence Col. and Nashotah House, General Theol. Sem. (B.D. 1913), Western Theol. Sem. (S.T.M. 1916, Th.D., 1922). Deacon 1912, priest 1913, Protestant Episcopal Church; served churches in Michigan and Illinois, 1912-1924. Dean Bexley Hall, Divinity School of Kenyon Col., 1924-1926; prof. systematic theology, Berkeley Divinity School, Middletown, Conn., 1926-1927; dean Western Theol. Sem., Evanston, 1927-1933; president Seabury-Western Theol. Sem., 1927-1938; prof. New Testament, Union Theol. Sem., since 1938; visiting prof., Univ. of Chicago, 1928-1937. Editor in chief *Anglican Theological Review* since 1924. Besides his translations—*Form Criticism: A New Method of New Testament Research* by Bultmann and Kundsin (1934), *The History of Primitive Christianity* by Weiss (1937), *The Message of Jesus Christ* by Dibelius (1939)—he is author of many articles and a number

of books, among them *The Economic Background of the Gospels* (1926), *The Growth of the Gospels* (1933), *The Gospel of the Kingdom* (1940), *The Earliest Gospel* (1943). Through his translations, his leadership among form-criticism critics in America, and his role of editor he has held a place of high rank among New Testament scholars.

Form Criticism and the Christian Faith 82

GUIGNEBERT, CHARLES: Born Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, France, 1867; died 1939. Teacher history at Eureux, Pau, Toulouse, and Voltaire (de los Liceos); since 1906 prof. of Christianity, Univ. of Paris. A number of liberal constructive New Testament writings have come from his research, two of them translated into the English language: *Christianity, Past and Present* (1927), and *Jesus* (1935). The latter work is one of the most vigorous investigations of the gospels as dependable bases for constructing a historical portrait of Jesus.

The Historical Existence of Jesus, from *Jesus* 171

HARKNESS, GEORGIA: Born Harkness, N. Y., 1891. Educated Cornell Univ. (A.B. 1912), Boston Univ. (M.A. 1920, M.R.E. 1920, Ph.D. 1923), Harvard Univ., Yale Univ., Union Theol. Sem. Teacher English Bible, Boston Univ. School of Religious Education, 1919-1920; assistant prof. religious education, Elmira Col., 1922, asso. prof. philosophy 1923, prof. philosophy 1926-1937; asso. prof. religion, Mount Holyoke Col., 1937-1939; since 1939 prof. applied theology, Garrett Biblical Inst. Ordained Meth. ministry 1926. Her writings include *Conflicts in Religious Thought* (1929), *John Calvin: The Man and His Ethics* (1931), *Holy Flame* (1935), *The Resources of Religion* (1936), *The Recovery of Ideals* (1937), *Religious Living* (1937), *The Faith by Which the Church Lives* (1940), *The Glory of God* (1943). Active in ecumenical conferences, poet as well as theologian, the only woman member of the American Theological Society, she has raised one of the most provocative voices among church-centered Christian theists.

Jesus Is Lord, from *The Faith by Which the Church Lives* 349

HARNACK, ADOLF: Born Dorpat, Germany, 1851; died 1930. Educated Univ. of Dorpat. Held degrees D. Theol., Ph.D., M.D., and Jur.D. Teacher church history at universities in Leipzig 1876-1879, Giessen 1879-1886, Marburg 1886-1888, Berlin from 1888 until his death. In the estimate of many he ranks as one of the greatest minds of the Christian centuries in his vast comprehension of the Christian tradition. Many scholarly volumes have resulted from his research, those particularly affecting the English-speaking world being *The Expansion of Christianity*, *The History of Dogma*, and *What Is Christianity?*

The Unique Character of the Gospels, from *What Is Christianity?* . 44

HORTON, WALTER MARSHALL: Born in Somerville, Mass., 1895. Educated Harvard Univ. (A.B. 1917), Union Theol. Sem. (B.D. 1920, S.T.M. 1923), Columbia Univ. (A.M. 1920, Ph.D. 1926), Sorbonne, Strasbourg Univ., Marburg Univ. Ordained Bapt. ministry 1919. Instr. philosophy of religion and systematic theology, Union Theol. Sem., 1922-1925; asso. prof. systematic theology 1925-1926, Fairfield prof. theology since 1926, Oberlin Graduate School of Theology. He is author of *Theism and the Modern Mood* (1930), *A Psychological Approach to Theology* (1931), *Theism and the Scientific Spirit* (1933), *Realistic Theology* (1934), *God* (1937), *Can Christianity Save Civilization?* (1940), *Our Eternal Contemporary* (1942); co-author of *The Church Through Half a Century* (1936), *Revelation* (1937), *The Christian Understanding of Man* (1938), *The Growth of Religion* (1938), *The Authority of the Faith* (1939). Primary among his many contributions as a philosopher of religion has been his keen analysis and fascinating presentation of types of thought as seen in different countries of recent years.

The Kingdom of God and the Church 321

HOUGH, LYNN HAROLD: Born Cadiz, Ohio, 1877. Education Scio Col. (A.B. 1898), Drew Theol. Sem. (B.D. 1905), New York Univ. Ordained Meth. ministry 1898. Pastor in U. S. and Canada, 1912-1930; prof. historical theology, Garrett Biblical Inst., 1914-1919; president Northwestern Univ., 1919-1920; prof. homiletics and Christian criticism of life, Drew Theol. Sem., since 1930, dean since 1934. Among his many books are *Adventures in the Minds of Men* (1927), *Personality and Science* (1930), *The University of Experience* (1932), *Vital Control* (1934), *The Church and Civilization* (1934), *The Great Evangel* (1936), *The Civilized Mind* (1937), *Free Men* (1939), *The Christian Criticism of Life* (1941), *Adventures in Understanding* (1941). As a Christian humanist he has with fine articulation evaluated the Christian tradition from the angle of the literary humanists.

The Incarnation, from *The Christian Criticism of Life* 231

HOWARD, WILBERT FRANCIS: Born 1880. Educated King Edward's School, Birmingham, England; Manchester Univ., Didsbury Col. Minister, Wesleyan Methodist Church in Glasgow, Manchester, Handsworth, and Wallasey. Visiting prof. Hellenistic Greek, Drew Theol. Sem., 1919; examiner in Biblical languages 1923-1926 and 1935-1938, in theology 1929-1931 and 1938-1940, London Univ.; in Hellenistic Greek and New Testament 1926-1928, Manchester Univ.; at Leeds Univ., 1938-1940; at Glasgow in Hellenistic Greek, 1928, 1934; at Oxford in theology, 1938. Dale lecturer at Mansfield Col., Oxford, 1940. Delegate British Methodist Conference to General Conference Methodist Episcopal Church, U.S.A., 1932. He is editor and joint-author of Dr. J. H. Moulton's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. II; author of numerous articles in theological journals. Among recent works on the Fourth Gospel, his book *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation* stands as one of the most comprehensive, profound, and appreciative.

Historicity of the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels, from *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation* 107

KNUDSON, ALBERT C.: Born Grandmeadow, Minn., 1873. Educated Univ. of Minnesota (A.B. 1893), Boston Univ. (S.T.B. 1896, Ph.D. 1900), universities of Jena and Berlin. Prof. church history, Denver Univ., 1898-1900; prof. philosophy and English Bible, Baker Univ., 1900-1902; prof. English Bible and philosophy, Allegheny Col., 1902-1906; prof. Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis, Boston Univ. School of Theology, 1906-1921, prof. systematic theology 1921-1938, dean 1926-1938, dean emeritus since 1938. He is author of *The Beacon Lights of Prophecy* (1914), *The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament* (1918), *The Prophetic Movement in Israel* (1921), *Present Tendencies in Religious Thought* (1924), *The Philosophy of Personalism* (1927), *The Doctrine of God* (1930), *The Doctrine of Redemption* (1933), *The Validity of Religious Experience* (1937), *The Principles of Christian Ethics* (1943). He is one of America's most comprehensive scholars, equally at home in the fields of the Old Testament, philosophy of religion, and systematic theology, whose major contribution has been the relating of the philosophy of personalism to the Christian tradition.

The New Christology, from *The Doctrine of Redemption* 223

KUNDSIN, KARL: A native of Latvia; educated in universities there and in Germany. In recent years prof. New Testament, Univ. of Riga, Latvia. His latest book is *Charakter und Ursprung der Johanneischen Reden* (1939). To the English-reading public he is best known through his "Primitive Christianity in the Light of Gospel Research," translated and edited by Frederick C. Grant in *Form Criticism* (1934), in which he applies the methods of form criticism in a fascinating manner to the developing eschatological situation in the Synoptic Gospels.

Primitive Christianity in the Light of Gospel Research 75

LEWIS, EDWIN: Born Newbury, England, 1881; came to U. S. 1904, naturalized 1916. Educated Mount Allison Univ., Can., Middlebury Col., Vt., United Free Church Col., Glasgow, New York State Col. for Teachers (A.B. 1915), Drew Theol. Sem. (B.D. 1908). Ordained Meth. ministry 1904. Pastor in North Dakota and New York, 1904-1916; instr. English, New York State Col. for Teachers, 1915-1916; instr. Greek and theology, Drew Theol. Sem., 1916-1918; adjunct prof. systematic theology, 1918-1920, prof. since 1920. He is author of *Jesus Christ and the Human Quest* (1924), *A Manual of Christian Beliefs* (1927), *God and Ourselves* (1931), *Great Christian Teachings* (1933), *A Christian Manifesto* (1934), *The Faith We Declare* (1939), *A Philosophy of the Christian Revelation* (1940), *A New Heaven and a New Earth* (1941); joint editor, *The Abingdon Bible Commentary*. Frequently classified as an American neosupernaturalist, he has been a leader in interpreting fundamental New Testament truths amidst the haze of modern biblical criticism.

The Gospel Figure, from *A Christian Manifesto* 343

LIETZMANN, HANS: Born Düsseldorf, Germany, 1875. Educated universities of Jena and Bonn (D. Theol.). Teacher church history at Jena, 1905-1908; Bonn, 1908-1905, 1908-1924; Berlin, where he succeeded Adolf Harnack, since 1924. A prolific writer and accurate scholar, he issued *Kleine Texte* (1900), critical editions of ordinarily inaccessible source material. In 1905 he brought forth the first of his five volumes of *Handbuch zum Neuen Testaments*. His two books best known in the English are *The Beginnings of the Christian Church* and *The Founding of the Church Universal*. As a scholar who combines scholarly acumen with sweeping devotional style, he has few peers.

The Gospel Portrait of Jesus, from *The Beginnings of the Christian Church* . 186

LIGHTFOOT, ROBERT H.: Born Wellingborough, Northants, 1883. Educated Eton; Worcester Col., Oxford; and Bishop's Hostel, Farnham. Curate of Haslemere 1909-1912; bursar Wells Theol. Col. 1912-1913, vice-principal 1913-1916, principal 1916-1919; fellow and chaplain Lincoln Col., Oxford, 1919-1921; since 1934 Dean Ireland prof. exegesis of Holy Scriptures, Oxford Univ. His writings include *History and Interpretation in the Gospels* (1935) and *Locality and Doctrine in the Gospels* (1938). The former work is one of the clearest critical interpretations of form criticism to come from an English scholar. It also shows a careful comparison of the gospel traditions.

A History of the Son of God, from *History and Interpretation of the Gospels* . . 121

LYMAN, MARY R. ELY: Born St. Johnsbury, Vt., 1887. Educated Mount Holyoke Col. (A.B. 1911), Union Theol. Sem. (B.D. 1919), Univ. of Chicago (Ph.D. 1924), Cambridge Univ. Teacher, Rockville High School, Conn., 1911-1913; general secretary Y.W.C.A., Mount Hoyloke Col., 1913-1916; Frederick Weyerhauser prof. religion, Vassar Col., 1921-1926; lecturer English Bible, Union Theol. Sem., and asso. in religion, Barnard Col., Columbia Univ. 1928-1940; dean and prof. religion, Sweet Briar Col., since 1940. She is author of *Knowledge of God in Johannine Thought* (1924), *The Fourth Gospel and the Life of To-Day* (1931), *The Christian Epic* (1936), *Jesus* (Hazen Series, 1937). Ranking as one of the leading women biblical scholars in America, she has written books deeply appreciated for their interpretations and their well-written style.

The First Christian Synthesis, from *The Fourth Gospel and the Life To-day* . . 164

MCCOWN, CHESTER CHARLTON: Born Orion, Ill., 1877. Educated DePauw Univ. (A.B. 1898), Garrett Biblical Inst. (B.D. 1902), universities of Heidelberg and Berlin, Univ. of Chicago (Ph.D. 1914). Ordained Meth. ministry 1898. Pastor in Illinois 1898-1899, 1900-1902, 1908-1909; prof. mathematics, Upper Iowa Univ., 1899-1900; principal American Methodist Institution, Calcutta, India, 1902-1906;

prof. biblical literature, Wesley Col., Grand Forks, N. D., 1909-1912, Y.M.C.A. Col., Chicago, 1912-1914; prof. New Testament literature and interpretation, Pacific School of Religion, since 1914, dean, 1928-1936; director, Palestinian Archaeological Institute, since 1936; Thayer fellow, American School of Oriental Research, Jerusalem, 1920-1921, director, 1929-1931, prof. and acting director 1935-1936; joint director, Yale Univ.-American School Expedition, Jerash, 1930-1931. He is author of *The Promise of His Coming* (1921), *The Testament of Solomon* (1922), *Genesis of the Social Gospel* (1929), *The Search for the Real Jesus* (1940); editor of *Journal of Palestine Oriental Society* (1930). He is a New Testament scholar whose interests have found more than ordinary activity in the archaeological pursuits, and whose "search for the real Jesus" has proved one of the most valuable survey studies of the last quarter century.

Jesus and the Problem of History, from *The Search for the Real Jesus* . . . 178

McGIFFERT, ARTHUR C., JR.: Born Cincinnati, Ohio, 1892. Educated Harvard Univ. (A.B. 1913), American School of Archaeology, Athens, Union Theol. Sem. (B.D. 1917), Columbia Univ. (A.M. 1917), Harvard Divinity School, Univ. of Zurich. Ordained Cong. ministry 1917. Pastor All Souls Church, Lowell, Mass., 1920-1926; prof. Christian theology, Chicago Theol. Sem., 1926-1939; president, Pacific School of Religion, since 1939. He is author of *Jonathan Edwards* (1932), *Young Emerson Speaks* (1938); editor of *Christianity as History and Faith* (1934). He is an American religious leader whose mind has been appreciated because of his work in the pulpit, his teaching and writing in the field of church history, and his administration of a theological school.

The Significance of Jesus 333

MACGREGGOR, GEORGE H. C.: Born Aberdeen, Scotland, 1892. Educated Eastbourne Col., Cambridge Univ. (A.B. 1912, A.M. 1922, B.D. 1929). Pastor in Scotland, 1918-1928; Bruce Lecturer, Glasgow, 1928; Hosmer prof. New Testament exegesis, Hartford Theol. Sem., U.S.A., 1929-1932; since 1933 prof. divinity and biblical criticism, Univ. of Glasgow. His writings include *The Gospel of John* (1928), *Eucharistic Origins* (1929), *Jew and Greek: Tutors unto Christ* (with A. C. Purdy, 1936), *The New Testament Basis of Pacifism* (1927). He is a New Testament scholar whose education and teaching have touched the intellectual life of England, Scotland, and the United States, and whose particular stimulus has been given in interpreting the relationship of Jesus to the Hellenistic culture in the first century.

History or Didactic Drama, from *The Gospel of John* 128

MACKINNON, JAMES: Born Turriff, Aberdeenshire, 1860. Educated universities of Edinburgh, Bonn, and Heidelberg. Lecturer and examiner in history, prof. ecclesiastical history at various universities in Scotland; has devoted himself to historic research as well as to academic teaching of history; has taken active part in educational administration as member of Edinburgh Provincial Committee for Training of Teachers and as convener of Education Committee of Edinburgh Royal Blind School; president, Carlyle Society, Scotland. Recent among his writings are *Luther and the Reformation* (4 vols., 1925-1930), *The Historic Jesus* (1931), *The Gospel in the Early Church* (1933), *From Christ to Constantine* (1936), *Calvin and the Reformation* (1936), *The Origins of the Reformation* (1939). He is a well-known Scottish scholar whose life in the study has been well balanced by his social interests, mainly those which have found him concerned with education for the blind.

The Synoptic Tradition, from *The Gospel in the Early Church* 13

MAJOR, HENRY D. A.: Born 1871. Educated St. John's Col. and University Col., New Zealand; Exeter Col., Oxford. Vicar of Merton, bicestor since 1929; principal, Ripon Hall, Oxford, since 1919; examining chaplain to the Bishop of Birming-

ham; select preacher, Oxford Univ., 1922; Cambridge, 1925, 1932; examiner Univ. of London; Noble lecturer, Harvard Univ., 1925-1926. Founder, *Modern Churchman*, 1911, and editor since that date. He is author of a number of books on English ecclesiastical questions, but is best known in America for his co-authorship with Manson and Wright of *The Mission and Message of Jesus* (1937).

Are the Gospels True History? from *The Mission and Message of Jesus* . . 21

MANSON, THOMAS W.: Born 1893. Educated in Glasgow Univ.; Christ's Col. and Westminster Col., Cambridge. Tutor, Westminster Col., 1922-1925; pastor, Presbyterian Church of England, 1925-1932; Yates prof. New Testament Greek and exegesis, Mansfield Col., Oxford, 1932-1936, and university lecturer in New Testament studies, 1935-1936; Russell lecturer, Auburn Theol. Sem., and Shaffer lecturer, Yale Univ., 1939; Rylands prof. Biblical criticism and exegesis, Univ. of Manchester, since 1936. He is author of *The Teaching of Jesus* (1931), *The Mission and Message of Jesus* (with H. D. A. Major and C. J. Wright, 1937); editor of *A Companion to the Bible* (1939); contributor to theological journals. He is an English scholar whose writings savor of depth and circumspection as related to the study of Jesus.

Religion and Morals, from *The Teachings of Jesus* 243

MEREJKOWSKI, DMITRI: Russian novelist and critic; born 1865, died 1943. His books are *The Death of the Gods* (1901), *The Birth of the Gods* (1926), *Akhnaton, King of Egypt, December the Fourteenth, The Life of Napoleon, Napoleon, a Study* (1929), *Michael Angelo and Other Sketches* (1930), *The Romance of Leonardo da Vinci* (1931), *Jesus the Unknown, The Secret of the West* (1933), *Jesus Manifest* (1940). He interprets Jesus in a rather mysterious and mystical fashion, yet in such a way that many readers find valuable correctives of their objective appreciations of Jesus as they read his books.

The Liberator, from *Jesus Manifest* 361

MINEAR, PAUL S.: Born Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, 1906. Educated Iowa Wesleyan Col. (A.B. 1927), Garrett Biblical Inst. (B.D. 1930), Northwestern Univ. (A.M. 1930), Yale Univ. (Ph.D. 1932). Assistant prof., Hawaii School of Religion, 1933-1934; since 1934 at Garrett Biblical Inst., now prof. New Testament interpretation. Ordained Meth. ministry. He is author of *An Introduction to Paul* (1937), *And Great Shall Be Your Reward* (1941); articles and reviews in *Religion in Life, Anglican Theological Review, Journal of Bible and Religion, Journal of Biblical Literature*, and *Christian Century*. He is one of the younger New Testament critics whose logical mind and devoted spirit, when related to New Testament problems, have won an appreciative audience.

The Relevance of the Message for Our Day 308

MOFFATT, JAMES: Born Glasgow, Scotland, 1870. Educated Glasgow Univ., St. Andrews Univ., Oxford Univ. Minister, United Free Church of Scotland, 1896-1912; Yates prof. Greek, Mansfield Col., Oxford, 1911-1915; prof church history, United Free Church Col., Glasgow, 1915-1927; Washburn prof. church history, Union Theol. Sem., since 1927. He is author of *Hebrews* (1924) in "The International Critical Commentary" and *The General Epistles* (1928) and *First Corinthians* (1938) in "The Moffatt Commentary" and a number of other books, including recently *The First Five Centuries of the Church* (1938), *The Books of the Prophets* (1939), and *Jesus Christ the Same* (1940). Probably no contemporary New Testament scholar is more widely known than he, mainly through his translation of the Bible and his editorship of the New Testament commentaries based on it. His *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (1911) has been *the* classic introduction for more than thirty years.

The Limitations of Historical Method, from *The Approach to the New Testament* 90

MONTEFIORE, CLAUDE G.: Born London, England, 1858. Educated privately and at Balliol Col., Oxford. Identified with educational and philanthropical work; president, Anglo-Jewish Association, 1896-1921, president, Liberal Jewish Synagogue; president, University College of Southampton, 1915-1934. His writings include *Origin and Development of the Religion of the Ancient Hebrews* (Hibbert Lectures, 1892), *Truth in Religion, The Bible for Home Reading, The Synoptic Gospels, Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus* (Jowett Lectures, 1910), *Elements of Liberal Judaism and Hellenism, The Old Testament and After, Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings.* Few scholars, either Jewish or Christian, have done more than he to unite Jews and Christians in their common appreciation of the New Testament figure of Jesus.

The Originality of Jesus 379

MORE, PAUL ELMER: Born St. Louis, Mo., 1864; died 1937. Educated Washington Univ., St. Louis, Harvard Univ. Teacher Smith Academy, St. Louis, 1887-1892; assistant in Sanskrit, Harvard, 1894-1895; assistant in classical literature, Bryn Mawr Col., 1895-1897; literary editor, *N. Y. Independent*, 1901-1903, *N. Y. Evening Post*, 1903; editor, *The Nation*, 1909-1914; lecturer in Greek philosophy, Princeton Univ. His later writings *Shelburne Essays* (11 vols., 1904-1921), *Platonism* (1917), *The Religion of Plato* (1921), *Hellenistic Philosophies* (1923), *The Christ of the New Testament* (1924), *Christ the Word* (1927), *New Shelburne Essays* (Vol. I, 1928; Vol. II, 1934; Vol. III, 1936), *The Catholic Faith* (1931), *Anglicanism* (with F. L. Cross, 1935). One of Dr. More's friends, after reading *Christ the Word*, summarized More's view as follows: "Dr. More has now come to be not merely a theistic humanist. He is a Christian humanist, holding with complete assurance the central assertion of historic Christianity that the Word became flesh. He has found the great goal of his thinking in Christ the Word."

The Faith of the Greek tradition, from *The Christ of the New Testament* 143

NIEBUHR, REINHOLD: Born Wright City, Mo., 1892. Educated Elmhurst Col., Eden Theol. Sem., Yale Univ. (B.D. 1914, A.M. 1915). Ordained minister, Evangelical Synod of North America, 1915. Pastor Detroit, Mich., 1915-1928; asso. prof. philosophy of religion, Union Theol. Sem. 1928-1930, prof. applied Christianity since 1930. He is the author of *Does Civilization Need Religion?* (1927), *Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic* (1929), *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1932), *Reflections on the End of an Era* (1934), *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (1935), *Beyond Tragedy* (1937), *Christianity and Power Politics* (1940), *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (2 vols., 1941-1943). As a right-wing theologian—being a neosupernaturalist—and a left-wing advocate in his social-ethical stress, he has been one of the most stimulating thinkers of the present era.

The Ethic of Jesus and the Social Problem 285

OTTO, RUDOLF: Born Peine, Germany, 1869; died 1938. Educated universities of Erlangen and Göttingen (D.Theol., D.Phil.). Teacher systematic theology Göttingen 1897-1911, Breslau 1915-1917; teacher philosophy of religion, Marburg 1917-1929. His books translated into English are *The Idea of the Holy, The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, India's Religion of Grace and Christianity Compared, Philosophy of Religion, Mysticism—East and West.* His stress upon the particular *numinous* as an aspect of the religious feeling has been basic in his interpretation of mysticism. In New Testament studies both his interpretation of the eschatological problem and his attitude toward the origins behind the Jewish-Christian tradition have aroused wide interest.

Christ Himself Primarily Charismatic, from *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man* 392

RALL, HARRIS FRANKLIN: Born Council Bluffs, Iowa, 1870. Educated Univ. of Iowa (A.B. 1891, A.M. 1892), Yale Divinity School (B.D. 1897), Univ. of Berlin, Univ. of Halle-Wittenberg (Ph.D.). Ordained Meth. ministry 1900. Pastor, Trinity Church New Haven, Conn., 1900-1904; First Church, Baltimore, 1904-1910; president, Iliff School of Theology, Denver, 1910-1915; prof. Christian doctrine, Garrett Biblical Inst., since 1915. His latest books include *The Meaning of God* (1925), *Christianity and Judaism Compare Notes* (1927), *Christianity Today* (1928), *A Faith for Today* (1936), *Religion and Public Affairs* (1937), *Christianity* (1940). No more fitting reward could be given a more deserving scholar than the Fiftieth Anniversary Bross Prize presented to Dr. Rall for his book *Christianity;* it came at a very dramatic moment—just as he terminated his twenty-fifth year as a teacher at Garrett Biblical Institute.

The Finality of the Christian Religion, from *Christianity* 237

ROBINSON, BENJAMIN W.: Born Philadelphia, Pa., 1883; died 1942. Educated Univ. of Chicago (A.B. 1901, Ph.D. 1904), Columbia Univ. (Ph.D. 1906), Union Theol. Sem. (B.D. 1907), American School, Jerusalem, Univ. of Berlin. Ordained Presby. ministry 1909. Instr. New Testament literature and interpretation, 1909, asso. prof. 1910, prof. after 1914, Chicago Theol. Sem. His later writings are *The Life of Paul* (1918), *The Gospel of John* (1925), *Commentary on First Peter* (1929), *The Sayings of Jesus* (1930), *Jesus in Action* (1942). His books on Paul, John, and Jesus are distinctive in their lucid and scholarly presentation of facts about those particular interpreters.

The Ethical Teaching of Jesus, from *The Sayings of Jesus* 274

SCHWEITZER, ALBERT: Born Kaysersberg, Alsace, 1875. Educated universities of Strasbourg, Paris, and Berlin. Curate, St. Nicholas, Strasbourg, 1899; privatdozent, Univ. of Strasbourg, 1901-1912; organist, Société J. S. Bach of Paris, 1903-1911; organist, Orfeo Catala of Barcelona; missionary surgeon and founder of hospital at Lambaréné, Gabon, Equatorial Africa, 1913-1917, 1924-1927, 1929-1932; Hibbert lecturer, Oxford and London, 1934; Gifford lecturer, Edinburgh, 1934-1935. Among his many writings the following have been translated into the English language: *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1911), *Paul and His Interpreters* (1912), *On the Edge of the Primeval Forest* (1922), *Philosophy of Civilization* (2 vols., 1923), *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (1931), *More from the Primeval Forest* (1931), *The Forest Hospital at Lambaréné* (1931), *My Life and Thought* (1933), *Indian Thought and Its Development* (1936), *From My African Notebook* (1939). Student of Bach, skillful organist, and medical missionary in the Lambaréné Forest, Albert Schweitzer also stands very high in New Testament circles for his scholarship. Especially has his eschatological position aroused much interest among New Testament students.

Jesus—An Imperious Ruler, from *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* 387

SCOTT, ERNEST F.: Born Durham, England, 1868. Educated Glasgow Univ. (A.M. 1888), Balliol Col., Oxford (A.B. 1892), United Presbyterian Theol. Hall, Edinburgh. Pastor, Prestwick United Free Church, Scotland, 1895-1908; prof. New Testament literature, Queen's Univ., Kingston, Can., 1908-1919, Union Theol. Sem. since 1919. Among his writings are *The Fourth Gospel* (1906), *The Historical and Religious Value of the Fourth Gospel* (1911), *The Kingdom and the Messiah* (1912), *The Beginnings of the Church* (1914), *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (1923), *The Spirit in the New Testament* (1923), *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus* (1924), *The First Age of Christianity* (1926), *The Gospel and Its Tributaries* (1929), *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians* (1930), in "The Moffatt Commentary," *The Kingdom of God* (1931), *The Literature of the New Testament* (1933), *The Nature of the Early Church* (1941). He is a profound and

accurate scholar who presents his ideas in most succinct and readable style. Probably no scholar has done more to introduce New Testament evaluations into the lives of college students than has Dr. Scott in his *The Literature of the New Testament.* His book *The Fourth Gospel* remains a classic interpretation.

Light and Life, from *The Historical and Religious Value of the Fourth Gospel* . 137

SMART, W. A.: Born Newberry, S. C., 1883. Educated Webb School, Bell Buckle, Tenn., Vanderbilt Univ. (A.B. 1904), Union Theol. Sem. (B.D. 1907), Univ. of Chicago. Ordained Meth. ministry 1907. Pastor, in Virginia, 1907-1914; prof. biblical theology, Emory Univ., since 1914. He is author of *The Contemporary Christ* (1942) and co-author of *Preaching in These Times* (1940). He is a Christian theologian who has ranked as one of the foremost preachers and lecturers of the South.

The Author of Salvation, from *The Contemporary Christ* . . 400

STREETER, BURNETT H.: Born, Croydon, England, 1874; died 1939. Educated King's Col. School, London; Queen's Col., Oxford (A.M.). Canon of Hereford, 1915-1934; fellow and dean, Pembroke Col., Oxford, 1899-1905; fellow and praelecter, Queen's Col., Oxford, 1905-1933; Ireland prof. exegesis, Oxford Univ., 1932-1933; provost, Queen's Col., Oxford, after 1934. He contributed to *Oxford Studies in Synoptic Problems* (1911) and was author of a number of books, including *Immortality* (1917), *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins* (1924), *Reality: A New Correlation of Science and Religion* (1926), *The Primitive Church* (1929), *The Chained Library* (1931), *The Buddha and the Christ* (1932), *The God Who Speaks* (1936). He held a position of double dignity as New Testament scholar and philosopher of religion whose writings savor of deep spiritual understanding from a Christian theistic viewpoint. His four-document hypothesis as related to the Synoptic Gospels has aroused much comment in New Testament circles.

John, Mystic and Prophet, from *The Four Gospels* 155

TAYLOR, VINCENT: Born 1887. Educated Divinity School, Univ. of London (B.D. 1911, Ph.D. 1926), Richmond Col., Surrey. Entered Meth. ministry 1909. Pastor at Mansfield, Carmarthen, Bath, Kleighley, Aberdeen; examiner biblical languages, London Univ., 1931-1934; examiner New Testament Greek, Univ. of Wales, 1937-1942; principal Wesley Col., Headingly, Leeds, Ferens prof. New Testament language and literature, since 1930. His writings include *The Historical Evidence for the Virgin Birth* (1920), *Behind the Third Gospel* (1926), *The First Draft of St. Luke's Gospel* (1927), *The Gospels: A Short Introduction* (1930), *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition* (1933), *Jesus and His Sacrifice: A Study of the Passion-sayings* (1937), *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching* (1940), *Forgiveness and Reconciliation* (1941). Among British New Testament students he ranks extremely high in his labors as related to the virgin birth of Jesus, the Fourth Gospel, and form criticism.

The Fourth Gospel and Some Recent Criticism 99

TILLICH, PAUL: Born in Germany 1886. Educated universities in Berlin, Tübingen, Halle. Teacher philosophy of religion and social ethics, Berlin, Marburg, Dresden, Frankfurt; prof. philosophical theology, Union Theol. Sem., since 1933. His books in English are *The Religious Situation* and *The Interpretation of History;* he is co-author of *The Kingdom of God and History* (1938). His religious position is influenced by neosupernaturalism, in which he sees man's life taking on spiritual meaning only as he is loyal to God, the unconditioned. The present world finds its sense of tragedy in its loyalty to human values, for anything not done for God is a sin.

Christ as the Center of History, from *The Kingdom of God and History* . . . 217

TORREY, CHARLES C.: Born East Hardwick, Vt., 1863. Educated Bowdoin Col. (A.B. 1884), Andover Theol. Sem., Univ. of Strasbourg (Ph.D. 1892), Yale Univ. (A.M. 1900). Instr. and prof. Semitic languages, Andover Theol. Sem., 1892-1900; director American School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, 1900-1901; prof. Semitic languages, Yale Univ., 1900-1932, prof. emeritus since 1932. Among his books are *The Translations Made from the Original Aramaic Gospels* (1912), *The Composition and Date of Acts* (1916), *The Second Isaiah* (1928), *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy* (1930), *The Four Gospels* (1933), *Our Translated Gospels* (1936), *Documents of the Primitive Church* (1941). No contemporary New Testament scholar has done more critically constructive work regarding the relation of the Aramaic language to gospel origins.

The Origin of the Gospels, from *The Four Gospels* 52

WHALE, JOHN S.: Born 1896. Educated Caterham School, Surrey. Pastor Bowdon Downs Cong. Church, Manchester, 1925-1929; Mackennal prof. ecclesiastical history, Mansfield Col., Oxford; tutor, modern history, St. Catherine's, 1929-1933; president Cheshunt Col., Cambridge, since 1933. His writings include *The Christian Answer to the Problem of Evil* (1936), *What Is a Living Church?* (1937), *This Christian Faith* (1938), *Facing the Facts* (1940), *Christian Doctrine* (1941). He is a teacher whose thinking frames very vividly the tenets of neo-orthodoxy in contemporary Christianity.

The Christian Doctrine of History, from *Christian Doctrine* 203

WILDER, AMOS NIVEN: Born Madison, Wis., 1895. Educated Oberlin Col., Yale Univ. (A.B. 1920, B.D. 1924, Ph.D. 1933), Mansfield Col., Oxford, Harvard Univ. Ordained Cong. ministry 1925. Pastor, First Church of Christ, North Conway, N. H., 1925-1828; asso. prof. ethics and Christian evidences, Hamilton Col., 1930-1933; prof. New Testament interpretation, Andover Newton Theol. Sem. 1933-1943, Chicago Theol. Sem. since 1943. His writings include *Eschatology and Ethics in the Teaching of Jesus* (1939), *Spiritual Aspects of the New Poetry* (1940), *The Healing of the Waters* (1943). He is a New Testament scholar who has also become well known and appreciated for his writing of poetry and his critical appraisal of spiritual values in poetry.

The Significance of the Eschatological Sanction, from *Eschatology and Ethics in the Teaching of Jesus* 257

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