

Formgeschichte, Eschatology, and the Life of Jesus

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FORMGESCHICHTE, ESCHATOLOGY, and the LIFE of JESUS.

(A) INTRODUCTION.

I. The Life of Jesus.

To modern minds it seems strange to say that the life of Jesus did not constitute a problem until last century. We are so accustomed to regarding this as the focal point of Christianity, to referring all theological considerations back to the question: What think ye of Christ? that it appears paradoxical to maintain that until a comparatively recent date practically no interest in this question was evinced at all.

It requires little reflection to show that until the Reformation such a situation was bound to prevail. Jesus was the Son of God, His Vicar reigned on earth, His power and authority were vested in the Pope, the existence of the Church was the pledge of all that she claimed for Him. Heretics there were who doubted His Divinity, but the Faith proved stronger than its aggressors and dogmatism silenced every critic.

That there were documents behind the Church's faith professing to give an account of the earthly life of Jesus was secondary to the consciousness that authority reposed not there but in the Apostolic See.

The intensified study of the gospels that was called forth by the Reformation, together with the transference of authority to Holy Scripture, might however have wrought a change. But in fact

it did not, for on the whole the Reformers took over the Catholic point of view both as to doctrine and as to the validity of the gospels as historic documents.

In the barren days of orthodoxy that succeeded, gospel study reached a low ebb such as it had never known in the days of Roman domination: verbal inspiration was emphasised, harmonies were concocted, everything was done to produce a unified picture of Jesus in which all the gospel material should find a place. This jig-saw theology claimed to have disposed once and for all of the difficulties of gospel criticism: they had pieced together the various accounts and found that the discrepancies were only apparent.

Yet it was this very attempt at a harmony which proved their undoing. For many felt that if a consistent record were to be provided, alterations here and there in the narrative would be essential. By removing superfluous material the purpose of reducing the gospels to a common denominator would be immeasurably furthered. This as will be seen was the beginning of the end, or on another view the first step forward.

Nevertheless it is surprising that events did not move more rapidly and that more sweeping attacks on the structure of the gospels were not made. Perhaps it is to be accounted for by the inborn respect for Scripture, the absence of scientific methods of approach, or the fear of a total collapse of theology. Whatever be the reason it is the case that until Strauss' "Life of Jesus" in 1835, the gospels were regarded more or less in the

same light as they had always been.

In spite of the fact that rationalists and supernaturalists fought bitterly over the question of miracles and general credibility, they approached the problem of Jesus rather from a dogmatic standpoint, and assumed that they were concerned with a fixed body of material on which they were obliged to take opposing sides.

Strauss' "Life" ushered in a new epoch in gospel study. His work, based as it was on a Hegelian attempt to find a mean between supernaturalism and rationalism, was indebted in the last resort neither to theology nor criticism.

Its defect was that his attempt to find throughout the necessary theses and antitheses put too great a strain on the resources of the gospels and sharpened the contrasts unnecessarily. Its merit was that this contrast first expressed by him in terms of "John or Synoptics?" brought into being the most productive period of criticism last century, which ended in the establishment of the two-source theory as a prelude to all investigation.

This 'golden age' of Lives of Jesus burst into renewed activity with the publication of Renan's *Vie de Jésus* in 1863 and lasted into the twentieth century. By this time it had become clear that imagination must be used to eke out the gaps in gospel history. There were inconsistencies, contradictions, and deficiencies, but on the whole there was no reason for despair. Higher criticism had led to optimistic results. Things which had appeared repugnant to modern minds were shown to be no

essential part of the gospel story. We could reject much that had perplexed and distressed, knowing that all our work would only serve to enhance the humanity and charm of Jesus.

He indeed was shown to be the most inspiring of men: a leader and hero. Kindly, beneficent, and compassionate, He wended His mild way through the fields of Galilee: fascinating all who came under His spell: a winsome figure, captivating and refreshing. He was a speaker of wise words, a man whose devotion to His Father was only to be compared with His love for His fellow men. This went beyond all bounds save where He lashed with His scorn the hypocrites, the 'unco guid' and pharisaical. All archaic observances He brushed aside, He was a modern among moderns, a fitting lion for 19th century urbanity.

Many thanked God that they had been freed from the shackles of an incredible Christology and basked in the fresh air and sunshine of liberal humanism.

The year 1906 put an end to their rejoicings. Schweitzer's brilliant book though not startlingly new in its conclusions was nevertheless powerful enough to put a new complexion on higher criticism.

He showed that their portrait of Jesus was sentimental and unhistorical: that fantasy, subjectivism, and modernism had all played their part in creating a figure vastly unlike anything to be found in the gospels.

The Jesus there was a child of His race, a prophet of olden times with a cry to repent - for the Kingdom of God was

at hand. This was no distant fulfilment of the moral law but a veritable cataclysmic event in which He Himself would appear a second time but on this occasion as the Messiah coming on the wings of the clouds. To regulate their lives in the meantime He left them sundry rules and guidance, but far from these being the eternal principles of truth as the Liberals believed, they were no more than a way of life conditioned by the apocalyptic end and their expectation of the coming catastrophe. This pungent reaffirmation of the prophetic side of Jesus has made a vast impression on New Testament theology which lasts to this day. But what is even more interesting than the contrast between the liberal and the eschatological viewpoints, is the fact that in the main both were based on the same critical foundation. Both schools agreed that in the gospels as they stand a life of Jesus could be found: that apart from minor differences of judgement the text for both was alike. The Synoptics, perhaps aided in a general way by John, contain an account of Jesus' ministry which corresponds on the whole to the facts of history. There may be gaps but these can be filled: there may be inconsistencies but these are only in the nature of things.

Behind both points of view lay a certain background on which they agreed: Mark was the first gospel, written approximately 30-40 years after the death of Christ as a memoir of the events of His life. Following upon this came the gospels of Matthew and Luke - perhaps ten years later - using Mark's material and also a collection of Logia which had not been at his disposal.

Last of all came John's gospel in which a certain amount of imagination had been mingled with history.

None of the later gospel writers had copied accurately what they found in Mark, and they apparently had also additional knowledge of their own: thus the divergences in the synoptics are to be explained by these independent workers. Accompanied by a less extensive series of Lives of Jesus, gospel criticism went on its way after Schweitzer's thunderbolt. Investigation of the sources continued: M. and Q. were subjected to further analysis, four documents were mooted as original (Streeter 1924), these grew to eight before very long (Bussmann 1931). It seemed as if the stages back to the original gospel sources were interminable: having discovered a Proto Mark they must then discover a Proto-Proto Mark: after that a Proto Mark thrice removed.

It was largely as a protest against what they believed to be an impossible retrogression that the Formgeschichtliche Schule took the field. They despaired of ever achieving any positive results by continuation of these methods and proposed one which has involved much more than mere textual alterations.

For it is bound up with a certain position regarding Jesus which is certain to affect our attitude to all attempts at formulating His life, and prompts us indeed to query whether we can know anything about Him at all.

This post-war activity on the part of a few German New Testament professors is ostensibly a movement to classify the gospel matter according to its form and to establish thereby a process of

development in the various categories. In practice, however, it involves a much more thoroughgoing change of attitude to gospel literature as a whole and to the life of Jesus in particular.

It is not without significance that Formgeschichte finds its earliest expression in a poet and not a grammarian. For in its essence it is the reply of the artist and the poet to the scholar. It embodies the claim that the best equipment for approaching the gospels is a sympathetic and understanding mind. In its ideal form it would insist that to appreciate such a phenomenon as the rise of a new faith and the personality of its founder what is required is not the microscope of a trained analyst but the wide experience of a cultured and discerning amateur. While it employs the tools of the skilled workman it uses them only to clear away the brushwood in order to enhance the view and not to hew down every tree to ascertain its age and history.

This work has made such an impression on theological writers that Alfred Loisy to-day refuses to regard as adequate a sketch of gospel history which he prefaced to his commentary on the Synoptic Gospels twenty-five years ago.

II. Forerunners of Formgeschichte.

From the suddenness with which this movement entered the field it might be assumed that it was an entirely new development. In some respects this is true: for while many preparatory stages may be distinguished, the exact situation had not arisen before. Formgeschichtliche methods had been used to discover Q: now formgeschichtliche methods are used to get behind Q.

The new movement undertakes the investigation of the oral sources which are found established in writing in the synoptics. It does not ostensibly engage in literary criticism: its method is rather examination of the forms in which the gospel tradition is preserved, coupled with critical analysis of these individual fragments. For it is their contention that the gospels are products of non-literary men, that indeed their origin is wholly anonymous, since they are a collection of sayings and tales edited and collated by the various evangelists. They find their parallel wherever the traditions of a group or a people are gathered into book form. Thus we may look for the same development here as has taken place in the tradition concerning St. Francis, the stories of the Jewish Hasidim in Poland, and of Dr. Faustus in Germany.

In Hellenic literature too are to be found anecdotes of philosophers which in time made their way into literary biographies, while the stories of miracles ascribed to a god, such as those in the Serapis cult must also be considered.

It is not by any means held that there was a connection between these and the gospels but at many points the same principles of emergence and development may be found in both.

(cf. Dibelius in Harvard Theol. Review, 1927, p.153.)

The gospels are thus quite impersonal until their final assembling stage, and by examination of the material in the synoptics we can trace their history and habitat, their origin and development, as isolated pieces of oral tradition.

It happened that between 1919 and 1921 three German professors working independently produced notable contributions to New Testament Criticism on formgeschichtliche lines. While it is true that owing to Old Testament scholars' investigations and the employment of this method in classical philology Formgeschichte was 'in the air,' it is striking that at precisely the same time these theologians should have been engaged in this work.

They were K. L. Schmidt, late of Bonn, who published *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* in 1919, Martin Dibelius of Heidelberg, whose *Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* appeared in the same year, and Rudolf Bultmann of Marburg, who produced *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* in 1921. Other contributors of less importance have been M. Albertz and G. Bertram who in 1921 and 1922 published studies in special departments of the gospel material: *Die synoptischen Streitgespräche* and *Die Leidensgeschichte Jesu und der Christuskult*.

Before proceeding to discuss their work and its bearing upon the Life of Jesus it would be as well to note the developments along these lines which preceded the final outburst. It may safely be said that the purpose of all synoptic criticism has been directed to one end: a fuller and more reliable knowledge of the circumstances in which the Founder of Christianity first made His

appeal. All research and investigation however obscure and however unexpressed be their motive have had this ultimate purpose behind them. The justification therefore for all attempts to pierce beneath the surface of the gospels to their initial sources lies here. Wendling's attempt to discover an Urmark, or Spitta's to reproduce an Urluke or Zahn's suggested Urmatthew as well as Harnack's resolution of Q were valuable as far as they went: but they were bound to come to an end, for behind the Urmark there would always be an Ururmark. Formgeschichte, therefore, was right when it said that work along such lines is impossible, and that the approach must be made from the other end, upwards instead of downwards.

The conservatives had few misgivings: they presupposed eyewitnesses and needed no oral tradition: Mark was based on Peter's account of events, while Q was Matthew's own information.

On the other hand many had seen the difficulties and were prepared to attempt their solution. E. Fascher, the historian of Formgeschichte, gives some account of these early Formgeschichtler in his *Die Formgeschichtl. Methode* 1924. Eichhorn, for example, maintained the existence of an Urevangelium, in Aramaic, the Greek translations of which accounted for the variant readings. Yet he analysed the material in a surprisingly modern way, tracing its developments, and found its origin in the mission. The history of Jesus belongs to that Christian prophetic mission, being originally a short written description of the most important points of the life of Jesus. This was given to missionaries as a

formula to use in their instruction, a sketch of the events from the time of John the Baptist to the Resurrection. Since the present synoptics are too big to have been used in this way he suggests that the Gospel of the Hebrews must have corresponded with the early sketch.

Eichhorn, therefore, in his insistence on the mission is godfather to Dibelius, in his theory of the development of the material torchbearer to Bultmann.

The most important forerunner of Formgeschichte was strangely enough the poet Herder. He traces the similarity of the synoptics to an original oral gospel which contained four sections: (a) the Revelation of God (Baptism, Transfiguration and Resurrection); (b) miracle; (c) speeches; (d) eschatological matter. This he deduces from Peter's speech (Acts 2, 22-39) and concludes that such a scheme for mission preaching was the foundation of the written gospels. In order that this might not develop into a mere collection of trifling incidents from the life of Jesus it must be disciplined and controlled. This took place through the existence of a class of men, associated with the apostles, whose business it was to spread the gospel: and he suggests a school of evangelists in the house of John Mark at Jerusalem (Acts 12, 12:25). These evangelists received their material from Peter, James and John. We have therefore a flawless line of transmission.

Preaching and instruction were thus formative influences although credit for the formation itself must in the last resort

go to Peter. The literary fixation came about through the necessity for proving Jesus to be the Messiah, whence it is clear that we have not a biography, not noteworthy facts about a private individual, but a gospel of Christ.

Apart from the absence of any evidence whatever of an 'Evangeliumkanzlei' where material was submitted and approved, there is obviously here too much of the poet and not enough of the theologian. In many points however the approach is to be commended, and a more or less similar constructive method has become the mainstay of the work of Dibelius.

Another line of Formgeschichte method is exemplified by Krummacker. His contention was that we must try to discover the impression made by Jesus on the disciples: and distinguish that from actual history. What had historic value for them has only aesthetic value for us. This aesthetic effect however he ascribes to the personality of the evangelists whereas Formgeschichte insists on the absence of any such factor. It is however along similar lines that Bertram has reached his present position.

In contrast to the theory of an Urevangelium, which he rightly judged to be an impossibility, Schleiermacher advanced the theory that the gospels were the work of collectors, that they consisted of many sources which contain groups of different types of material: while in opposition to both, i.e., Eichhorn and Schleiermacher, Gieseler asserted that the foundation was an oral gospel. Of an Urevangelium there is no trace, and for collections of fragments there was no time (cf. Act 8¹). In the preservation of this oral gospel there was no artificial restriction or

discipline; the desire to tell truly what had happened, the fact of repetition and the similarity of education and upbringing of the Apostles would guarantee that. As this oral gospel came into the various countries the evangelists wrote down what most fitted their needs. Thus in the last resort Mark's gospel is the gospel according to Peter as Luke's is according to Paul, while Matthew's is a Syrio-Chaldaic gospel which was afterwards translated.

These various expositions of the tradition-hypothesis were accepted for a time by Roman Catholic and Protestant alike but support fell away not only because the theories were in many cases fanciful, but because they gave a loophole to the mythical theories of men like Strauss. Since the oral tradition idea was being used to destroy the historicity of the gospels attempts were made to dispose of it. It was shown that the synoptics were not independent nor could they be simply the written form of an oral gospel. This - mainly the work of Wilke and Weisse - largely destroyed the tradition-hypothesis, but at the same time banished the conception of a gradual development by word of mouth from the reckoning of the theologians.

The Mark hypothesis gradually gained ground and interest centred round literary criticism, and examination of sources. This remained more or less the point of view of synoptic study until the recent burst of activity. The ideas of folk-tradition disappeared since what was written down was the work of eyewitnesses. It was a solid body that had to be dealt with, not a fluid mass.

The present return to the oral tradition conception is in so far different from the Herder and Schleiermacher period, that the situation is altered by the recognition of the Two-Source theory. What the older Formgeschichtliche Method was used to discover, is now the starting point for further investigation.

Gunkel had led the way in the Old Testament by turning his back on the previous method of separating the sources JEP and approaching from the other side, insisting that it was not a historian's eye but a poet's that was required, that Genesis was not history but legend, and that legends are a product of folk tradition not of individual writers. Genesis is not a composition of sources but a collection of legends which should be examined singly. JEP were not individuals but schools of narrators who did not form the narratives themselves but preserved what they received. The editors modified the material but remained largely transmitters.

This is largely the attitude of the Formgeschichtlers to the New Testament. They accept the sources but begin with them instead of working back to them. The material obtains its form largely through folk-tradition which works according to laws, although the editors have obviously some part to play.

Wellhausen, Wendling, and von Soden were of some importance as more immediate precursors of the new Formgeschichte (the latter pair especially for their perception of the distinction in type between the sections Mk 2¹-3⁶ and 4³⁵ - 5⁴³ which Dibelius has since styled Paradigmen and Novellen) but the first Formgeschichtler proper of the 20th century was K. L. Schmidt.

III. Schmidt.

K. L. Schmidt starts out from the question as to the Where and How Long of Jesus' ministry. Controversy has raged mainly round the duration of Jesus' activity, whether one year (based on the synoptics) or two to three (as in John).

In an examination of the approach to this problem Schmidt discovers that the Inspirationists among the Protestants and the present day Catholics on the one hand join issue with the Fathers and the modern Reformed theologians on the other. So long as the gospel literature is held to be infallible, divinely dictated, nothing can emerge that is not harmonistic. The process from the Reformed standpoint is one of explication and reconciliation, not one of literary criticism. Osiander (1537) expresses the extreme position thus; "*Harmoniae evangelicae libri quatuor in quibus evangelica historia ex quatuor Evangelistis in unum est contexta ut nullius verbum ullum omissum, nihil alienum immixtum, nullius ordo turbatus, nihil non suo loco positum; omnia vero litteris et notis ita distincta ut quid cuiusque evangelistae proprium, quid cum aliis et quibus commune sit, primo aspectu deprehendere queas.*"

The human element is entirely lacking, there can be no question of arbitrary arrangement of material, of selection, of gaps in the narrative, of free composition.

That this has not been the historic attitude of the Church is shown by Augustine's distinction of "*Ordo gestarum*" and "*Ordo recordationis*", the admission that the appearance of an incident

in a certain position in the gospel narrative does not imply that it must necessarily have happened in that sequence. In this matter the theologians of the Middle Ages concurred and Bishop Jansen (1576) was of the opinion that the evangelists clearly betrayed that they took no great pains to follow out the actual course of the activity of Jesus.

On the other hand modern Catholic theologians have given up their former broad treatment of the synoptics in favour of a minute investigation of the duration of the ministry, based on the incidental references of the evangelists, while modern Protestant theology has forsaken the Inspirational theory and approached the question from a less biassed standpoint than ever before.

The stumbling block to a dispassionate approach to the synoptics had been the authority of John. Catholic and Protestant alike so long as John was held to be the gospel 'par excellence' were hampered in their treatment of the others. They were in that case obviously of less moment and deserving of less consideration.

Given however the recognition that John is late and subjective, attention was at once diverted to Mark as the oldest and most reliable of them all. From there it was but a stage to the Two Document hypothesis and the attempt to get at Ur-Mark; which some said was longer and some shorter.

Investigations by J. Weiss, Wellhausen, Loisy into the text of Mark gave rise to considerable scepticism as to its value

at all. This however led to purely negative results and was quite unsatisfactory.

The merit of Schmidt's work is that he shows Mark as containing the oldest account of Jesus' ministry but nevertheless a composite work in the same sense as John. Further, that Matthew and Luke, the oldest interpreters of Mark, have changed much and improved upon it. His main task is to discover that oldest framework of the history of Jesus which can only be done by minute literary critical investigation.

In the course of an elaborate enquiry into the connecting links in the Marcan narrative, instead of regarding the synoptic material as a fixed given, whence a stable and inviolable chronology and itinerary can be deduced, he approaches the question from the standpoint: "Is there any topography and chronology at all?" He proves successfully on the whole that what indications of locality and period do occur are in fact accidental, and that a consecutive consistent narrative was not the first stage of gospel tradition.

On the contrary, the Marcan outline gives every indication of being a collection of independent narratives and sayings assembled largely under three or four wide topics and reduced to some semblance of a sequence by the work of the evangelist. A simple form of this is the series of parables on the Kingdom of God, Mark 4²¹⁻³⁴ (pages 130-131) more complex but still discernible is the collection of Birth Stories in Luke which show by their contradiction that they were originally independent accounts (309).

Thus he explains the repeated presence of *kai* in the gospel not as a connective supplied by the collector (since it is

often unnecessary) but as the normal mode of introducing an anecdote in oral tradition. These tales and incidents from the life of Jesus would be transmitted and circulated by Christians in the early days, recalling them when they were together, and without a doubt employing them in their worship. In normal conversation one tale would be added to another: - καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτι - and in this fashion there would arise tale-complexes, several anecdotes having the same theme which would in time take on a more or less stable character. In this way καὶ became a type of caesura.

Such complexes would come to be written down for the purpose of reading in public, complete with καὶ. As is still the custom only one narrative would be read but the connecting link would remain. Thus when Mark came to collect the various sections of material he simply took over the passages as they stood and preserved the introduction unchanged. Matthew and Luke on the other hand have substituted for it connectives of a more elaborate kind, in Luke especially do these correspond to the literary nature of his gospel. (19). Schmidt examines the Marcan text in detail adducing parallels in Matthew and in Luke and where necessary commenting on material peculiar to either of the later synoptists.

The particular contribution of the evangelist to the chain of narratives consists in so-called Sammelberichte (e.g. Mark 1³⁹, 2¹³, 1¹⁴⁻¹⁵) where in a few words he sums up a phase of Jesus' activity (e.g. "And He preached in their synagogues throughout all

Galilee and cast out devils."1³⁹) otherwise his task is one of collecting and arranging material.

Schmidt's contention is that in this arrangement no other principle prevailed than that of setting side by side anecdotes or sayings which bore some relation to each other, usually by virtue of their theme (e.g. 3⁷ - 6¹³ Jesus and the People; 6¹⁴-8²⁶ Jesus' activity outside of Galilee; 10⁴⁶ - 13³⁷ Jesus' last days in Jerusalem)(171 ff.). In such cases there is no connection between the individual anecdotes, only a basic motif. Within the large scope of "Jesus and the People" stories are included according to their topographical introduction e.g. tales connected with the sea, but that these were not originally connected can be seen by the fact that no itinerary can possibly be formed out of the material given here. 4¹ -5²¹ff. e.g. are according to Mark the events of one day which is manifestly impossible. Jesus preaches to the people (4¹ ff.); in the evening or late afternoon of the same day He sails to the land of the Gaderenes (4³⁵); on His arrival there He heals a madman (5¹ ff.); He sails back, is called upon by Jairus, on the way heals a woman and then recalls Jairus' daughter to life (5²¹ ff.). A further example of events which appear to be connected but are in reality independent of each other is to be found in 2²³ - 3⁶. After the plucking of the ears of corn Jesus and the disciples according to the narrative go into the temple - which according to the law would be forbidden.

Much of Mark's description of Jesus' activity takes place similarly upon one single day. Investigators having felt the need of some other solution have attempted in various ways to

lengthen the period of time by assuming intervals between the narratives. Matthew however had no such difficulty. He transfers the parables into chapter 13, the stilling of the storm and the healing of the demoniac to chapter 8, and the tale of Jairus finds a place in chapter 9 (152). Realising the nature of the Marcan narrative better than we Matthew had no hesitation in destroying the sequence in the interests of other arrangements of his own.

Of a different type is the passage 121-39 (67). Here is a fixed chronology including the healing of the man with the unclean spirit and Simon's mother-in-law extending over a day and the following morning. These set times could not originate from the evangelist for this reason, that had he found these tales without any indication of time attached to them and added the details himself then it would surely have been natural for him to incorporate 1⁴⁰⁻⁴⁵ more happily in the sequence than ~~is~~ the case. As it stands the abrupt transition from the concluding words: "And He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee and cast out devils" to the immediately following sentence: "And there came a leper unto Him beseeching Him" shows plainly that the leper narrative might equally well occur at any other point and is in fact unlocalised.

But the technique of the evangelist forbade him to tamper with it: for as can be seen throughout the gospel he includes or omits chronology or topography independent of whether it assists his framework or not. In other words he is so faithful a collector that he includes complex narratives (i.e. a collection already extant) at the risk of destroying the general theme which he has

himself constituted. 6¹⁴ - 8²⁶ might be described as an already existing sequence under the heading of "Jesus' activity furth of Galilee". Its inclusion has a disturbing effect on the general scheme. Perhaps the best example of a complex section is the obviously interwoven account of the healing of Jairus' daughter and the healing of the woman with the issue of blood (147).

Thus if indications of time and place occur in the fragments which came into his hands these were allowed to remain. If they did not occur he did not insert them. Matthew and Luke on the other hand - and especially the latter - are not merely collectors but up to a point writers.(68).

To speak therefore of a Proto-Mark which contained either more or less than the existing Mark, but was more consistent, is to have a false conception of the process of development. This can best be seen by noting the use made of the Marcan material by Matthew and Luke and later writers. Mark 1⁴ introduces John the Baptist without any account of his ancestry or the period when he ministered. Luke 3 already introduces information as to the time of John's activity and his family. While in the Ebionite gospel after an exact account of the date comes a complete biographical summary (20).

Just as Mark gives no introductory information about John so his account of Jesus is equally brief "And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee"(1⁹). That he knew something of His environment is clear from incidental references (3²¹, 6¹) but so faithful is he to the tradition that has come down to him that he reproduces it verbatim. Where

biographical details, just as topographical and chronological, are essential to the situation in the incident or saying, they are given 'en passant' as they existed in the earliest forms. Luke (3²³ ff.) on the other hand develops this by giving Jesus' age and His ancestry while the Ebionite gospel has an exemplary introduction: "There appeared a certain man named Jesus and He was thirty years old" (28). A further indication of the same type of development is the naming of the mountain of the Temptation in the gospel of the Hebrews as the great Mount Tabor (31).

This amplification of the existing narrative in the interests of consistency, style and completeness, had been recognised: Schmidt's contention is that not only must the framework of Matthew and Luke be recognised as arbitrary but also that of Mark himself.

It is not enough to acknowledge the work of Matthew in localising, collecting and arranging the Sermon on the Mount; it must be admitted that the Marcan narrative is built up on identical principles.

Those who are not prepared to face this must have difficulty in accounting for the summary treatment meted out to the Marcan arrangement by Matthew and Luke, and that within the same generation.

Mark himself placed no value on chronological, topographical and psychological connection. That indications of time and place appear at all is due to chance (e.g. 2²³ where time and place - Sabbath and cornfields - are essential for the narrative). There is no rule for the preservation or omission of such details in the earliest tradition: all that can be said is that both tendencies would be at work, on the one hand the desire to localise

events which were without fixed location, and on the other the emphasis on the narrative in the Cultus where the incidental details were secondary. This tendency is clearly traced in the post-Marcian development and from that we are able to draw conclusions for the pre-Marcian period..

To perceive this is not to have merely a negative result for it is to realise that when Matthew and Luke altered the Marcian narrative (e.g. Matthew 9¹ transfers the tale of the palsied man (Mark 2¹⁻¹²) to a period after the Gaderene swine episode and has to introduce a sea journey for this purpose (79)) they did not thereby destroy a faultless chronological sequence and darken historical fact by their efforts. Rather was it recognised by them as it must be by us that the Marcian scheme was in the large his own and that they were not bound to follow it if another arrangement appeared to them more satisfactory (76-77).

Schmidt's attitude to Mark's gospel is in the question of material very conservative. He does not credit the evangelist with having invented any incident or framework for a saying, the latter on the grounds that so few of the sayings possess such a frame (237).

The work of Mark therefore consists in nothing apart from the arrangement of the tradition, the inclusion of collective accounts, and such otherwise inexplicable interpolations as 8^{31,32}, 9^{30,32}, 10^{32,34}, containing Jesus' prophecies of His Death and Resurrection in similar terms which are also those of the confession of the early Church (cf. Acts.) and which would make the attitude of the disciples and women in 16¹ unintelligible if they had been

spoken by Jesus Himself (218).

The question of topography and chronology is further ventilated in his treatment of the final chapters of Mark. He compares Luke's account of the journey to Jerusalem (9⁵¹-19²⁸) a purpose which is never allowed to fade from the reader's mind, a distinct progress towards a goal with geographical notes and developing action, to the much more disjointed parallel passage in Mark (8²⁷ - 10⁴⁵). He shows how Luke takes over Mark's framework to some extent, adding and rearranging material to suit himself but that for lack of material even he is unable to complete a proper itinerary. The only localised scenes are two dealing with Jericho and one with Samaria, and the Jericho story should not belong to a journey to Jerusalem via Samaria but via Peraea (as it is in Matthew and Mark). Apart from these scenes the material has no fixed localisation nor has it an essential chronological sequence (246-271).

Similarly when the section dealing with Jesus' last days in Jerusalem is examined (Mark 10⁴⁶ - 13³⁷), on the surface it would appear to extend over three days and to be a closely connected succession of events. But apart from the most unequal division of space allotted to these three days (1st day 10⁴⁶(11¹) - 11¹¹, 2nd day 11¹² - 11¹⁹, 3rd day 11²⁰ - 13³⁷) the treatment of the passage by Matthew and Luke who omit, insert, alter and remodel at will indicates clearly how completely this section is composed of fragments which do not of necessity belong together. It can be seen here how loose in fact the Marcan outline is, not just in the sense that in spite of the gaps in its narrative it nevertheless

preserves a chronological connection, but that even that is absent and the whole resolves itself into isolated stories. For Matthew and Luke the Marcan portrayal is not a string of pearls, loosely strung together, where odd beads may be inserted here and there, but rather a heap of unstrung pearls, with perhaps some closely related (281). They are best regarded as the first interpreters of Mark (introduction IX).

In actual fact the pre-Passion narrative is in all three cases nothing more than a scheme: in Mark spread over three days, in Matthew two, and in Luke over a longer time. Into this period have been collected various isolated incidents which may quite well have happened in previous years and outside of Jerusalem. Only the entry into the city and those passages which deal with Jesus' attitude to its people can be safely attributed to this stage in the ministry, all the rest has been first by Mark and then by Matthew and Luke made to subserve the general heading "Jesus' last days in Jerusalem" (300-301).

The question of the length of the ministry of Jesus is on Schmidt's showing unanswerable: the commonly held theory of a one year period would seem to be exploded on the evidence of Matthew 23³⁷⁻³⁹ (Luke 13³⁴⁻³⁵) where Christ prophesies the doom of Jerusalem. If the saying is genuine - and there is no adequate reason to doubt it - the presence of *πολλάκις* cannot mean anything else than more frequent visits and longer acquaintance with Jerusalem than the synoptic sequence on the surface indicates (271-272).

The Passion narrative however requires a different evaluation.

It is the only section of the gospels which provides exact details as to time and place. Therefore it is plain that from the outset a continuous recital was in mind. In the congregational gatherings and missionary activity of the early Church, while individual tales would be narrated for their apologetic or didactic worth, the Passion story must have been read as a whole. Only thus could the question be answered: how did Jesus come to be crucified by those whom He had benefited by His signs and miracles?

It is therefore the oldest and most reliable part of the gospel. On the one hand the gospel writers had to collect and arrange isolated incidents and sayings, of different dates and origins, with resultant disharmony in many places: on the other hand the large measure of agreement in the synoptics on the matter of the Passion - extending indeed to the otherwise widely differing fourth evangelist - points to a much earlier fixation than the rest. Changes there are by way of addition and improvement on the part of the later gospel writers, just as the hand of Mark himself may be traced in his account, but the alteration is insignificant compared with the treatment of the remaining material (305-309).

Schmidt sums up his general conclusion as follows: the oldest sketch of the history of Jesus is that of Mark. The lack of adjustment of material contained in that gospel indicates how the earliest tradition concerning Jesus appeared - no continuous narrative but rather a collection of individual stories which are on the whole arranged in accordance with their main theme. This is not always at once recognisable since they are strung together into

the history of early Christianity with its different religious, apologetic and missionary interests. Luke belongs to this process too, though he is the only evangelist who has over and above that any literary aspirations. While we have the impression from his prologue that he has investigated the gospel material more thoroughly and offers a more reliable account of events the contrary is the case: all that he brings to the Marcan outline, apart from the extra material which he largely shares with Matthew, is a rearrangement in accordance with better psychology and logic.

This however sits ill upon the characteristic short anecdotal form of the original material which was above all designed for the purposes of the cultus. Proof of this lies in the fact that the most beloved gospel in the early Church was that of Matthew which outbids Mark in its absence of framework and its objective grouping of material.

In Mark who on the whole merely sets individual sections side by side there is still too much unnecessary detail. In his introductions there still can be seen the fragments of an itinerary. Luke observed these and enhanced them. Matthew on the other hand held them to be of secondary importance. And since the real itinerary of Jesus, in which the Christian community from its infancy had no interest, has been irretrievably lost, we can only follow Matthew's example and indeed outdo him.

The Jesus narratives lie principally on one and the same level. Only now and then can we in respect of the inner nature of a story determine accurately its time and place. But on the whole there is no life of Jesus in the sense of a developing life story,

no chronological sketch of the history of Jesus but only isolated tales and sayings which are given a framework (317).

The value of Schmidt's work is undeniable. As opposed to easy solutions of gospel inconsistencies by condemning the offending passages as unhistorical, he assumes the whole structure in effect to be actual tradition material and that from earliest times. His merit lies in his establishing a case for adopting a new standpoint in regard to that material, namely that which views it as a collection of independent fragments.

This is in fact the basal assumption of all Form critics and is the rock on which the whole school builds. Vincent Taylor (page 13) is of the opinion that time will qualify the belief that the synoptic framework is a purely artificial construction. On the other hand he is forced to admit (page 38) that "with the gospel of Mark before us it is impossible to deny that the earliest tradition was largely a mass of fragments". Schmidt has recognised the existence of small complexes within the gospel so that Taylor's objections on this head are beside the point. (39-40)

Nor does his argument that there is a "sense of movement" in Mark alter the position in any large degree. Mark's gospel could not become a "formless collection" by its very nature as starting with Jesus' Baptism and ending with His Death and Resurrection, nor can there fail to be a "sense of movement" in any series of anecdotes and sayings which are classified under roughly progressive headings. Mark had certainly "access to good tradition concerning the Public Ministry of Jesus" - indeed the best that there was - but that does not alter the fact that when he got it it was so far

as we can judge in a very much less coherent form than that in which he presents it.

Schmidt's general claim remains unanswered and must now be regarded as a preliminary assumption for all gospel study. It is the most reasonable and probable solution as well as that most in accordance with the textual evidence to imagine these fragments, whether oral or written, as reaching Mark's hands in a disjointed or isolated state and being grouped and arranged by him with little alteration into a general scheme of a life story.

If at times Schmidt's efforts to prove the absence of chronology or topography seem a trifle strained (e.g. pages 79, 85, 191.) his general contention is adequately established. We do not require to subscribe to more than his fundamental position and may hold that in some respects he has erred on the side of conservatism in others on the side of radicalism.

Perhaps he will be shown to have been too conservative in his estimate of the evangelists' rôle or not sufficiently appreciative of the work of the Church in the formation of the earliest tradition. That he seems to have held some form of this belief is however indicated in his introduction : "in my opinion the importance of the early Christian Cultus, the services of the Church, for the development of gospel literature cannot be too highly estimated. The oldest tradition of Jesus is conditioned by the Cultus, therefore symbolic (Bildhaft) and supra-historical." (VI)

The advantages of this discovery from our point of view are only to be compared with its disadvantages. On the credit side can be said that instead of being content to regard the years 30 to 70

as a blank (i.e. from the Death of Jesus to the composition of Mark) we are put in possession of a mass of material reproduced more or less in the form in which it was told from mouth to mouth or on scraps of papyrus. We have thus a continuous line of information as to the teaching and thought of the earliest Christians in these hidden years, instead of being left entirely in the dark until the emergence of the first gospel.

On the debit side however what we must reckon with is this: that what seems to us to be a coherent account of the life of Jesus is on the contrary nothing of the sort. What seems to be a sequence of events is in reality the artificial framework of the evangelist.. What seems to be development in the thought and action of Jesus is but the arrangement and revision of Mark.

IV. Dibelius.

Dibelius builds on Schmidt's foundations; he accepts the basal assumption that the gospel writers were collectors of isolated fragments rather than composers of consecutive narratives. His peculiar contribution is his theory of the Sermon (Chapter 2, *Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*).

The generation of Christians immediately following on the death of Our Lord expected the end of the world in their own lifetime: it is therefore improbable that they had any inclination to devote themselves to literary activities: besides which they were by nature and profession unliterary men. How then are the gospels to be accounted for? Our Lord died around 30 A.D.; the first gospel appears after 70 A.D. There is a hiatus of over forty years, in which, contends Dibelius, either the gospels had an unliterary existence or they had no existence at all.

Indeed we must ask ourselves could any tradition arise under such circumstances, and our task is first and foremost to reconstruct the situation of the early Church and to see whether conditions then would lend themselves to the rise of gospel material, and of what sort that might be expected to be. We must get back to the "Sitz im Leben" of the earliest stratum of the gospels, examine the environment and the general situation, otherwise we are at a loss to explain why there should be any gospels at all and they would stand in a vacuum from which there would be

no deliverance.

We may assume that before and after the death of Jesus His words and deeds were current among His followers and that added to this would be the narrative of His passion and death.

When therefore these make their appearance in gospel form we should enquire how that came about. It is not enough to say that it is explained by oral tradition: for it is clear that men who awaited the end of all things would have no concern with events of the immediate past.

By far the more likely development in view of the Eschatological attitude of the times would be that amid prophetic utterance and apocalyptic excitement the oral tradition of Jesus would vanish, or by having a false interpretation put on it would lose its value.

Thus instead of the gospels being a natural consequence of the existence of current oral narrative concerning Jesus, the problem is to discover how it was that anything was preserved at all.

Tradition can only become stabilised either under ordered preaching or by immanent laws: we must enquire therefore as to the Occasion for the writing of the gospels and the Law which governed the preservation of material. If it is disputed that a law of development must be traceable, then it must also be shown that the gospels are not a collection of incidents and sayings, reported

in the normal fashion of folk-lore: they then constitute a purely literary phenomenon which is otherwise inexplicable. On the other hand if there had been no occasion, then it is difficult to see why letter-shy men should create a tradition which was to precede the literary productions that followed.

Dibelius finds the solution to the riddle in the prologue to Luke's gospel: "For as much as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also to write unto thee in order, etc." This otherwise conventional introduction is noteworthy for its variation in one important respect. The usual formula in a work of this kind would have been "I who was an eyewitness have investigated, etc." Luke however bases his own work and the attempts that preceded him upon the testimony of unnamed persons who had lived in the time in question. Further, those who had been eyewitnesses of the events became according to this statement "servants of the word", i.e. preachers, and missionaries. Here are then both the occasion and the law of transmission: the eyewitnesses become preachers and relate their experiences, and these experiences are subjected to certain aims and interests. From an examination of the synoptics it will be seen that material was not allowed to seek its own fate, but that it was nourished and regulated, many traditions existing

in almost the same form in different places, and as to the occasion, this can also be observed in many incidents and sayings whose purpose is clear: namely the Mission.

Missionary enterprise is therefore the keynote of the activity of the early Church, and to the preaching in this connection we must look for the "Sitz im Leben" of the gospel material and the preservation of any recollections of Jesus.

Thus the reminiscences of the eyewitnesses were not merely exchange of experiences which would lead to no set form of tradition, nor were they for the benefit of posterity, for to their thinking there would be no such thing.

Only a subjugation of their knowledge to the needs of missionary activity could give any stability to the preservation of material: i.e. they were not haphazard recollections, but recollections powerful enough to evoke repentance and to win converts. For this purpose only a disciplined tradition would be of any service, the available material had to be used to its best advantage, and not left to the chance attentions and fallible memories of the missionaries.

This body of preaching matter would be used for the conversion of Jews and Gentiles, for worship in already established congregations, for instruction of newly-won converts. In all these cases information about Jesus would be essential though in some cases referred to more than in others, e.g. it would be expected

that those communities which arose on a Jewish foundation would be in closer relationship to the tradition of actual events than those founded by Paul.

According to Dibelius, therefore, the Sermon in this wide sense, including all possible forms of Christian preaching and instruction, is the origin of all the tradition of Jesus that we possess, as the Mission is the cause.

From Luke's prologue it can be further seen that the material in his gospel is not the contents of sermons but a pledge for what was in the sermon. All our observations tend to confirm the fact that the missionaries did not relate the life of Jesus but the salvation that had appeared in Him. Whatever they related was subordinated to the Gospel, and had to confirm and justify it.

It need not be imagined that there was a special type of sermon preached in those times, in which all the gospel material can find its place: the material presented there rather objectivates the preaching of salvation, will sometimes be included in the sermon, sometimes tacked on to it.

The oldest fragments must have been of this type, although no sermons of the first few decades exist to confirm this fully. There are however the sermons in Acts which have a notable similarity: the question whether they are all genuine is relatively unimportant. For if their similarity depends on historic fact it is no more striking than if the author - like Josephus - composed

the speeches himself. The same general line is adopted in the sermons of Peter and Paul on three occasions: to the people, before Cornelius, and at Antioch, although the writer of Acts had other schemes which were possible - as in the speeches before Felix and Agrippa.

In the former group there is apart from the introduction, which varies according to context, the same scheme: Kerugma, scriptural proof and call to repentance. Salvation through Christ is confirmed by the Old Testament and is made the ground of an appeal for conversion. The conclusion that emerges is that there was a conscious attempt on the part of the author to show the similarity of Christian preaching - as opposed to an attempt to show the diversity of the Apostles' minds, and this is confirmed by a reference to 1 Cor. 15¹¹ where Paul speaks of all Christian preaching as being of the same type.

Dibelius proceeds to build most of his arguments upon this passage in Paul. If the sermons in Acts are disputed there is no doubt as to the genuineness of Paul's letter, where he quotes as a tradition which he himself received the message of the death of Christ for the sins of men. This must therefore have been already established by the thirties in Antioch or Damascus - apparently ^{as} a formula. These communities would thus appear to have given those whom they sent out as missionaries formulae of this kind, summary of the Christian sermon, to use in mission work or to keep them firm in the faith. We may therefore assume tradition of this type varying in small details (cf. the difference between 1 Cor. 15, the synoptics

and Acts in their accounts of the death and resurrection of Jesus) according to the place of its origin, since no particular community possessed supreme authority on this matter.

Such a Kerugma was included in the sermon as a starting point for imparting information about Jesus: that this Kerugma was the general practice is seen from the passage quoted. It would serve both as an occasion for preaching to non-Christians and would act as a reminder to the Christians themselves.

Dibelius' conclusion from this passage is that the tradition, originally spoken in Aramaic, then further recounted in Greek, was established in such a fixed formula in Greek speaking communities for missionary purposes. Paul seems in his use of παραλαμβάνω and παραδίδωμι to relate the procedure of the early Church to the זָבַח and $\text{נָתַן$ of classical Judaism.

From these sermons which are preserved, it is clear that interest centred round the suffering, death or resurrection of Jesus and only occasionally round the rest of His life. This is only to be expected in view of the significance of His death in relation to the expected Parousia. The events in Jerusalem were the prelude to the coming end, were the first act of the ἔσχατα. Salvation came to them not only in the person and sayings of Jesus but actually in these happenings. The paradox of the Cross and the question of guilt could only be explained by a historical sequence such as is found in Mark's Passion without its necessarily being so

comprehensive. That the synoptics and John show here alone greatest measure of agreement is a confirmation of the early origin of such a connected whole.

In preaching, details of the life of Jesus would only be of secondary importance. They have no vital role in the great matter of salvation: they are not cosmic acts or a prologue to the end of the world; rather are they a foretaste of the future power of the Messiah. They needed only to be mentioned as examples, not as constitutive parts of the world redemption. No biographical description of Jesus' activity could be used, since that would have no redemptive value, nor complicated narrative since that would only have ruined the effect of the sermon. Some such use therefore of the details of Jesus' life must be assumed on the lines of Clement of Rome's use of the story of Cain and Abel to illustrate the sin of envy.

Where mention of the life of Jesus is made in Acts 10³⁸ and 2²² this is borne out. "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, wonders and signs" 2²². "Jesus of Nazareth who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil" 10³⁸. Both cases concern manifestations of His power and may be taken to include also decisions in controversies, answers to questions and other sayings which are also reckoned as evidence of power (Mark 1²²).

They are mentioned at all to show that "God was with Jesus": had they not had that significance they could have found no place in the sermon. And since it is obvious that the sermons in Acts are

mere skeletons of actual preaching, so it may be assumed that no such bare statement was made in preaching as that "He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil" or that He performed "miracles, wonders and signs" without introducing examples of these powers in confirmation.

Such incidents would be utilised without narrative exactness, and in a manner that would not impair the style of the sermon: they could only be used in the sermon as examples.

They were neither to provide a connected narrative, nor to satisfy a desire for knowledge, nor to astonish by their own virtue, but only to support the didactic motive of the preaching. Such examples from the life of Jesus Dibelius calls Paradigms.

Beside the Passion Story (which would be too long for use in preaching) and the Paradigms, there must be assumed a different development for the sayings of Jesus which have no narrative introduction or connection, such as parables and commandments. These would have their place principally in instruction of already converted Christians. The fact that Q can be identified as a separate category in the gospels is confirmation of its divergent development. Narrative and sayings were formed under different conditions.

To modern minds this may seem odd, influenced as they are by the biographical conception, which would combine words and deeds in a compact whole and expect them to be united from the beginning. Jewish tradition on the other hand was familiar with the cleavage

between Halakha and Haggada: the former containing rules for life; the latter history and theology.

The correspondence of this distinction in the Jewish religion with the facts of the New Testament text is clearly evident. In the Halakha every saying had to be preserved with the greatest care since they demanded obedience, whereas the Haggada enjoyed considerable freedom, requiring only to be respected by the individual. If the same conditions prevailed in the early Christian communities it would be expected that the sayings of Jesus would be translated literally from the original spoken or written Aramaic, while the stories would be related freely.

That this was the case appears to be indicated by Matthew 11²⁻⁶ and Luke 7¹⁸⁻²³ where the question and answer regarding John the Baptist's activity are practically identical, whereas the narrative framework differs considerably. Similarly, Matthew 8⁸⁻¹⁰ and Luke 7⁶⁻⁹, the words of the centurion and Jesus' reply coincide while the introductions are quite distinct. Whether there was originally a framework round these stories which was regarded with indifference by one or both writers, or whether there was none to begin with, the treatment is illustrative of the varying conditions under which spoken and written material developed.

On the question of where the tradition mainly originated Dibelius ascribes it mostly to the Greek speaking Jews of the Diaspora. The first recollections must have sprung from the circle

around Jesus in Palestine. But of these earliest groups we know little, and nothing has been preserved in Aramaic. On the other hand however much we explain away Paul's silence regarding the earthly life of Jesus it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the Churches founded by him did not interest themselves to any extent in the original Palestinian tradition.

Indeed the apostle (1Cor. 11²³.15³) speaks of himself as having acquired his tradition material from other hands. This on the evidence of Galatians cannot mean Jerusalem and must refer to those communities where Paul himself was a missionary: Damascus and Antioch in Syria. Hellenistic Christianity therefore before Paul was able to hand on tradition and so far as it was in Greek, to form it.

These congregations bearing a closer relationship to Judaism than did the churches founded by Paul grew out of the Jewish settlements at Antioch, Damascus, Alexandria and Rome without severing completely from Jewish practices.

They brought with them a stock of prayers, songs, and precepts into the Christian Church for liturgical purposes; witness the Jewish material in Christian guise in the following: the prayers in Didache 9.10., I Clem. 59-61, many songs of the Apocalypse, Odes of Solomon, and the paranetic material in James and Hermas (Mandata). It was characteristic of these congregations that they believed that Judaism found its fulfilment in the appearance of Christ as the Messiah (as opposed to Paul's consciousness of a new and paradoxical

revelation of the God of the Jews). Thus in these communities there need be added to what was already being preached of a Creator God, the moral life, the resurrection of the dead, and the last judgement, only what happened in Palestine as the first act of the end of the world. Thus this type of Christianity would be very interested in material dealing with the life of Jesus. Not that they might preserve it for posterity - for they believed there would be none - as being of historic value, but from the point of view that at last salvation had come to the Jewish people.

Paul's great problems were not felt by them. Converted Jews and converted heathens might live peaceably together as Christians for they could look back on the admission of "God-fearing Greeks" into the Jewish congregations. How the heathen could be saved without the Law presented no difficulty for them. Their affairs were governed by Jewish codes and gradually sayings of Jesus would be included.

In such communities worship, preaching, and teaching were carried out after Jewish fashion but in the Greek language. Here then is to be sought the beginning of a tradition which would be given to missionaries, preachers and teachers as material for their work. The cultivation of tradition arose from this need, not from literary and biographical ambition.

Such cultivation implies discipline: it can prevent destruction or diminution or corruption by the outside world since such develop-

ments make the tradition useless for preaching and teaching. This is not to say that no corruption entered the process, but that by this means the tradition was not exposed to the haphazard recollections of unlettered men. On the other hand there would be a tendency to improve, explain, and arrange. In this way the Christian communities prepared the tradition which the evangelists used.

Thus it came about that men who were by nature far removed from men of letters created a style of their own, driven to it by the exigencies of their beliefs. What they had seen and heard they could not but speak about (Acts 4²⁰). The result is something as far removed from the minutes of proceedings as can possibly be: and to treat Proto Mark and Q as of this nature is totally to misunderstand their origin. If the gospels were to have been written in the spirit of an accurate record of events they would never have reached paper at all. The earliest purpose in the minds of those who handed down the tradition was to win men over and to convince those who had been thus won. Since this purpose was everywhere alike a similar style was bound to emerge, with differences corresponding to the personality of the formulator: Dibelius compares the resultant divergences where two political speakers with the same platform expound their plans in neighbouring constituencies. In the case of the early Church, the former distinction will be less actual than the latter: whereas men of small literary gifts will tend to reproduce more or less the same versions of a common body

of information, the audience on the other hand will be a prominent determining factor in the result. Whether they memorised them or had them written down is a question of little importance since both were probably common.

Dibelius' theory then is briefly this: that from the recollections of eyewitnesses to the finished gospel stages of development can be traced and distinguished in the text. All that is presented there was originally grounded in the missionary activity of the Church and had its place in preaching - the word being used in the wide sense. Its motive was throughout evangelical, conditioned by the belief in the approaching end of the world, and therefore non-biographical, non-reminiscent and highly didactic (erbaulich). We should expect therefore neither a dispassionate account of what happened, nor can we look on the gospels in any sense as a life of Jesus: rather are they composed of isolated fragments which are themselves only in the second instance concerned with past events and primarily always with the salvation of men. What is presented is not history but the history of redemption.

He then proceeds to the text and classifies the material there claiming to find confirmation of his constructive method by means of analysis. It is unnecessary here to do more than name his grouping. Firstly, come the Paradigmen: short isolated instructional fragments of a definitely religious character, containing only essential details and centring round a saying of Jesus as the kernel.

These as we have seen he holds to have been thus formed after a pattern for preaching purposes (e.g. Mk. 2^{1ff.} 2^{18ff.} 2^{23ff.} 3^{1ff.} and 3^{31ff.} etc.).

Their historicity will be correspondingly greater as their form is stabilised by the use to which they were put. The question is one however which can only be settled with reference to each individual item and is not properly the province of Formgeschichte: only where a Paradigma deviates from the original character - adjudged from observation of them as a whole - can Formgeschichte indicate a step from the more to the less historical. In any case their historicity is only relative in that we cannot hope to distinguish between the completed Paradigma - the result of an intentional subordination of history to the evangelical motive - and the original form. Indeed in this matter it is impossible to speak of an original form since the incident or saying from its first appearance in tradition is necessarily coloured by this purpose.

To desire historical accuracy would be simply to apply the old conception of Inspiration which was used of the whole to the constituent parts. The value of the Paradigms does not lie in the authenticity of every word but in the fact that they give an impressive picture of Jesus' life and work (60). We cannot reproduce the original by striking off what appears to be a later addition, we must accept it as being from the first an interpretation of the events.

Secondly, to be distinguished from the Paradigms are the Novellen: these are longer, with a greater wealth of detail, and more secular in their motif. They found their place outwith preaching and for them Dibelius postulates a class of narrators (e.g. Mark 1⁴⁰⁻⁴⁵ 4³⁵⁻⁴¹ 5¹⁻²⁰ etc.). They are not concerned with the problems of the Paradigms, how does the individual stand with relation to God, how does he enter the Kingdom of God, what is the true demand of God. Much more are they concerned to show Jesus as a wonder worker, to make the greatness of His miracles plain, and to describe His methods (90). The missionary purpose is here in abeyance. They do not as in the Paradigms show the will of God through the words and deeds of Jesus (even in the healing miracles of the Paradigm class) but find their end in showing the appearance of the divine on earth in the miracle. (It is also possible that the elaborate descriptions of cures may have been designed to give guidance to the miracle workers of the early Church (84).

Just as the preaching was directed to attract converts and the Paradigms were introduced as verification so the Novellen attracted another type of convert by showing the superiority of Jesus to all other cult gods. Both could win believers for the Lord therefore Mark included both (93). Dibelius traces the formation of the Novellen as a development of Paradigms - examples of such mixed forms may be found in the synoptics e.g. Luke 13¹¹⁻¹⁷

and in the apocryphal gospels-or as having their origin in non-Christian environments (e.g. the tale of the Gadarene swine). The former will therefore have more historical reliability than the latter.

A third type of material is the Legend, although the name is no value judgment - their historicity must be adjudged on their individual merits. This group consists of pious tales - common to Christian and non-Christian writings: but the commonest form, the personal legend, dealing with the deeds and experiences of holy men and women, is comparatively absent from the gospels, since where Jesus is concerned His virtue and holiness and piety are not the subject but the divine message He brings and the divine revelation which He displays (102). For personal anecdotes we must turn to the apocryphal gospels where many typical legendary incidents, illustrative of the powers of Jesus are to be found, whereas the synoptists have practically excluded such tales. Examples of this class in the gospels are the story of the box of ointment, the fate of Judas, Matthew 27³⁻⁸, or the story of Zaccheus, Luke 19¹⁻¹⁰. The only legends proper concerning Jesus are the tale of Him as a twelve-year old boy in the Temple and the Birth Stories.

Lastly, in the narrative class comes the Passion Story, related as a whole - as opposed to all others - on account of the fundamental significance of the death and resurrection in the early

Church. Obviously it must at one time have consisted of isolated incidents but as it stands in the gospels it is a unity. Its purpose was to justify the resurrection faith - to prove that all that had happened in Jerusalem was according to the will of God. For this purpose the Old Testament was adduced and scripture and history became woven into one pattern. The Passion Story is not concerned to portray touching and heroic events nor to present an accurate chronicle, but to proclaim God's purpose in the Crucifixion.

In his account of Mark's role in collecting and editing the narrative material Dibelius agrees with Schmidt, except that he attributes greater significance to the evangelist. His purpose was to show Jesus as Messiah but at the same time to make it clear why He was rejected by the Jews. Dibelius traces here what he calls a "secret Epiphany motive" which causes Mark to interpret in many cases instead of simply arranging. He must show that Jesus was the Messiah but also make it clear why He was not recognised by the people and why He was crucified. Only His closest circle was privileged to know His divine glory until the resurrection revealed it to the world.

As to the collected sayings, the existence of Q is recognised with reservations: it cannot be said for example in what form Q constituted an independent source and we know nothing of what chronological or biographical framework may have enshrined the individual fragments. We are forced to speak of a 'Schicht' rather

than a 'Schrift' (236). Mark is obviously only giving examples of a much larger stock of material at his disposal when he says: "and He taught them many things by parables and said unto them in His doctrine" 4² (cf. 12¹.3²³). Such a collection of sayings is to be expected, as following on Jewish models and for mission purposes: evidence of this latter, in showing the possession of such groups of sayings by missionaries, is to be found in I Cor.7²⁵.7¹⁰. 9¹⁴. This paranetic material is the actual substance of the early Christian preaching, as opposed to the narrative material which was only the pledge for it. Whereas Luke increasingly historicises, Matthew reduces the narrative effect of Mark's tradition: and the distinction between the spoken and narrative sections tends to disappear. When the paranetic material becomes incorporated in the narrative, we are entitled to speak of a gospel but not before: since the εὐαγγέλιον of the early Church was the preaching about Jesus and the teaching of Jesus used indiscriminately. Mark merely makes reference to the latter whereas Matthew reproduces it. It was through Matthew that a book (Mark's gospel) which was originally intended as a supplement to preaching became its substitute.

Finally, Dibelius distinguishes the Mythos: pointing out the conservatism of the gospels in that while Paul constructs a complete dying and rising God, pre-existent and all powerful, and such ideas must have been in the air, yet they remain singularly

free from any matter of this kind. The later gospels betray many of the usual features of the Mythos, but apart from the Baptism, Temptation, and Transfiguration accounts the synoptics have preserved a remarkable purity.

So much for Dibelius and the constructive approach which leads him to the general position that the beginnings of the gospel material are barely to be regarded as literature at all: apart from the narrative of the Passion, short isolated incidents from the life of Jesus are used for preaching purposes, and for the practical needs of the growing community sayings and parables are put into currency. The literary development properly begins with the Novellen, while on the fringes legendary motifs are introduced as a normal consequence of the growing worldliness of the Church. Through it all the tendency of the collectors to interpret as well as record, subordinates the material to the particular theological view of Christ they wish to impose.

Thus while it is maintained that the main part of the Marcan tradition was formed at a time when eyewitnesses still lived, at the latest between 50 to 70 (confirmation being found in Paul's possession of different elements) the historicity may be regarded as in descending order of formation. The Paradigmen will have greater likelihood of corresponding with actual fact than the Novellen, the Novellen than the Legenden, and so on.

But more than this, even in the most likely sources for a historical account of the life of Jesus we cannot say that it is to be found: for on his theory of the occasion of the appearance of any material, it can never be called purely historical.

Whatever was related of Jesus' words and deeds was from the beginning a witness of faith to win converts. It was not knowledge of a historical sequence that constituted Christianity, but faith in the contents of this history as the history of redemption, as the decisive beginning of the last story of all (295). The gospels made no attempt to present the story of an exemplary and pious man and with few exceptions they give no answer to questions as to the character, personality, and qualities of Jesus. (300).

In his treatment of Dibelius' work (pp.52-82) Fascher is distinctly unfair. Seizing upon the claim that the Paradigms appeared originally in the Sermon, he labours to show that having no specimen Sermons preserved the constructive theory is of no value. Similarly, noting that there is no indication in scripture of a special class of narrators, he disallows most of Dibelius' work on the Novellen. And on the grounds that he does not provide Form-Criticism but Style-criticism, he holds that Dibelius makes no advance on Wendling and von Soden.

In all this he is less than just since the actual inclusion of the Paradigms in a spoken sermon affects neither their classification as a distinct group with certain common features, nor the fact that they were from the beginning subservient to the Mission. Further, Dibelius has since shown himself to be prepared to extend his conception of preaching to include teaching and discussion within the congregation. (Zur Formgeschichte des Evangeliums in Theol. Rundschau 1929). Likewise the characteristics of the Novellen are not to be discounted because the narrators cannot be

identified. Dibelius' main point in both cases is not that which Fascher attacks - and his criticism leaves the original contention unharmed - namely, that both are related not as history or biography but as bringing "the good news" in different forms.

It may be that Dibelius is wrong in refusing to analyse in order to arrive at an original form and that Bultmann is right in postulating a narrative accretion to the original spoken word, but this does not deprive the constructive approach of its value, nor entitle Fascher to dismiss Dibelius' work as in most respects of little account. It is in fact a merit in Dibelius' work that it is what Fascher slightly calls a "programme" rather than an exhaustive investigation. He is saved thereby from losing his way in the undergrowth of meticulous analysis of the gospels and is able to preserve a wide and embracing view of the whole. Taylor apportions praise more adequately when he says, referring to the first edition of *Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*: "There can be little doubt that when the historian of contemporary criticism makes up his account high praise will be awarded to this slim volume of about one hundred pages" (pp.11-12).

V. Other Formgeschichtlers.

(a) Bultmann.

In alleged opposition to Dibelius' constructive method, Bultmann stresses a thorough-going if not exhaustive analysis. His method is based on the observation of the development of Mark by Matthew and Luke and later, by the apocryphal gospels: on this analogy he assumes that Mark and Q themselves have been similarly altered from their originals. By this means he claims to discover in the case of each individual fragment what its original form must have been. His classification is much the same as that of Dibelius, differing however in terminology.

In dealing with the spoken matter he holds that whatever narrative material exists as a framework for sayings is mainly invention. Whether they have a historical background or not, as they lie before us they are ideal scenes (21) giving concrete examples in cases where the Church finds it necessary to go back to Jesus for guidance - which is as much a constructive attitude as any of Dibelius. His reason for saying this is partly derived from comparison with parallels in Rabbinic literature, and partly from the tendency of later gospels to invent scenes for sayings which are still unframed in the synoptics. The interest is in the saying, not in the *dramatis personae*.

Of the sayings themselves, it is impossible to tell which, if any, are genuine words of Jesus. They may be old, they may be Rabbinic, they may be original: the Church in all probability did not confine itself to actual utterances of Jesus but used whatever

was worth reproducing for its catechetical purposes (60). Specific sayings of Jesus may be found where ordinary folk-sayings are transcended, or where the tone is not obviously Rabbinical or Jewish apocalyptic (63). Even the residuum may not necessarily be Jesus' own but as readily the work of the Church (75). We may assume that they had a certain number of sayings of Jesus - though we do not know how many - principally determinable by being opposed to Jewish prescriptions (e.g. what comes from within defiles a man): to this they added some of Jewish origin (e.g. whosoever receiveth one of these little ones): and constructed some themselves (e.g. I am come not to destroy the law but to fulfil it). We must also assume an alteration of already existing sayings, and finally their collection. In most of these, Jesus is a secondary consideration and plays a minor rôle, in those where He is the leading figure, we may be sure that this is the work of the Church (98).

Bultmann's conclusion is that we can reckon as real utterances of Jesus those which contrast with Jewish ethics and piety or emphasise eschatology - the characteristics of His preaching - and those which serve no specifically Christian interest. Otherwise they are probably Jewish or later Christian (129).

In the narrative portions a similar result is recorded. The Miracle Stories (Novellen) are not in purpose biographical: they are not proofs of the character of Jesus but of His divine power. They are automatic and rarely connected with the disposition of the patient; if *πίστις* is mentioned it has its object not in Jesus' personality or in His gospel but simply in the miracle itself (135 ff.). The main emphasis in the miracles lies on the

wonder itself, just as in the Apophthegmata (Paradigmas) it lay on the saying. Their origin is largely in folk lore, though some have historical antecedents - even these however are shaped by tradition (140).

In all cases following certain laws discoverable from the material as a whole, he claims to be able to reproduce the original form, whether saying or deed. Bultmann does not attribute the collection of material to any one especial need or purpose: as he says, spiritual property is its own justification. At all events we may look on the various threads of gospel tradition as being collected under various motives of worship and discipline.

Mark used no sources which gave him a connected narrative of Jesus' life: he joins incidents together, giving them a suitable place in the sequence and produces a picture of Jesus' activity. He also gives it the tone it needed for Pauline Hellenism and introduces the dogmatic interest. The intention behind this is to bind the Christ Mythos of Paul to the tradition of the Jesus of history. Of the latter, however, we have only an outline and there is no development.

The idea of making a unified picture of the life of Jesus lay far from the Palestinian community where the tradition originated - their Eschatological background forbade it. Whatever therefore in the gospels tends to give that impression is the work of the Hellenistic Church which needed such a picture partly to show the identity of Jesus with the Kurios and to confute similar activities in the Greek cults. Mark's gospel is thus not biography but a Cult Legend (227).

Bultmann's classification of the synoptic material varies in the main very little from that of Dibelius: though his nomenclature is different. He disapproves of the constructive approach, and criticises Dibelius' emphasis on preaching as being the source of the Apophthegmata (Paradigmen). But in the main there is agreement between them as there is in their attitude to the biographical question, where they both maintain that it was not the intention of the early Church to recount tales of Jesus out of an interest in His activities. The vital distinction between them lies in their assessment of the historicity of the material: Dibelius taking a much more conservative view, where Bultmann approaches complete scepticism. The latter attributes much more to the Church, to infiltration, and to corruption, and leaves a bare skeleton of material which we may call our knowledge of the historic Jesus.

His book, as Fascher says, reads like a lexicon and one cannot but feel that over and over again his wholesale destruction of material is without sufficient justification. His "general laws of development" are too often based on a few isolated instances and where in each group of material only approximately one-tenth is accepted as historically genuine, gospel study becomes little short of impossible. Scepticism and subjective judgement destroy the value of his conclusions and make demands on the gospels which they are unable to meet. Where Dibelius is content to regard all the gospel narrative as history seen through the eyes of faith, Bultmann demands minute accuracy and, believing that it is not to

be found, dismisses the whole as fictitious. Where the slightest ground exists for doubting the authenticity of a saying he cheerfully adds it to the limbo.

(b) Albertz.

For the purposes of this discussion Albertz's work is of some importance. Unfortunately he examines only a small section of the gospel material - the Streitgespräche (Paradigmen: Apophthegmata). He adopts however a more conservative view than either Bultmann or Dibelius in the matter of their historicity. While recognising that the unknown narrator shows no trace of the interest of a chronicler, he rather believes that the absence of detail is due to a designed concentration on the sayings and represents a shortened form of the historical reality, than that the framework was invented. As to the pronouncements themselves, he finds in them actual words of Jesus, seeing in them similarities to the parables.

(c) Bertram.

Bertram's work has been described as dealing more with the history of Church worship than with the form of the gospels (Fascher 171). His purpose is to show that the tradition of Jesus was formed from the needs of the community. These needs spring from the relationship between the worshipper and the object of his worship (Kultheros). In the Passion story there is a picture of Christ which grew out of that need and not a narrative of the

Jesus with Whom the disciples lived on earth. We must try to understand the Passion story from the Resurrection faith. It is a work of art to be compared with Shakespeare and Ibsen. Of history there is no trace: indeed it is beside the point to inquire where history lies. What we know is that in the beginning was the Cultus and from that the gospels have developed. Thus history disappears and Bertram does not regret its passing.

What these discovered and sayings, stories in
 Greek, Hebrew, in written or oral form, were collected by
 one of the gospels - pre-eminently those by Mark - arranged
 in order as not incidents, and some particular illustrations
 of the collection is the process.
 Finally, the chronology and the development of the gospel
 is a matter of speculation.

It is a matter of speculation whether the existing evidence is
 sufficient to show that the gospel of Mark is the earliest of the
 gospels, and if so, whether it is the work of a single author or
 of several.

VI. Formgeschichte and the Life of Jesus.

It is possible to find a certain measure of agreement among these various representatives of the Formgeschichtliche Schule: their nomenclature may differ and their methods may be at variance, but a general position may be established to which they would all assent.

Firstly, they are agreed that the gospels rest upon oral tradition, that from the time of Jesus' ministry onwards anecdotes and sayings were current among His followers and circulated freely in the early Church.

Secondly, that these anecdotes and sayings, sometimes in small groups, whether in written or oral form, were collected by the writers of the gospels - presumably first by Mark - arranged in some order which was not inviolable, and that various alterations were made by the collectors in the process.

Thirdly, the chronology and the itineraries of the gospels are either non-existent or unreliable.

Fourthly, there was no interest in relating anecdotes of Jesus for their own sake, from a desire to know what manner of man He was.

Fifthly, what information we have about Jesus has no doubt a basis in fact yet we can only regard this as a general confirmation of the historical background of the Christian faith and not as an accurate record of events. Whatever knowledge we have of the founder of our religion is mediated by the faith of

the earliest believers and subjected to propagandist interests,

Sixthly, the most reliable section of gospel material consists of unattached sayings or those with a minimum of narrative: even here however we cannot expect absolute certainty.

Thus the gospels are not literature: to educated Greeks they were "monstra". They are without accurate analogy or parallel although resemblances may be found. All agree that they are not biographies, nor writings invented for mission purposes, but popular devotional manuals (Kultbücher) arising from the spiritual urge which possessed the community as a result of the Resurrection faith.

While controversy may rage over the classification of the gospel material and over the question of the origin of the various strands, for New Testament theology the important aspect of the school's work does not lie in their difference of opinion on these matters, but in the agreement which the Formgeschichtlers show on the old problem of Jesus research.

It is not a new claim that they make when they tell us that history and imagination have combined to form the gospels or that the life of Jesus of Nazareth meant little to the men of the early Church. But it is backed this time by more concrete evidence than merely a desire to eradicate all difficult passages as "accretions".

The rationalistic attempt of the 19th century, whose aim was to reduce the incomprehensible, could be successfully exploded by Schweitzer because it chose simply to omit what offended "reasonable

men". Dogmatic motives had outrun their critical faculty and large sections of the gospels were regarded as unhistorical because they could not harmonise with a preconceived portrait of Jesus.

Since those times much has happened. The Two Source theory has become a foundation of gospel criticism and recognition has been given to the large part played by eschatological expectations in the minds of Jesus and His followers. The conclusions of the Formgeschichtlers are however doubly significant in that they base their estimate of Jesus not on theological preconceptions but on critical analysis and a new point of view with regard to gospel origins.

It is therefore the business of theology to examine their claims and their effect on our conception of the historic Jesus. That it will require to be vastly altered if their contentions are correct, is clear: for it destroys the whole edifice on which the Lives of Jesus rest. If the order of events disappears in default of connections, no psychological interpretations which would attempt to introduce a continuity that the gospels lack will have any value. And there has perhaps been no age when more stress has been laid on the personality, character traits, and actions of Our Lord.

The human Jesus at the moment goes far to outstrip the Risen Christ in popular appeal: the humanity, affections, dispositions, and moods of Jesus are analysed and dwelt on. Sermons and popular theological works concentrate more on the "manhood of the Master" than on the worship of Christ: the brotherhood of Jesus with all men before the Father is that which appeals most to modern minds.

Any who can read more into the New Testament accounts than their neighbours are eagerly besought to shed more light on lesser known aspects of Jesus: His humour, His anger, His sarcasm. "Sirs, we would see Jesus" is the cry of today as strongly as in the heyday of Liberalism.

Partly this is to be accounted for by the fact that research penetrates slowly into the public mind and the introduction of jarring elements by the eschatological exponents has not yet been fully felt. But on the other hand the production of Lives of Jesus by responsible theologians shows no signs of abating. Within the past thirty years there has been hardly less activity along this line than in the Strauss-Renan era. The author of three volumes on the subject himself asserts that the total output of books about Jesus during the past five years "would fill several five-foot shelves".

It would almost appear as if there were a passionate eagerness to vindicate a waning faith by an appeal to history and by a desperate attempt to present a coherent picture for our guidance and imitation. To shed new light on the life of Jesus is the general aim, while the particular purpose is to seek material whereby we can constitute a living personality with clearly defined attributes and actions: whose thoughts and ways are made plain to us, whose example we may thereupon follow. If the writers of these Lives have any grudge against the gospel writers, it is that they "left so much to chance", that so much more has been "lost", that facts and figures have not been preserved as carefully and lovingly as they ought and

that, in short, for men who loved their Lord they betray a singular lack of care in preserving reminiscences of Him. It is true of course that they themselves knew much more but would that they had only handed it down to us also and not been so haphazard in their recollections! Nevertheless we must acknowledge our debt to them in that they have preserved so much of the Master's everyday life for us and presented us with a more or less satisfactory biography.

It is just this attitude which the Form critics claim to shatter. Men living in expectation of the end of the world could have no interest in the events of the past years, they say. Jesus, for them, was the Christ who was about to come in glory ere their generation had passed away. Of biographical interest, of cherishing of anecdotes concerning Jesus because of the light they shed on His personality, of a consecutive account of His ministry there is no trace because these were matters of no moment to the men of those times.

What interested them was the salvation that had come through the Death and Resurrection of Jesus: His precepts were a rule of life "till He come", anecdotes concerning Him were only related with a view to converting, persuading, or confirming men in the new faith. That historical fact lies behind them is undoubted but it is beyond our reach, since from their very nature they are made to conform to a purpose other than a relation of events. They adduce Papias and tell us that Mark does not contain "memoirs of a historian" but "memoirs of a preacher". Thus the Form critics discourage attempts to base a life of Jesus on the gospels on the assumption that that

is their primary function and warn us against a revival of the Verbal Inspirational theory in the New Testament.

It is noteworthy that at a time when Barthianism has emphasised the otherness of God and discountenanced easy theories of the "Brotherhood of the Father," Formgeschichte steps forward and insists on a similar revision of our attitude to Jesus. We must not like Weinel reply to the question "Do we know Jesus?" by saying "Yes, we know Him very well indeed." Schweitzer's famous closing words in the Quest of the Historical Jesus are being repeated today with new meaning. Goguel puts the case in its extreme form when he says: "What is agreed on by even the most pronounced opponents of the mythical theories can be put in a single sentence, namely: "Between the year 25 and the year 30 of our era a rabbi by the name of Jesus was crucified at Jerusalem by order of Pontius Pilate in consequence of a messianic movement." (Harvard Theological Review 1930, p.111.)

Opposition to the Form critics' conclusions has not been lacking. With the notable exception of Lightfoot's History and Interpretation in the Gospels 1935, most English criticism has been unfavourable, as also much continental scholarship. It is contended that in the growth of tradition a simple historical interest in producing a picture of the life of Jesus was at work. Windisch (Deutsche Literaturzeitung 1934 col. 2408) for example, asks whether it was not simply a natural desire on the part of the believers to know and to remember what had taken place and how it had come about. He compares the questions of Echekrates in Plato's

Phaedo regarding the death of Socrates to the will to know all that happened to Jesus on the part of the early Church.

An uncompromising opponent of Formgeschichte is the Bishop of Gloucester who in an article in the Church Quarterly Review (Jan. 1935) expresses the full biographical standpoint.

"There is no evidence that the primitive Christians were miserable eschatologists waiting for the end of the world. From the beginning, they would want to remember the words and deeds of Christ. The new converts would want to hear them and there would be many who had their stories to tell." "We can find in all this modern criticism no arguments adduced why we should not treat these biographies as many others that have come to us from the ancient world. . . . They are a record of life and words narrated by eyewitnesses and handed down by tradition. They present a homogeneous picture of a life, a teacher, a prophet." (Pages 289, 295.)

This difference in viewpoint between those who believe that the earliest tradition concerning Jesus arose from an interest in His earthly life, and those who hold that the early Church had no such concern and that information about Jesus is incidental can be put to the test along other lines than that of investigating the synoptic material.

We possess canonical and extra-canonical writings dating onwards from 20 to 30 years after the death of Our Lord. This is the only material which we have to guide us in our knowledge of

the conditions of the early Church. They are writings concerned with the propagation of the faith, ecclesiastical ordinances, moral codes, in short all the subject matter of the Christian mission.

If the details of the life of Jesus were of such interest to the earliest communities it should not be difficult to find an abundance of references to them in these writings. Letters from missionaries to their churches, to new foundations, would presumably relate copiously from the events in Nazareth, portraying a beloved Master, lingering over His words and ways, seeking to acquaint the newly-won converts with the behaviour and character of the founder of their sect. Just as pupils love to narrate the eccentricities of a beloved teacher, so these men who had been with Jesus would pass on tales of their life in Nazareth to make the newcomers familiar with old times (cf. Xenophon's *Memorabilia*).

We know that from the death of Jesus - and before it - there were men who had been with Him throughout His ministry and that these men founded the Church. That they had a great store of information about Jesus is obvious and it is to be assumed that this was handed on by word of mouth or in writing to the missionaries of the ever-widening communities.

If in the New Testament and later writings however these missionaries in their letters refer only to certain aspects of the life of Jesus e.g. His maxims and precepts, His passion and death, while the events of His ministry are either unmentioned or briefly referred to, then it will be reasonable to suppose that there was more interest in some parts of His work than in others, and that

a regard for reminiscence for its own sake was non-existent.

Indeed if it is shown that in all the 1st century writings Jesus as a man among men is in fact entirely absent and events from the Nazareth ministry find no place, then we are at a loss to account for the presence of the gospel material which developed within those years and among the same people. Either we assume that the Church within the 1st century of its existence knew nothing of Jesus - in which case the gospels are fictitious - or else the silence of these early writers is to be accounted for in some other way. If it can be shown for example, that together with an absence of mention of Jesus of Nazareth, there goes a lively expectation of the coming of the Christ, then we should indeed have a clue to the attitude of the Church to what knowledge they possess concerning Jesus.

It would be possible for such knowledge to be in circulation and to be regarded not as historical reminiscence but rather as witnessing to the certainty of the Parousia. When we discover from their writings where the interest of the Church lay, what Jesus implied for them, then we shall be in a position to evaluate the significance of the synoptic material. If it is shown that interest lies in the past, then the gospels may properly be regarded as memoirs and as biographical: if however interest lies in the future, then the original purpose of the gospel material was not reminiscent however biographical a shape it may later have assumed. The Form-geschichtliche claim that they were fragmentary units subservient to missionary purposes would then be entitled to serious consideration. Under this point of view we therefore proceed to examine the Christology of the early Church as represented in all that we possess of their literature.

(B) ESCHATOLOGY AND THE LIFE OF JESUS.I. Paul.

Adolf Deissmann (The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul p.171) said "I think if we wish to gain a real understanding of Paul we should begin with the formula 'Εν Χριστῷ' ". Whereupon he proceeded to examine this and similar phrases: "in the blood of Christ", "in the name of Christ", "with Christ", "through Christ", coming to the conclusion that all are to be taken as expressions of the spiritual communion of Paul with the risen Christ and not as referring to the historic Jesus at all. The keynote in fact of Deissmann's attitude to Paul is that he was a mystic and not a theologian, that his letters are therefore to be read as the expressions of a personal religious conviction more than as theological treatises.

With variations and limitations this point of view still holds. Paul's Christ is the risen Christ: mysticism is the texture of his faith, questions of the Law or Justification are subsidiary. The statement of this point of view was a healthy protest against systematisation and it has been vindicated by more recent studies. That Paul's letters are occasional, non-literary, and personal, is the fact which must be remembered in their perusal. They are not complete schemes of his beliefs delivered for guidance to various communities, but messages as substitutes for the spoken word dealing with some special situation.

Paul's beliefs are bound to enter into these communications but only as substrata to that which is primary, namely his union with the exalted Christ which he shared with all his converts. It is therefore a wresting of the framework of Pauline Christology to suggest (e.g. Weymouth) that in 2 Cor. 5¹⁶ *κατὰ σάρκα* implies personal knowledge of Jesus. There is no more fleshly knowledge here than there was a physical appearance on the Damascus road where Paul describes Jesus as having been seen by him: *ὡφθῆ*
καί μοι I Cor. 15⁸, also *οὐκ ἔγνωμεν τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν ἑνώπιον*¹. In the latter case it was the living Christ who appeared, just as in the former the thought is "we have known Christ up till now in a fleshly i.e. non-spiritual fashion". He had not previously been *ἐν Χριστῷ*.

However pleasant may be the conjecture that Paul was a witness of the crucifixion, however it may correspond in time to that period when Saul was under Gamaliel in Jerusalem, it must remain nothing more than a mere possibility, and phrases of the nature of *κατὰ σάρκα*, and references to the "blood" are in no wise to be regarded as having any bearing upon the question at all.

With these provisos, that all that Paul says is to be interpreted in the light of his mystic experience of Christ, and that his acquaintance with Jesus may only be remotely conjectured, it may be freely granted that his knowledge of the historical Jesus must have been considerable.

What Jesus stood for, lived for, and died for, he had ample opportunity of finding out during his Pharisaic period. His persecution of the Christians, his own restless and inquiring mind, above all his intercourse with Peter, Mark, and Barnabas, would necessitate the assumption that his knowledge must have been considerable.

Further, in the twenty years that passed between his conversion and his first epistle there were ample opportunities in conversation with missionaries and preachers to learn all that was to be known whether it came through eyewitnesses, the disciples, or their followers. Whatever oral or written tradition was current at the time, it is to be presumed that he had access to it.

He himself refers in two separate passages to this knowledge which he had acquired, where it is clear that the reference cannot be to his mystical experience: I Cor. 15³ (For I delivered unto you that which I also received), which precedes an account of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, and I Cor 11²³ where the same formula is used to introduce the narrative of the Lord's Supper.

Dibelius as we have seen points out that καταλαμβάνει and παραδίδουαι are the equivalents of the Hebrew קָבַץ and נָתַן which were used of receiving and handing down the prophetic tradition (p.20).

Whatever theory may be built upon these two passages, they are obviously unique in the epistles, bear the mark of foreign material embodied in a fixed form, as of a lesson learned and

committed to memory or preserved in writing. Such information as this concerning Jesus we may assume to have been part of Paul's equipment, mental or material. Indeed merely from these fragments we learn that he knew of the existence of Cephas, of the Twelve, of the Crucifixion, the Betrayal, and the Last Supper.

Since that is the case we should expect there to be a host of references to the earthly ministry of Jesus, a constant display of allusions - quoting in the event of a desired example, instancing in the case of a desired authority: in short that knowledge of the details of Christ's life should be one of the most characteristic features of the letters. Is this the case?

Perhaps the most convincing form in which this question can be answered is to be found in a book by Mr G. O. Griffith entitled "St. Paul's Life of Christ". At one point in this work, he sets out to give in review Paul's biography of Jesus in the apostle's own words. This framework occupies five pages (45-49) of which the following extract concerning the earthly life occupies approximately one: it may be judged how much of it is justifiably to be regarded as having a biographical interest at all.

"But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman - remember that Jesus Christ was of the seed of David according to my gospel - born under the Law that He might redeem them which were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. - For of (David's) seed hath God, according to promise, brought unto Israel

a Saviour Jesus: when John had first preached before His coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was fulfilling his course, he said: What suppose ye that I am? I am not He. But behold there cometh One after me the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose. (For) John baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe in Him who should come after Him, that is, in Jesus.

"And being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself. For ye know the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich yet for our sakes He became poor that ye through His poverty might become rich (and) ye remember the words of the Lord Jesus how He Himself said: It is more blessed to give than to receive - Christ also pleased not himself - becoming obedient unto death, yea the death of the Cross:- as it is written: The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell upon me. For they that dwell in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they knew Him not nor the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day fulfilled them by condemning Him.

"(And) I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it and said, This is my Body which is for you: this do in remembrance of Me. In like manner

also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My Blood; this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. For though they found no cause of death in Him, yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain: (before Pontius Pilate (He) witnessed the good confession) (and thus) the rulers of this world crucified the Lord of Glory. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him they took Him down from the gibbet and laid Him in a sepulchre."

So much for the earthly appearance of Jesus: there precede this passage extracts bearing on Christ's pre-existence, and the remainder of the section is composed of an account of the resurrection appearances, the exalted Lord, and the Second Coming.

Even of that proportionately small section of Paul's Life of Christ - if we can indeed speak of such a thing - it is only by courtesy that it could be said to be biographical and that too with most of the biographical material drawn from outside the epistles (Acts. Pastorals.). For on the most cursory view the theological interest is so apparent as to dwarf any historical detail that remains. It will be shown later why this should be, but for the present it may be said that beyond the fact that Jesus

was born, was baptised by John, was betrayed and crucified, we should know practically nothing of His life if our only source of information were Paul. And even these pieces of factual evidence are so bound up with dogmatic interests as to be only in a very secondary sense biographical.

Since Paret's article on Paul and Jesus in the *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie* 1858 this question of Paul's allusions to incidents and sayings from the gospels has exercised a considerable amount of scholarship. Sabatier in *The Apostle Paul*, takes a view that seems as positive as any writer short of a romanticist can subscribe to, when he says that the general picture Paul draws of the Saviour's life "exactly answers to the impression left on us by the gospel narratives as a whole". It is doubtful whether this can be seriously maintained: if a general picture be spoken of, surely the first impression is that of contrast. It is only in the descent to the particular that one finds Paul taking any cognisance of the historic Jesus whatever.

Hausrath (*der Apostel Paulus*) is surely arguing beside the mark when he speaks of the apostle's knowledge embracing the whole life of Jesus: His Davidic descent, His Baptism, the Last Supper and the Passion. The question is not, Did he know about them?: that he did is apparent: rather is the question, Had he any interest in them as facts, as being part of the life of the Jesus of history, and was his whole attitude towards that life not rather a transformation of what knowledge he had into a theological concept?

Jowett in his comment on 1 Thes. 4¹⁵ on "What did St. Paul know of the life of Jesus?" is much more to the point when he says: "In 1 Cor. 15³⁻¹⁰ the apostle describes himself not only as preaching to the Corinthians the doctrine of the Resurrection of Christ but as dwelling on the minute circumstances which attested it. Had he told them in like manner of other events in the life of Christ - had the parables and discourses of Christ interwoven themselves in his teaching, were the miracles of Christ a witness to which he appealed?" These questions he says must remain without an answer: "but as far as we can trace it was not the sayings or events in the life of Christ but the witness of the Old Testament prophets that formed the larger part of St Paul's teaching, the external evidence by which he supported in himself and others the inward and living sense of union with Christ, the medium through which he preached Christ crucified." (Quoted by Somerville: St Paul's Conception of Christ - Appendix A).

It will be our contention here that Paul did not intersperse parables, miracles, and discourses of Christ with his teaching, for the very good reason that his interest in the historic Jesus as living an everyday life was non-existent. The exalted Christ, the Christ who was to come, the same Christ whom he had seen on the Damascus road and who was the most vital reality of his daily experience: this was the Christ for these growing communities to feed on, not the Jesus of Nazareth.

Nor need this contention be based on the reading of 2 Cor. 5¹⁶ where he speaks of having known Christ according to the

flesh, and confessing to doing so no longer. It would be to base our argument on too slender a footing to insist that this must mean a resolve to take no further interest in the historic Jesus but to concentrate attention upon the exalted Christ. "To cast a slight on the words and acts spoken and done in the ministry (of Christ) and on the revelation of character made thereby was not, I imagine, in all his thoughts". Bruce (St Paul's Conception of Christianity 255-6:quoted by Somerville p.267) is surely right in this attitude but wrong in his emphasis. Paul had no intention of casting a slight on Jesus' work on earth, he simply ignored it in his efforts to impress upon the world the tremendous truth of the risen Christ and His impending return. That Jesus lived an earthly life at all was only of interest to him in so far as it served his theological purposes, in regarding Him as the second Adam.

That these contentions are amply borne out by the evidence of the epistles themselves will be shown by their examination first of all under the question of whether Paul betrays any concern for the Galilean ministry either as a history that was worth recording, as an example that ought to be followed, or as a matter that intimately concerned the early Church.

It is significant that the most detailed references 1 Cor.11²³ and 1 Cor.15³ are directly bound up with the faith and worship of the Church: in the one case being a narrative of the Resurrection appearances which fall into the supernatural category, and in the other a basis for the Eucharistic rite. This latter, which does

fall within the earthly ministry is obviously not related with reference to history so much as to present practices, and to say this is not to deny its basis in fact but to point to the centre of interest which lies not in its shedding any light upon the life of Christ but as being a guarantee for the observance of the Eucharist.

Less detailed are the references to the death of Jesus and His rising again: in most cases they are mentioned in a dogmatic context (1 Cor.1^{17.23} 2² 8¹¹ 15¹⁴ ; 2 Cor.4¹⁰ 4¹⁴ 5^{14.15}; Rom.1⁴ 4²⁴ 5^{6.8.10} 6^{3.4.5.6.9.10} 7⁴ 8^{11.32.34} 10^{7.9.} 14^{9.15}; Gal.1¹ 2²⁰ 3^{1.13} 6¹⁴; Eph.1^{7.20} 2¹⁶; Phil.2⁸ 3¹⁰; Col.1²⁰)

Here it is obvious that the abundance of allusions to the death and resurrection of Jesus are not conditioned by interest in them as events concerning Jesus but as events concerning the salvation of the world. Redemption has been obtained by the dying and rising of Christ (Rom.4²⁵): the new age has begun which is to be completed in the appearance of the Lord Himself, therefore, and only as the act which heralds this fresh beginning, is the death of Christ an object of interest.

How true this is can be observed from the colourless nature of the words used: mostly ἀποθνήσκειν and θάνατος (1 Cor.8¹¹ 15³; 2 Cor.5¹⁵; Rom. repeatedly in 5,6,7,8,14; Gal.2²¹; Phil.2⁸ 3¹⁰; Col.1²²; 1 Thes.4¹⁴ 5¹⁰). Death on the Cross specifically is mentioned but seldom (1 Cor.1:2; 2 Cor.13⁴; Gal.3¹ 5¹¹ 6¹⁴; Eph.2¹⁶; Phil.2⁸; Col.1²⁰) but these are balanced by the occasions where Crucifixion is used of the inner experience of the apostle (Rom.6⁶ ; Gal.2²⁰).

Likewise the Pauline use of *πάσχειν* and *πάθλημα* is non-biographical but refers to the spiritual life of the believer (Rom.8¹⁷; Phil.3¹⁰; 2 Cor.1⁵). Where the *στίγματα* are specified it may be noted that the same thought lies behind it (Gal.6¹⁷).

In one or two instances there appears to be a more extensive use made of the death of Christ but it cannot be said either that the theological interest is absent or that they amount to anything approaching narrative: 1 Cor.2⁸ They would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; 2 Cor.13⁴ Though He was crucified through weakness; Rom.4²⁵ Who was delivered for our offences (cf. Isa.53¹²); Rom.8³² He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all (cf. Isa.53); Gal.3¹³ where the fact of the Cross subserves a vindication of Christ's death with reference to Old Testament law; and 1 Thes.2¹⁵ The Jews who killed the Lord Jesus.

The sufferings, the death, and resurrection of Jesus therefore are not regarded by Paul as worth narrating for their own sakes, as shedding light on the rest of the work of Jesus on earth, as being in harmony with His life, as being the culmination of a life of sacrifice. On the contrary, there is no trace whatever that he was conscious of it in that light at all. It was a fact, a historical occurrence, of supreme interest and value, not with reference to Jesus but for the saving of mankind. Of them as incidents in the life of Jesus he takes no cognisance: they are of cosmic rather than of personal significance.

Jesus' own attitude and purpose which seem to be lightly touched on in Rom.15³ "for indeed Christ did not seek His own

pleasure" i.e. in His death, would be more convincing if it were not used to exemplify an Old Testament quotation. The other reference Phil 2⁸ "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death " is occasioned by the admonitions in the context 2^{3.12} and is of itself a completely abstract conception (v.Soden 116).

The remaining allusions to the life of Jesus are scanty. A few concern His birth: 2 Cor.8⁹ "The Lord Jesus Christ though He was rich yet for your sakes became poor"; 2 Cor.8³ "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh"; Gal.4⁴ "God sent forth His Son made of a woman"; Phil.2⁷ "Was made in the likeness of men". Here clearly the emphasis is on the entrance into human life of the Kurios Christos: it was essential that as by man came sin, so by man also should come the deliverance from sin. The Birth is therefore a postulate of the eternal Christ not of the historic Jesus, the humanity is an empty formula, not the richness of personality.

A few scattered references to His existence on earth bear this out to the full: Rom.1³ Jesus Christ Our Lord which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 5¹⁵ the gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ; 9⁵ Israelites..... of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came: 15⁸ Jesus Christ was a minister of the Circumcision for the truth of God. Here Old Testament prophecy and the controversy with Judaism are the prevailing motives, not an attempt to provide historic annotation.

Did Paul not then make use of the earthly life of Jesus as an example for his converts? That is to say that even admitting that the incidents of the Galilean ministry should be passed over

in silence, is there no trace of the character of Jesus being held up as a pattern for the Christians to copy?. 2 Cor.5²¹ "for He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin" is so much part and parcel of a dogmatic Messianic Christ that it can hardly be regarded as pertaining to the historic Jesus. 2 Cor.10¹ "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" is as little a historical trait as Rom.15³ (For even Christ pleased not Himself) and refers no doubt to the same idea. Where in Col.3¹³ he exhorts them to be forgiving he does not cite the example of Jesus forgiving His enemies, nor does he so much as mention Jesus' teaching on the subject, but introduces the dogmatic motive of Christ's forgiveness of their sins(through His death). Instead of adducing such examples from ^{ἡ ζωὴς} as we might expect, Paul falls back on the entrance into the world, the death, and the life in glory of Χριστός.

The result of the investigation is therefore this: that the death and resurrection of Jesus are introduced in all cases as a dogmatic motive: that apart from that only the incarnation in the doctrinal sense finds a place, together with a few references apparently biographical but actually apologetic.

It is clear that Deissmann's contention is justified that Christos for Paul means the cosmic Christ, the Kurios, and that where the name Jesus is introduced it is not in our sense of contra-distinction to Christ, but is synonymous. Paul has unified his doctrine to embrace the earthly Jesus under the conception of the Christ: the substance of his faith is not the Galilean ministry but the eternal purpose of God.

For him that ministry was only of importance in that in it the Christ became man, was obedient unto death and rose again, resuming the status He had enjoyed since the beginning of time. The humanity of Jesus was essential for Paul's theology, but the details of that human life were of no consequence in the light of the majesty and glory of the risen Saviour and the promise of His speedy return.

It has been suggested by Fascher that the reason for Paul's failure to give any account of the life of Jesus is that he had already given that information in his previous meetings with the converts concerned. The only justification for this assumption would appear to be Gal.3¹ "foolish Galatians before whose very eyes was portrayed Jesus Christ crucified" which indeed may be nothing more than the gospel of the crucified Christ as retold in the epistles, or 2 Thes.2⁵ "remember ye not that when I was yet with you I told you these things" where the reference is however to the expectation of the Parousia. Apart from that it would be strange if there had been any former teaching that no echoes should find their way into the letters, no reference, no repetition, no illustration.

The psychological as well as the textual argument might well be used in this connection. Paul's conversion took place at the beginning of his ministry: whatever knowledge he had previously of the Jesus of history became thereupon transmuted into the light of the Christ of faith. His thought played upon this fact in the period of retreat and the historical perspective became dimmer and dimmer until the only trace of it remained in the bare assertions of

humanity and death.

Surely we cannot argue with Anderson Scott (p.13) "The fact of Our Lord's humanity is absolutely indispensable for the apostle's theory of redemption. It provides the identification of the Redeemer with the race He would redeem, in all human experience save the consciousness of having sinned. It is therefore wholly a mistake to represent the emphasis which Paul puts upon the risen Christ as excluding interest in or knowledge of the historical Jesus: the Heavenly Man, the Life-giving Spirit had no meaning for him except for His being the same as The Man Christ Jesus." This confuses two entirely different thoughts. In the first case the importance of the fact of the humanity of Jesus for Paul's theology and in the second, the place of the content of that humanity in his framework.

Deissmann's reply to that would be: "To Paul Christ is not a great historic figure but a reality and power of the present, an energy whose life-giving power is daily made perfect in him" (188-189). Deissmann's completely spiritualised conception of the Pauline theology i.e. as opposed to transactional redemption, does not prevent his emphasis falling on the side of those with whom he would otherwise disagree.

Von Soden has probably expressed the position as well as it may be: "Only then will Paul be completely understood in his whole position as well as in his particular utterances, when we have learned to think with him always of the glorified Lord, where he does not expressly glance for an instant at His earthly appearance as Jesus." (p.118).

It may be here noted how infrequently the name of Jesus alone is quoted. In Col. it does not occur at all: in Gal., Phil. 1 Cor. only once; in 1 Thes. twice: in Rom. three times: in 2 Cor. twice. The formula "the Lord Jesus Christ" occurs in the undisputed epistles seventy-three times; "The Lord Jesus" alone a little over a dozen times: "Kurios" alone, where the reference is to Christ, is found about one hundred and thirty times, "Christ" alone, one hundred and eighty (Somerville p.10).

When we come to examine the dependence of Paul upon sayings of Jesus much the same picture presents itself. While he repeatedly quotes the Old Testament (in Gal. ten times, and in Rom. fifty) it is a very rare occasion on which he cites actual words of Jesus. It is undeniable that much of his ethical teaching is in agreement with the gospels although perhaps not enough to warrant the judgement of Paret that "he was conscious that he was in perfect harmony with the mind of Christ so that he did not need support or proof from individual quotations". Nowadays, it is recognised that the difference in terminology and thought between the gospels and epistles is not so lightly to be brushed aside. There is agreement combined with difference and the explanation lies deeper than the complacency of Paul.

The question is not so much, how far does Paul's moral teaching compare with the gospels? as, how far does Paul show himself consciously dependent upon sayings of Jesus? There is much that might pass for evangelical influence in his work (e.g. 1 Co. 3⁸ Every man shall receive his own reward according to his

own labour; 1 Thes.⁴⁸ He therefore that despiseth despiseth not man but God who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit (Luke 10¹⁶); Rom.12¹⁴ Bless them which persecute you, bless and curse not; Rom.14¹⁰ Why dost thou judge thy brother?) but where no direct acknowledgment is made it is impossible to say whether Paul used current traditions of Jesus' words, misquoted from memory, or simply employed moral precepts which were in circulation at the time and not necessarily dependent on Jesus at all.

Those cases where he cites the actual words of Jesus present an interesting problem. 1 Cor.7¹⁰⁻¹² Unto the married I command yet not I but the Lord. Let not the wife depart from her husband ... but to the rest speak I, not the Lord. 1 Cor.9¹⁴ Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. 1 Cor.11²³ For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you (Institution of Lord's Supper). 1 Thes.4¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. Gal.6² Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ (cf.5¹⁴).

In the first place the suggestion may be dismissed that the knowledge is here revelational; 1 Cor.7¹⁰ is a sufficient refutation of this. In the second place the fact that only in one of these quotations (1 Cor.11²³) is a previous knowledge on the part of the recipients assumed, and that in a case where ritual would make it very likely, leads to the question whether such sayings, as authoritative words of Jesus, would be in fact known to his readers. Then thirdly, it is remarkable that these are not great problems of vital

importance which are to be settled by adducing words of Jesus. On the contrary they deal largely with trivial matters of discipline and organisation, while on the other hand where the question of holy days is raised (Rom.14⁵; Gal.4¹⁰; Col.2¹⁶) the attitude or words of Jesus with regard to Sabbath Observance are never mentioned.

Finally there is no direct correspondence of text between Paul and the gospels (cf. 1 Cor.7¹⁰ and Mark 10^{9.11}; 1 Cor.9¹⁴ and Luke 10⁷; 1 Cor.11^{23.25} and Mark 14^{22.25}) and of one saying (1 Thes. 4¹⁵) there is no trace whatever in the gospels.

This apparent freedom and particularly the appearance of the last-named might be accounted for by variant traditions in the possession of the apostle. But the disproportionate attention paid to the Old Testament as an authoritative writing - in fact as ἡ γραφή - compared with the meagre reference to words of Jesus is significant. There is obviously not yet the same value placed on sayings of Jesus as on Old Testament prophecy and wisdom. Where they are quoted they have absolute authority but they are quoted seldom.

For all practical purposes the principle holds here which held in the narration of the life: Paul assumes that ἐν Χριστῷ a man will know what is right and proper without any definite words of admonition or exhortation. The historic Jesus has not so much to say to the Christians as the risen Christ: "be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may discover what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" Rom.12². He can therefore give them commandments himself in the name of the Lord Jesus (1 Thes. 4²) which deal with questions not touched on by Jesus (cf. also 1 Thes.

5¹⁷). The preaching about Jesus and the teaching of Jesus become intermingled. While that was so, he assumed throughout that the Old Testament morality held: the most vital ethical problems are based on Old Testament teaching rather than on Jesus - adultery, murder, theft, covetousness, idolatry. The conflict between Jesus and the Jewish law does not seem to have been apparent to him.

But granting that acceptance of the presuppositions of the law which he regarded according to Rom.2²⁰ "as the embodiment of knowledge and truth", together with a sense of what was "fitting" (Rom.1²⁸) or "becoming" (Col.3¹⁸), his emphasis throughout is that without the experience of Christ all precepts are valueless. Thus the nett result is that where sayings of Jesus are quoted they are treated with freedom, and one might almost say only introduced where the Old Testament fails to give guidance. They are always subsidiary to the Christians' communion with the exalted Lord. Once again, therefore the historic Jesus gives place to the Christ of faith. As for parables they simply do not occur.

As has been already suggested there was even more behind Paul's neglect of words or deeds of Jesus than merely an experience of the risen Christ. For if his interests were solely centred upon that it could be well argued that neglect amounted to indifference and indifferent Paul could not by nature be. If he makes no reference to incidents or sayings from the Galilean ministry it is not as we have seen because he was not, at all events at some time in his life, aware of them: nor is it because he substituted something for them, a collection of ideas from the mystery religions, for

example; it was neither of these but rather a change of emphasis, a diverting of the axis to another position.

That new position as has been seen was his conversion experience *ἐν Χριστῷ*: to say with Deissmann that thenceforth theology disappeared into mysticism is to exaggerate unduly the effect of that experience. It might change his outlook, might give him a new point of view from which to judge all other experiences, but it could not eradicate the mental background. There still remained the dialectic of the theologian: redemption, justification, and salvation were still concepts based on objective happenings, not expressions for the one great mystic consciousness of Christ. True they were experienced, but they had their basis in history.

That is to say that Paul's theology was not entirely other-worldly: the divine impinged upon the human, God intervened in man's affairs. The life in Christ was not conceived of as a Nirvanah. Christ was a vital personal power whose work among men did not cease when He was made man for their salvation, nor when He died and rose again; nor yet when He was ever present with His faithful believers. He was much more than all that the Christ who was in no distant time coming to judge the world and complete the work He had begun.

Jesus for Paul was one with Christ: the Christ who was from the beginning and who would be until the end. Of His preëxistence nothing need be said except that He had left His high estate and become man: of His life among men it was enough that He had been born of woman, endured the cross of humiliation for the sins of

mankind: but vital for men and women who were seeking the truth was this, that here and now they could live in Christ and would by the grace of God see Him face to face. The Christ to come and, as a pledge of that, the Christ in experience: there was the emphasis, there was the reality. The gospel of the salvation of the world could not be content with an unknown preëxistence, or an unrecognised ministry in the byways of Judea: the soaring thoughts of the apostle busied themselves with faith and hope rather than with remembrance, with the history of salvation rather than with the history of a mission. Paul's line was drawn through the Crucifixion, what went before was past: for the world history began on Easter Sunday and the tale would be complete before many of them were prepared. Then would begin the Messianic reign: Jesus Christ the Lord, the King.

How could the Galilean ministry fail to dwindle into insignificance beside such a conception of coming glory? Then let history be recorded, then let men dwell upon the wonder and majesty of the rule of Christ, but surely not upon the prosaic happenings by the Jordan and the Lake. What were the earthly baptism, the miracles, the journeyings, the whole history until the Cross, compared with the wonder that was yet to be?

How great a part this eschatological hope played in the early Church and especially in Paul had been recognised largely through the initial work of R. Kabisch: *Eschatologie des Paulus* 1893. It is not the purpose here to examine the content of Paul's eschatological belief so much as to assess the importance of that belief for his attitude to the historic Jesus. Our attention will therefore

be concentrated on the question whether there is evidence for maintaining that Paul looked to the future for Christ rather than to the past, that his eyes were upon the coming of the Saviour, rather than turned wistfully and lovingly upon the years that lay behind.

We are aware through the work of Charles of the tremendous apocalyptic expectation that saturated the later Judaism. Within the two centuries preceding the Christian era, an age of crises where the miseries of the present world seemed to find their only palliative in catastrophic termination, it is safe to say that popular religion concerned itself more with hopes and fears of this kind than with the morality of the Church (cf. Dewick p.55).

The Rabbis were hostile to this manifestation but they could not themselves avoid subscription to the Messianic ideas of the prophets: such expectations were common to all. The Deliverer of Israel was waited upon by gentle and simple at times with more at times with less eagerness and anticipation. In the latter days of Judaism the religious consciousness concentrated on the hope of the future. The better times which were awaited form the real end which all religious motives subserve. "They eagerly obeyed the Law in order to take part in the reward" (Schürer, quoted by Kabitsch p.11).

We must assume for Paul a similar outlook: and just as before his conversion the Law was his means of attaining blessedness in the Kingdom, so after his experience the same goal would attract him but by different paths. What indications do Paul's writings give that

this was the case? It is clear that it is not enough to show that in a few passages Paul is expectant of the coming of Christ in glory, but if it can be shown that this expectation lay behind his whole thought his references to the Parousia will have the more weight.

It has been seen that there were two aspects to Paul's thinking: firstly, the act of Jesus in reconciling man to God by His death and secondly, the life of the believer in the risen Christ; i.e. justification and life "en Christo" are the vital elements in his theology. Can these be shown to have an eschatological background then it may be taken that his whole outlook was directed to the future.

For this purpose the passage Phil. 3⁸ ff. is significant: "Yea doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in Him not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith for our conversation is in Heaven from whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body etc."

Here are clearly the two main conceptions of Paul's theology, justification by faith and life in Christ considered as preliminaries to the great day when the Lord will come in person and reign upon earth. In Christ we are made heirs of God through faith in His

atoning death: reconciled indeed, but the work has just begun.

The consummation is yet to come. Peace with God is assured, the life in Christ secures that, but it is a life which has a forward gaze; there is the goal to be reached, the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3¹⁴). "Much more having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved through Him from the wrath" Rom. 5⁹.

This is not to say that Paul minimises Justification (there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus Rom. 8¹); or communion with the exalted Christ (who shall separate us from the love of Christ?); those two quotations alone disprove that. But through it all there was this hope of the future which should establish the reign of Christ. "Justification may truly be called the anticipation of salvation, the anticipation of the final judgement. But St Paul craves the realisation of that blissful future when sin and death and judgement are no more to be reckoned with. ... He knows himself to belong to the σωζόμενοι but the salvation (σωτηρία) is a process which culminates when the exalted Christ shall return in glory and both the dead and the living shall be transformed into perfect fitness for his fellowship." (Kennedy pp. 9, 10.)

St Paul's conception of τὰ ἔσχατα has many facets, but there are only two points which concern our investigation, firstly, whether he believed in the coming of Christ and secondly, whether he believed it to be imminent. What his ideas of Resurrection and Judgement were, as also the manner of Christ's coming, are not to the point. If in the light of the above emphasis upon the Christ of

the future as the crown of faith and experience it can be shown that throughout his epistles the apostle had that belief ever before him, then the justification for his cursory treatment of the Jesus of the past will be apparent.

And here it may be said with Schweitzer (p.52) that from his first letter to his last Paul's thought is always uniformly dominated by the expectation of the immediate return of Jesus and of the Messianic glory. 1 Thes. 1¹⁰ Ye turned unto God to wait for His Son from Heaven, even Jesus which delivereth us from the wrath to come. In reply to the Thessalonians' anxiety about those who had already died he tells them 4¹⁴⁻¹⁷ that "we who are alive, who survive till the coming of the Lord, shall in nowise precede them etc.". He may in 5^{2.3} tell them that the time of the Lord's coming is "like a thief in the night" but it is still to come within the present generation.

So with the other references in this letter there is the insistence on the Parousia in their lifetime, e.g. 5²³ May your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire without blame at the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. also 2¹⁹ 3¹³). It appears that in the interval between the receipt of the first letter and the writing of the second an unhealthy excitement had risen over the immediateness of the Advent: in the later epistle Paul's effort is directed to correcting this, but by no means to change the tone of expectancy or postpone it indefinitely. 1¹⁰ "when He comes to be glorified in His saints and to be wondered at in all who have believed on that day" is still within the lifetime of his readers.

And at the beginning of that passage where he narrates the course of events which must precede the Coming he affirms it as strongly as ever (2¹) and concludes with an exhortation to await it with patience (3⁵).

If there is any difference in the eschatology in the early epistles from those of the third missionary journey it lies in expression more than emphasis. In the five years that intervene the tension with the Jews was increased and the tone becomes definitely less Jewish, besides which the occasion lent itself less to expansive treatment of the question. The Law, faith, and incidental governmental affairs form the main themes of the Corinthian and Roman letters and the epistle to the Galatians. But the expectation is still there and as strong as before.

1 Cor. 1⁷ Ye are waiting for the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ; 4⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the time until the Lord come who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; 7²⁹.31 But this I say brethern the time is short for the fashion of this world passeth away; in 10¹¹ he speaks of this as the generation which is to witness the end of the world cf. also 5⁵ 15²³; as the epistle began with the Advent hope so it ends with it, 16²² Maranatha (come Lord!).

In the second letter to the Corinthians we find similar references: 1¹⁴ We are your rejoicing even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus. The words of Isaiah that "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation" are quoted in 6²

with obvious conclusions for the present, while 11² speaks of espousing them to one husband that he may present them as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Rom. 2¹⁶ looks for the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to Paul's gospel. "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" 8¹⁹, for "the glory which shall be revealed to us" 8¹⁸, while "we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body" 8²³. "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep for now is our salvation nearer than when we (first) believed" 13¹¹, "the night is far spent and the day is at hand" 13¹² when "we shall all stand before the Judgement seat of Christ" 14¹⁰ to give an account of ourselves to God 14¹².

Less striking are the allusions in the Galatian epistle but none the less convincing; Jesus who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world 1⁴. We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith 5⁵. In due season we shall reap if we faint not, therefore so long as we have time let us do good to all men 6^{9.10}.

The epistles of the captivity betray no diminution of imminent expectation. Phil. 1⁶. He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ; 1¹⁰ That ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; 2¹⁶ That I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain; 3²⁰ For our conversation is in Heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body; 4⁵ Let your moderation be

known unto all men: The Lord is at hand. Similar allusions are to be found in Ephesians (1¹⁴.21²⁷4³⁰) and Colossians (1²⁸ 2¹⁷ 3^{4.24}).

It cannot be argued in face of this evidence that as Paul grew older his belief in the Parousia was either dimmed or diminished; there is the same assumption in his last words as in his first, without development, without reaction, that the Christ was on the point of appearing. Dewick (pp.280-1) is surely misinterpreting 1 Cor.15²²⁻²⁸ when he sees in it a contradiction of the usual early expected Parousia. The thought is that Christ will come and go after which when He has put all His enemies including death under His feet He will restore the Kingdom to His Father i.e. the Kingdom of Christ is not the present world era up to the consummation, but the time between the Parousia and the final act of unification. That is to say that here too Paul shares the current belief that Jesus was at that time reigning as Messiah but that his reign would shortly become visible on earth. If Paul's thought underwent a development it certainly did not consist in the slackening of his eschatological expectation as time went on (Schweitzer p.54).

It is of little use to investigate the sources for Paul's eschatological belief and to claim thereby to have explained away his theories: a cursory glance, almost as much as detailed investigation, shows that his framework for the Day of Judgement is as spare as in his other fundamental doctrines. He is here as always content to assert primary truths: the development of them into a logical system was far from his thoughts. His attitude towards the second advent is vastly different from that of his environment: partly by

reason of his emphasis on the central fact of Christ and partly by the vitality of his religious nature.

When details are proffered they are treated as subsidiary: it was not in his interests to give a closely worked out programme for the Last Days in the manner of the Jewish apocalyptists. Schweitzer's résumé therefore (63-69) of the events following upon the Day, while true to chapter and verse is not true to Paul. The impression he gives is that Paul's interests were in creating a patchwork of imagery and extravagance, like any Baruch or Ezra. Whereas it is much more correct to say that just as his terminology of salvation was secondary to the fact itself, so his conception of the Parousia was not an integral part of his belief in its imminence.

We are probably truer to Paul when we recognise the Jewish eschatological strain in his writing, one among many heritages from his training and environment, but at the same time recognise that the really significant fact for him is that it is Christ who is coming, that He is coming soon, and that He is that same Christ who emptied Himself to become man. It is a background for all his thinking, a basis for all his hopes until the very end, that he will yet see face to face the Lord whom he has glorified since his experience on the Damascus road.

Whatever there may be of judgement, of conflict, of angels, and of resurrection, of men of sin in the mind of the apostle there is first and foremost the triumph of Christ: the perfect union, salvation and peace. Then he would know even as he was known, mortality would put on immortality. The transformation which was

begun here would be completed hereafter: the life in the Spirit which he enjoyed now was the foretaste of what was to come.

(cf. Headlam p.33).

Under the light of this "summing up of all things in Christ, the things in Heaven and the things in earth" Eph.1¹⁰, which lies before him, the apostle keeps his eyes forever fixed upon that consummation when redeemed humanity reaches its final assimilation in Christ. "His life circulates through them in unimpeded richness, They have now attained to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" Eph.4¹³. (Kennedy 333).

Speaking of the final stage of Paul's thought Kennedy says;

"It would be useless to speculate on the manner in which St. Paul conceived this great consummation to be fulfilled. Unquestionably he would have regarded all philosophical categories as inapplicable to his momentous theme. For his mind, its interest and importance are wholly religious. He could not realise a more glorious issue for the wondrous process which germinated for humanity with the Incarnation, blossomed in the Atoning Passion and came to full maturity in the Exaltation, than a reentrance of the glorified Lord into the depths of the Godhead, so that His own words should receive their profoundest significance: I and my Father are one. In that crowning end, the Consummation of the Kingdom of God is accomplished." (341)

It is impossible not to see in this conception of a cosmic Christ a factor which accounts completely for Paul's disregard of the historic Jesus: for him religion did not consist in meditation upon the ways and words of a past Redeemer but in life in a present Lord and hope for a greater and fuller existence in the Coming Kingdom. Jesus the man could not but become a minor figure beside Christ the Judge and King. The Day of the Lord was not in the past but in the future: His work was yet to be done. As ruler and Messiah how could His status be compared with that of a wandering rabbi; His acts of mercy and charity, and healing, His words of wisdom and insight, what were these compared with the majesty and the power of His coming glory?

The only light in which the earthly ministry could be regarded was as a necessary humiliation, a brief though essential chapter in God's plan for the redemption of the world. The Jesus who had died is the Christ, but it is only in His Death and Resurrection that He becomes significant for mankind. It cannot be expected that the same man who writes in Eph. 2¹⁵ of Jesus having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, where the earthly life is nothing more or less than a dogmatic symbol, should dwell with interest upon its details: for Paul the real life of Jesus began beyond the grave Rom. 5¹⁰. It was something that should be borne about by them in their experience of union with Him 2 Cor. 4^{10.11}, not a summary of biographical events. What Jesus did and said was of little consequence beside what He is and will be.

It is this point of view which must be stressed in regarding the thought of the epistles. Not that Paul did not know - though how much, and how and where he acquired his information, is uncertain. There is no attempt to deny the fact that those around Jesus must have had something to say of His life and that that may have been communicated to Paul. Nor is the question here under what influence the earliest narrators would transmit their facts, rather is the need fundamental to recognise that Paul, presumably knowing of these everyday events, writes as though he had no interest in the Jesus of the past and concentrates on the Jesus of the present and future.

Thus Johannes Weiss' effort to prove that Paul did know facts about Jesus (Jesus and Paul 17-22) apart from straining the texture of the letters establishes in fact nothing. Much more truth lies in Wrede's emphasis (Paul 147 ff.) when he asks, what was the origin of the Pauline conception of Christ? For it is obvious that the Kurios Christos is not derived from Jesus of Nazareth but was in the apostle's mind before he believed that Jesus was that Kurios. "Nothing is further aloof from him than religious veneration for a hero. The moral majesty of Jesus, His purity and piety, His ministry among the people, His manner as a prophet, the whole concrete ethical and religious content of the earthly life signifies for Paul's Christology nothing whatever." (Wrede 89).

It is not as if the Christ of the epistles is a transformed Jesus: that the details of Jesus' ministry have been raised to cosmic status and transmuted into eternal principles. On the contrary the preexistent, dying and rising Saviour, who will shortly come to

judge the world, betrays obvious Judaistic and Hellenestic influence. Schweitzer makes out a good case as against Bousset and Deissmann for deriving Paul's whole theology from late Jewish eschatology (pp. 37 ff.).

It would be untrue to say that Paul had simply adopted the current mythus, but it is clear that non-gospel influences are evidenced in his letters. Where they originated and in how far they were present in the apostle's mind from the beginning is not of great moment. The fact is that whatever knowledge of Jesus he had has been sacrificed in the interests of a larger unity: that of identifying Jesus with the eternal Christ. Jewish apocalypse, Hellenistic mystery, and historical fact are blended into an imposing soteriology and eschatology - in the midst of it what room could there be for the historic Jesus?

(The epistles of doubtful authenticity - 2 Thes. and Eph. - have been here taken as a portion of Paul's legacy: partly because there is not universal agreement on the subject and partly because the present problem is not affected by their genuineness. On the other hand the generally accepted view that the Pastoral Epistles are non Pauline has been adopted - and this largely for convenience.)

II. Other New Testament Writings.

Hebrews.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." With these words at the beginning of his twelfth chapter, the author of Hebrews sums up his peroration on faith.

It has been often said that Our Lord's humanity has been better served by this writer than by any other in the New Testament, yet while there are some slight developments in this direction it will be shown that his point of view is largely that of the remaining authors, and the above quotation represents both the limits of the interest and the typical attitude of the composer to the life of Jesus.

He is the author and finisher of faith, rather than the prophetic healer: He endured the Cross as a correlative to entering into glory, rather than as a climax to a life of sacrifice. Even when full credit is given to the allusions to Jesus' humanity it is seen how much of the motive is dogmatic and not biographical, and how the emphasis lies elsewhere than on His earthly life.

When it is remembered that a knowledge of the existence of Jesus must be presumed, together with the theological necessity for affirming His humanity in the interests of His High Priestly calling, the claims that a greater attention is paid here to the earthly life than in the other epistles will be seen to be largely exaggerated.

Milligan (p.79) in an attempt to show that the author makes repeated reference to the events of Christ's earthly life can only summon up a meagre skeleton of information: the fact that He sprang out of Judah⁷¹⁴ (obviously Messianic dogma and not history cf. Num. 24¹⁷); that He preached salvation 2³ (mentioned because it was salvation and therefore their chief concern); the opposition He encountered 12³ (this does seem to have more justification as a non-dogmatic detail, being used to encourage the readers to bear their own sufferings with fortitude); the intensity of His personal sufferings 5⁷ ff. (it would be more convincing if the description of these had been more obviously dependent upon the evangelists and less obviously upon Ps.22^{14.24} - cf. V.Soden 119).

It will be seen that only one of the above can be called a pure biographical reference, therefore dictated by an interest in the life of Jesus Himself, and that that is used rather as an admonition. Other references not given by Milligan have a purely theological significance (2⁹ Jesus made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death; 2¹⁶ He took on Him the seed of Abraham; 9¹⁴ Christ offered Himself without spot; 10^{19.20} Having therefore boldness by the blood of Jesus to enter into the holiest

by a new and living way through the veil, that is to say His flesh). We can hardly speak of a strong emphasis on His humanity when it is capable of being regarded as a veil, i.e. a symbol of His physical mortal aspect (West. Comm. p.84).

What Milligan calls references which bring out the true humanity of His inner life are also seen to be dictated not by a regard for that inner life as such but in it as a facet of the High Priesthood of Jesus. "We find Him spoken of as exercising faith or trust in God" but 2¹³ - I will put my trust in Him - is an Old Testament quotation applicable to the Messiah: "as moved by mercy and sympathy towards His brethern on account of His likeness to them" 2¹⁷ - wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethern that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. The significant word here is "behoved": not that Jesus was like us and therefore was now a High Priest reconciling us with God. Primarily He must be a High Priest - from eternity - therefore had to become man, to be like His fellows, to share their difficulties, temptations, and sorrows, in order that having suffered (2¹⁸) He might help sinful man by His intercessions.

That is to say that those characteristics of His earthly ministry that are introduced are introduced not for themselves but for their place in the concept of the office of the Christ: as such must be regarded allusions to His being tempted, His sinlessness, His obedience, and His suffering.

His High Priestly work depends upon His absolute oneness with humanity, except in the matter of sin; only thus could the Old Testament prophecies of a Second Covenant be fulfilled, and the perfect Priest of the order of Melchizedek be conceived of. The High Priesthood of reconciliation with God is the framework and into this the Jesus of history must be fitted. Once more we have faith not biography, interpretation of history rather than factual knowledge.

Just as pre-existence was requisite (1²) to His humanity, so His humanity was requisite to His exalted life. It may be admitted that the fact of Jesus in history and faith is the axis on which the whole scheme revolves, that the author did not start out with eternal priesthood in his mind and then proceed to fit the life of Jesus into that scheme; but on the other hand, assuming him to start with Jesus, it is clear that in meditation upon the Old Testament scriptures he seeks confirmation in them for almost all that has any significance for him in Jesus' life. The facts of Jesus' existence that concern him are those which show Him as the fulfilment of prophecy or the priestly office, with the nett result that the historic interest is replaced by the dogmatic.

When Milligan therefore (p.80) says: "Whether we regard Christ's life from the outside or the inside it is the life of one who in the path of actual experience and trial was prepared for His great work", the statement is correct but the emphasis is misleading. For it is the "great work" that determines just

how much of Jesus' life, outward or inward, has any significance for the writer.

Milligan recognises this when he speaks of a "perfected" and "representative" humanity as being characteristic of the Jesus of the epistle and fully acknowledges the minor rôle of the earthly life (p.84): "The exalted Son is the main aspect in which He is presented to us in the epistle and all that has been said regarding His pre-existence and incarnate states is only introduced for the light which they throw upon it..... Even where the thought of the historical Son is prominent the writer proceeds immediately to describe Him as having "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high".

Further, the concept of the Priestly Office of Christ with its basis in Old Testament ritual which is unique in the New Testament writings should not conceal from us the similarity of thought with the Pauline and other epistles in the matter of the Parousia. There is here as always the expectation of an immediate Advent: the current eschatological hopes are ever actively in the writer's mind. The day is approaching (10²⁵), it is just a little while till He that shall come will come and will not tarry (10³⁷). Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many and will appear a second time separated from sin to those who are eagerly expecting Him to make their salvation complete (9²⁸).

These among other indications are clear proof of where the author's interests lay, for the High Priesthood of the Lord,

His Atoning Sacrifice and Sacerdotal intercession at the throne of God find their fulfilment in the Messianic kingdom common to the New Testament.

Notwithstanding that the writer disclaims any attempt to give a detailed treatment of eschatology; "Let us cease to speak of the first principles of Christ and press on to perfection: not laying again a foundation of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgement"⁶¹, it is only the detail that his topics exclude, for his expectation is as much a matter of course as the more specific allusions of Paul.

Ever and again we have seen in these New Testament writings even when the Last Things are not directly concerned, a word or a phrase which brings up the whole picture in all its vividness and reveals the Parousia hope in all its strength as a background to their thinking.

So it is in Hebrews: with these few direct expressions of belief in an imminent Advent to give the clue, many strands of thought become disentangled and are brought into a framework of Messianic expectation (2⁵ 3^{6.14} 4^{1.9} 6^{11.18} 9¹⁵ 10³⁷ 12¹⁴).

Jesus is the captain of their faith 12², and they must keep their eyes upon Him, but it is as the perfecter of that faith as they run the race that is set before them that He commands attention. Their holiness is of value to them in that through it they shall see Him 12¹⁴. Their thoughts are not on this life but on the one to come, 13¹⁴, and that life is rendered the more tolerable by the very High Priesthood of Jesus, as Mediator of the New Covenant 12²⁴.

Thus the High Priesthood of Jesus in Death, in Intercession, and in His Second Coming is the real motif of the letter: it is inconceivable that any great amount of attention could be paid to the Galilean story. The fact that Jesus had lived, suffered, died, and risen was all that the author wanted to know: these were fulfilments of the Old Testament - therefore of importance for the salvation of men. But what bearing on that High Priesthood could His life among men have, His thoughts, His environment, His followers, His friends, all that we regard as important for an understanding of Him, what meaning had that for a man who saw in Christ the coming Judge of the world?

As an indication of how little the author concerns himself with Jesus' earthly ministry, we should consider the forlorn little observation almost at the end of the book - "Jesus suffered without the gate"¹³¹². The very fact that it strikes us as being out of place is a fair proof of how unbiographical a tone pervades the letter. For this has the appearance of being a genuine piece of historical detail, introduced in passing for its own interest and not as a pillar of faith.

But the reference in these verses ^{12.14} is to ¹¹^{10.14} the city sought by Abraham (West. Comm.) and the reference to Jesus' death outside the gate would have no point except with reference to the *πόλις μέλλουσα* cf. ²¹⁷ and for *πόλις* cf. Rev. 21¹². The thought would then be that Jesus had to become man and die upon earth to constitute His sacrifice. (V. Soden ¹²⁰).

It is clear therefore that such an apparent biographical detail is much more in harmony with the rest of the epistle when

it is shown not to be so, but rather a theological implication. While therefore admitting that in some respects this epistle exceeds the Pauline letters in its emphasis on the humanity of Jesus, it must be recognised that the primary interest in that humanity is theological and that even without that caveat what we have can only by exaggeration be called biography.

As Milligan points out p.218, when criticising a claim by A.V.G. Allan in Christian Institutions that attention to the actual historical life of Christ was more important than to the Christ of the creeds, "It was not by the presentation of Christ as He was but of Christ as He is now living, sovereign," - and we may add "and as He shall be, judging, ruling", - "that the world was first won to Him, the apostles themselves being witness". Then he goes on to quote Denney: Studies in Theology, "it might sound perhaps too paradoxical to say that no apostle, no New Testament writer ever remembered Christ: yet it would be true in the sense that they never thought of Him as belonging to the past. The exalted Lord was lifted above the conditions of time and space: when they thought of Him memory was transmuted into faith: in all the virtue of the life they had known on earth He was Almighty, ever present, the living King of Grace. On this conception the very being of the Christian religion depends".

In the epistle to the Hebrews this is manifestly plain. Not the Jesus of history but the Christ of faith: not the Lord on earth but the Lord in Heaven occupies the centre of the picture, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever. (13⁸).

James.

The epistle of James is neither occasional in its purpose nor specifical in its references. If therefore it might be argued in the case of Paul that the life of Jesus was not mentioned because the theme was in some way defined for him before he commenced writing, in the case of James this can hardly be so.

The letter is couched in the most general terms; no reference is made to any Church, situation, or individual. It is rather, to quote Rope's Introduction in I.C.C., that the writer "has in mind in his counsels the general needs of such Christians as he is acquainted with or of whose existence he is aware The author addresses any Christian into whose hands his work may fall and touches upon subjects of wide and general interest". Apparently details of the life of Jesus were not considered of sufficient interest to be included.

If it be granted that the aim of the writer was not "expository" so much as "hortatory" surely the greatest sanction for adherence to the precepts of Jesus would have been to adduce the example of Our Lord Himself. It may well be admitted that many topics which must have been of moment to the Church at large at this time are not dealt with. The absence of decisive data has indeed been noteworthy enough to militate against the establishing of an accurate date. But on the other hand where such a diversity of subjects is dealt with and such a wide range of religious thought displayed, the feeling must arise that the epistle does give a tolerably accurate picture of the writer's interests.

The background of his ethical and theological opinions becomes fairly plain. "We have a right to believe that the epistle offers a picture not indeed complete but yet fair and trustworthy of the writer's religious position. And for that
... the silences of the epistle are highly significant and must be given full weight" (I.C.C.).

While the theological element is in abeyance it is not difficult to find expressed in the precepts a definite system of beliefs - these being largely Jewish in character. Together with such more or less predominant motives are to be found several characteristically Christian - sufficient to introduce a tone conclusively disposing of the suggestion made by Spitta and others that the epistle was written by a Jew.

A Jewish-Christian author is writing in Palestine somewhere between 75-125 A.D. (cf. I.C.C.) a letter in which he displays convictions obviously Christian to such an extent that we may assume that we are given what was for him the framework of his religious belief, and yet he makes even less reference to the historical Jesus than Paul or the other New Testament writers. With the exception of Hermas his epistle displays the greatest absence of detail of this kind in all the writings of the early Church.

For there is no single allusion to the life or death of Jesus in the whole epistle (τὸ τέλος Κυρίου 5¹¹ is now regarded as referring to God's purpose for Job and not as in Augustine to the death of Christ). This absence of narrative

has been considered remarkable principally from the theological point of view in the uniqueness of its testimony to a type of religious belief, obviously Christian, which laid no stress upon the death of Jesus as bringing salvation to men. In contrast with Paul it is certainly a striking divergence, a cleft which becomes the more visible when it is realised that most of James' standpoint is based on an ill-digested knowledge of Paul and a protest against his theology.

But if we may explain the lack of reference to the death of Jesus as a reaction against Pauline thought and as an omission for theological reasons the same cannot be said for the total and absolute absence of any mention whatever of the character, deeds or personality of Jesus. No trace whatever exists of the slightest allusion to an incident, miracle or parable as related in the gospels.

Whether James was aware of any facts or not it is impossible to say, the truth remains that while echoes of the gospels recur with unusual frequency, these echoes are exclusively references to sayings and admonitions, never to biographical events. In the matter of the sayings it has been argued that many passages in James show dependence on the Synoptics: much of this has been shown however to be again "lexikalisch".

A common use of words is indeed perceptible together with a certain similarity of ideas, many of which however can be shown to be part of the normal everyday Jewish background. (e.g. the fig-tree metaphor 3¹²). This crystallises in certain cases into

obvious parallelism, though it should be noted never into actual quotation. Such correspondence may for example be seen in the Beatitudes of 1^{12.25} compared with Matthew and Luke or in the taking of oaths 5¹² compared with Matthew 5³⁴⁻³⁷.

But not only is there no direct transference into his own material of sayings of Jesus even where it might be expected (e.g. 2^{5.13} 4¹²) arguing much less recognition of Jesus' words than in Paul (since the sanction for him still remains the inviolable scriptures - cf. 2^{8.11}) but also where the best vindication of his exhortation would have been examples from the life of Jesus there is no trace of his interest in this aspect of the matter at all.

For example, in the short passage 5¹³⁻¹⁸ there are surely ample opportunities for even a stray allusion: 5¹³ Is any one of you suffering, let him pray. Here might it not have been natural to add "even as Our Lord did upon the Cross or in the Garden". Instead of that Elijah is cited as an authority for praying. 5¹⁵ "The prayer of faith will restore the sick man" - naturally there should follow "as the Lord healed them that were brought to Him". Forgiveness of sins brings no mention of Jesus: for an example of suffering Job is cited 5¹¹, for a miracle recourse is had likewise to the old Testament 5¹⁸.

Not only is there ample reason for the introduction of gospel matter but its complete absence must be regarded as more than a coincidence. It is obvious that just as there is a theological reason behind the omission of the death of Christ, so there

is a practical reason behind the omission of His life, namely the complete absence of interest in it.

And the ground for that lack of interest is again in its turn theological and is dependent on James' system of values. Clearly salvation is yet to come and that right early: the first chapter has not even begun, as in Paul, with the death of Christ, it is yet to be experienced. "Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord..... keeping up your courage for the coming of the Lord is at hand. See the Judge is standing at the door." 5^{7.8.9.}

Once more the Christ whose approach all good Christians must await with patience is the centre of attraction while in the Jesus of Nazareth interest is non-existent. That is to say that in Palestine forty or fifty years at the earliest after the death of Jesus, a letter of this nature could be written in a distinctively Christian strain, where countless opportunities are given either for reference to or quotation from events and sayings in the earthly ministry of Jesus, and these opportunities the writer almost goes out of his way to avoid. The only clear reason can be that expectation was centred on the future rather than the past, that the Christ who was to come was the Christ of significance and the Jesus of history of little or no importance.

1st Peter.

Resembling the letter to the Ephesians in subject matter in many ways and dating still within the 1st century in all probability, the 1st epistle of Peter reveals also the characteristics of the writings of this period.

¹
(5 *μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθμάτων* is mystical in sense and refers not to the writer's presence at the Crucifixion but to his own sufferings in the manner of Christ - cf. passim in the epistle. There is no justification on other grounds for the assumption that the letter was written by Peter.)

Once more there is little or no reference to the life of Jesus and together with that a lively expectation of His Coming in the immediate future. The first few lines of the letter enshrine this position and give the proper perspective: God the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ has begotten us anew to a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and to an imperishable inheritance reserved in Heaven for you who are kept by God's power through your faith for a salvation which is ready to be unveiled at the end of the world - *ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ* -

¹³⁻⁵. They are to rejoice in this prospect, even if now for a short time they are compelled to sorrow amidst various trials ¹⁶. Their troubles are all designed to test their faith that they may have glory and honour and praise at the appearing of Jesus Christ ¹⁸.

The sufferings of Christ and the glories which are to follow - together constituting salvation - were indicated by the spirit of

Christ to the Old Testament prophets, and just as these sufferings were predicted and have come true, so God's elect of the Diaspora are to prepare themselves calmly and hopefully for the blessing which is soon to be theirs in the revelation of Christ Jesus 110-13. Having been ransomed by the precious Blood of Christ who was predestined for this work before the creation of the world, but has only in these recent times been made manifest, raised from the dead, and given glory, they are to spend in fear the rest of their time on earth 117-21.

Clearer utterance of the recognised attitude to the work of Jesus could not be wished for: His merits were redemptive (cf. 1²), His life a fulfilment of prophecy, His sojourn on earth but a phase - and that, save for His atoning death, the least important - His real abode is in Heaven from which He is almost hourly expected to return.

That He should be rejected by men (2⁴) was part of His office: that He never sinned (cf. 1¹⁹), that no guile was heard from His mouth, that when He was reviled He reviled not again, that when He suffered He did not threaten but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously, that He bore our sins in His own Body on the Cross, that He healed us with His stripes (2²¹⁻²⁴) - all this is not biography but fulfilment of prophecy. Because He is the Christ He had to fulfil all that had been foretold regarding the Suffering Servant (Is. 53). Nor does it constitute biography if these sufferings are held up as an example to the dispersed Christians (2^{21.25} 4¹). The interest is in the Messiah

of prophecy not the Jesus of history.

So also with similar passages - 3¹⁸ Christ also once for all suffered for sin in order to bring us to God, into which main theme is worked an amount of Jewish eschatology. On the other hand these sufferings - for which they have a prototype in Christ - are to be a subject for rejoicing, for the greater their hardships the greater will their joy be at His Coming. 4¹³.

Their moral lives will stand them in good stead over against the Gentiles and they will have no long time to wait: the end of all things is at hand 4⁷, and in preparation for it let them live righteous and godly lives. The Day of Visitation (2¹²) will search out the Gentiles: they will have to give an account to Him who is ready to pronounce Judgement on the living and the dead (4⁵). The time has come for Judgement to begin at the House of God and what will it be for those who reject God's gospel? (4¹⁸). Pastors are to be diligent in their duties so that when the Chief Shepherd appears they will receive the never-withering wreath of glory (5⁴). Young men are to humble themselves before God so that at the right time they may be exalted. (5⁶).

Thus throughout the writing there is emphasis on the times that lie ahead, exhortation to live in accordance with that expectation of the Messianic Kingdom, and therefore no conception of Christ in His Incarnation as other than the Servant of God who was to suffer to redeem His people. Of interest in His daily life and surroundings there is no indication. There are no quotations

from the sayings of Jesus though the language bears more resemblance to that of the Synoptics than do the epistles of Paul: this dependence is however again "lexikalisch" and does not go so far as citing actual words.

2nd Peter.

The 2nd epistle of Peter - which is perhaps the latest book in the New Testament - is in so far therefore significant.

Three points of interest arise in this connection; firstly that the expectation of the Coming of Jesus is yet undimmed, secondly that that expectation takes the place of all other references to Him, including His Death and Resurrection, and thirdly that for the first and last time an episode from the gospels is introduced.

To deal with the last-named first, as it is of greatest moment, there are several things to observe. The text runs: "When we made known to you the power and Coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ we were not following cleverly-devised legends but we had been eyewitnesses of His majesty. He received honour and glory from God the Father and out of the wondrous glory words such as these were conveyed to Him: This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And we ourselves heard these words conveyed from Heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain" (1¹⁶-17).

Obviously the Transfiguration story is known and in the synoptic form: but the noteworthy features are the type of narrative related, and the motive for its appearance here. Both of these are more than significant, for the nature of the incident was exactly such as to raise Jesus above earthly existence: to show Him as the Glorified One even while He was on earth, a prelude to His Ascension into Heaven. That is to say that the one fact of Jesus'

earthly life which the writers of the epistles consider worthy of notice is that which has least connection with His ministry and harmonises most readily with the conception of the Exalted Lord. Further, the motive for its mention at all, as stated by the author (v.16) is even more indicative. For it is as a justification for the assertion that Jesus is about to return in power and glory that this foretaste of the same honour and glory being conferred on Him on earth is narrated.

Thus the pressure of belief in the Second Advent is the determining factor and only as proof of the validity of that hope is the life of Jesus drawn upon at all, and that at the one point during the account of His ministry where He has least relation to His environment.

Just as in James the Parousia embodies the interest in Jesus so here throughout the letter the references to Him are as of the Coming One. In reply to those who doubt the certainty of the Last Day He brings assurance of its inevitability (3⁷). Its delay is only to give all possible opportunities for repentance (3⁹), the fact that scoffers are active is sure proof (3³). The Day will come like a thief and the earth and all its works will vanish (3¹⁰). Therefore since all things are on the verge of dissolution they ought to live uprightly (3¹¹), for in accordance with His promise they expect new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (3¹³). There will be the full knowledge of Jesus Christ (1⁸ 2²⁰ 3¹⁸) when the Day dawns and the Morning Star rises in men's hearts (1¹⁹) and they become sharers in the divine

nature (1⁴).

Redemption by the Death and Resurrection of Jesus has even lost its importance (cf. 2¹) and we find salvation centred round His awaited appearance. This appearance and their triumphant admission into the eternal Kingdom of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has become the content of faith, the yearned for salvation, and the object of all their hopes and interests as well as the fulfilment of prophecy.

Jude.

So in the epistle of Jude there is no allusion to Christ's life or death but definite reference to His Coming (v. 21) in Judgement on the Great Day (v. 6) where they shall stand in the presence of His glory free from blemish and exultant (24) and eventually enjoy eternal life (21).

Philemon.

Philemon contains neither biography nor eschatology.

John.

As it has been recognised (I.C.C. XXXVIII - LII) that not one but many heresies are combated in this epistle it would be unreasonable to emphasise unduly the importance of its anti-Docetic teaching. It is in any case not the narrower form of the doctrine, denying the actual humanity of Jesus that is attacked, so much as their general denial that the Christ could become man. For if the former were admitted to be the opposing claim we should expect as the best rejoinder characteristics and personal traits of Jesus to attest his full manhood: on the other hand, the more general form of the heresy would require little more than repeated affirmation that the Christ did in fact become flesh.

It is this latter interest that appears to be supreme: more the assertion of faith that the Son of God was made man and that the man Jesus was the Son of God. We therefore expect interpretation and not biography and it is that which the author offers. If the writer was the evangelist the total lack of gospel references would be surprising though not altogether out of harmony with the doctrinal nature of his material, but since this is doubtful and unless the writer wishes to pass for the apostle, the opening verses may be taken quite generally and not with a historical reference. *ὁ ἀκηκόαμεν ὁ ἐώρακάμεν αἱ χεῖρες ἐψηλάρησαν* (1¹) need not be personal reminiscences nor indeed mystical experience, but may quite well be knowledge available to all of the revelation that was in Jesus.

This current knowledge which he claims to be the basis of faith is, to judge from the tone of the epistle, largely dogmatic and quite in keeping with the point of view which has been found prevalent in the other New Testament writings.

It concerned the eternal nature of Christ (1^2 $2^{13.14}$); its manifestation in Jesus (1^2 3^8 4^2 5^{20}); His Baptism (5^6); that He died for men's sins (1^7 $2^{2.12}$ 3^5 3^{16} $4^{9.10.14}$ 5^6); that He is now interceding for them with the Father (2^1). But clearly these are merely a background for the fellowship with Christ which they now enjoy (1^3 3^{14} 5^{20}), with its promise of eternal life (2^{25} 3^{15} 5^{11}), and this is gained as much by ethical conduct as by belief in the name of the Son (3^{23} 5^{13}). Such behaviour is based sometimes on God's love to us (4^9), sometimes on the life that Jesus lived (2^6). But since God and Jesus and Christ are used as synonyms it is difficult to place any reliance on such a phrase as denoting knowledge and evaluation of historical fact. So with the attributes "righteous" ($2^{1.29}$) and "pure" (3^3).

Even the bare fact of their ransom by the death of Jesus which is almost all ⁱⁿ His life on earth that is considered "knowledge" gives place to the present consciousness of union soon to be realised in full. That they are already God's children they know, but that they are to be something more is also certain, though what it is they cannot yet say. All they know is that when Christ appears they shall be like Him and shall see Him as He is (3^2) and that is not far off. The signs are in their midst, witness the

presence of Antichrists ($2^{18} 4^3$). But the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining (2^8); the world also with its desires is fading (2^{17}). It is the last time (2^{18}) and therefore they are exhorted to abide in Christ that when He shall appear they may have confidence and not shrink in shame from Him, at His coming (2^{28}). Their love will be shown to be perfect if they can stand fearless before the Judgement (4^{17}). Jesus' work on earth was to be a propitiation made by God but their eyes were not turned back upon that except in thanksgiving: their joy lay before them in the knowledge that His perfect revelation was at hand.

Nevertheless it is noticeable that in this epistle the idea of a present Christ seems to be almost as prominent as the Christ to come (cf. $2^{18} 2^{17} 2^{28} 3^2 4^{17}$ with $2^{13} 3^{14} 5^{13}$). In Paul this contradiction was also visible: life en Christo was a guarantee of the life eternal if not its equivalent.

This introduction of the more mystical aspect of the faith was bound to follow on the disappointment of the eschatological hopes. As the Parousia failed to take place, attempts were made to substitute a more spiritualised allegorical conception of the Day and Judgement. The Lord is already present to those who have faith. The great Day when Christ should appear was already there in their experience.

This tendency in Paul, more openly expressed here in John, was nevertheless at this time not sufficiently strong to displace

Acts.

The investigation of Acts, if not the most fruitful among the New Testament writings is perhaps the most interesting. On many occasions in perusal of the epistles, with their total lack of reference to the historical Jesus as other than a theologically significant fact, the thought must have arisen that this absence of allusion must surely be in some way connected with lack of knowledge. The Christological barrenness of James and 2nd Peter must surely be explained by ignorance of any detail concerning Jesus. If that was the case - for which there is no evidence since the gospels reached their completed form before the later epistles were written - a similar argument cannot be employed with respect to Acts.

There appears to be no adequate reason for doubting the opening statement which claims the same authorship for the gospel of Luke and for this book. The latter is a continuation of the gospel and carries on the narrative after the death of Jesus. What difference there is lies in the style: in Acts the writer has a freer hand, he is not so bound to a pre-existent framework or finished material. It is therefore more literary in its nature: i.e. the author is not so much here a collector as a producer.

But this distinction does not rob of its significance the fact that here we definitely know that the writer was aware of the whole Lucan material, that he had himself given it its form. If therefore there is any part of the New Testament where direct

allusions to gospel incidents should be frequent and prominent it is here. Nor does the nature of the topic invalidate this expectation, since the similarity of much of the narrative (e.g. the miracles) would normally invite comparisons, the substance of the sermons being concerned with Jesus would presumably refer back to the Nazareth ministry, scattered throughout would occur sayings and events from the life in Galilee: the Lord's attitude to the various questions that arose, pious recollections of His personal habits and the like. These, even some of them, we are entitled to look for as natural and fitting in a book which professes to be the account of the spreading of the influence of that same Jesus throughout the world, the proclamation of His significance, and that from the same hand as was responsible for His biography.

Yet it is clear from the very first that that proclaiming of His work consisted on principle and in essence in something vastly different. (The sermons are probably freely composed by Luke on the basis of what was actually the framework and substance: those reproduced are obviously too short to be records and too comprehensive to be excerpts.) The subject of the Kerugma of Acts is elsewhere throughout the New Testament is the risen Lord: it is the Son of God, the Christ, the Name of Jesus.

In this *ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου* is to be found the object of faith: it is the subject of confession, the aim of baptism, the substance of teaching. Not Jesus in His earthly habit but in

His present glory is once more the centre of interest: just as once more the knowledge of His greater might that is to come diverts attention from what is past.

The Resurrection is not so much the pivot round which the whole existence of Jesus turns, as the beginning of His rightful power and the pledge of the majestic reign which is about to commence. God had made this Jesus whom the Jews crucified to be both Lord and Messiah (³⁶2). Not so much that He had been crucified as that He was now the Christ, and that as they had seen Him taken up into Heaven so they would see Him come again (1¹¹).

It is belief in the absolute certainty of the Christhood of Jesus that is the mainspring of the early Christian preaching as reproduced in Acts. The "fascination exerted by the moral beauty of the character and teaching of Jesus" is not the subject of the new religion but that as the Christ He had suffered as was predicted by the prophets: He had come unto His own and they had received Him not. And as He had fulfilled the Messianic prophecies on earth so He would complete the tale of predestination by returning in power and might.

In the Crucifixion they had witnessed the climax of the unity of the people: but with the Resurrection the new age began. This for them was the beginning of history, not the years that lay before it: this was the history of their salvation. He had risen, He had been amongst them, He had been carried up before their eyes, and from beside the throne of grace, as Son of Man

upon the right hand of God, He had poured out His Spirit upon them at Pentecost: these were wondrous happenings but more wondrous still were to come. The Holy Ghost descending upon them, the ecstasy and miracle of that experience had filled their hearts and their minds with hope and assurance that their redemption was at hand. They were afire with expectation: the end of the world was upon them: they were living in the midst of τὰ ἑσχατά.

It had all happened as the prophets had foretold: He who was despised and rejected, the Man of Sorrows, whom they had hanged on a tree, whom God had on the third day raised again, now sat at His right hand. And the prophets would not fail them now, for even as they had been inspired to predict the things that they themselves had seen, so their words that the Son of Man would come on the clouds of Heaven were about to be justified in like manner. (3^{20.21}). Then the dead should rise (4²) and receive justice for their merits or sins (10⁴²) and all who were counted worthy should share in the Kingdom at Jerusalem (15¹⁵⁻¹⁸).

Afire with this expectation, and driven by the knowledge of its imminence, they urge their gospel upon Jews and Gentiles. True it is not a bare proclamation of the Advent: there is a moral content involving repentance, but for that morality as well as for the doctrine the sanction and the urge is the Parousia. Only under the shadow of the Day could the gospel have been preached with such vigour and vehemence.

If the substance of early preaching had been merely the

ethics of the Logia - there is only one saying quoted in Acts 20³⁵ and this is not found in the gospels - there would in all possibility have been no opposition from the tolerant faction of Judaism. The explanation of the ban on Christian preaching by the Sadducees (Acts 4) was that to these rationalistic moderates the excitement and turbulence caused among the commonalty (2⁴⁷) by the proclamation of an impending judgement and a general resurrection (4²) was anathema (23⁶ ff).

Had the apostles contented themselves with commending Christ as He lived no one would perhaps have minded; even as the Messiah who had been done to death He would not have been more than a passing interest and the authorities would not have interfered. But that these fanatical followers of His should arouse the people to a pitch of excitement by proclaiming His speedy return was adequate ground for intervention.

Thus the most striking guarantee for the fact that eschatology was that side of the early preaching that appealed most and made the greatest impression is just the hostility of the organised Jews. In no other way can we explain their charge that the disciples wished to "change the customs which Moses delivered" (6¹⁴). For there was not enough divergence in the morality, nor enough danger in the doctrine of the Crucified and Risen Jesus to merit their defiance of the customs of Moses, but if the stability of the whole political and social fabric was in jeopardy through these wild predictions of the approaching end of all things, then that preaching must be suppressed. It was just this that brought about the arrest

of Paul (23⁶ 24²¹).

The Kerugma as reproduced in Acts is obviously not merely the simple statement that the Lord's coming is at hand: we have seen that the past Messiahship of Jesus also played a part. But the position may be explained thus: in ignorance the Jews had crucified Jesus, not knowing that He was the Christ (3¹⁴). But all men knew that David had predicted His rising again: the bonds of death could have no power over Him: He could not remain in the grave forsaken, nor could His body undergo decay. Therefore He must rise again, and indeed they had seen Him (2²⁹⁻³²). By His appearances after death and by His ascension He had proved Himself to be the Anointed of God (2²⁴ 1¹¹). His sufferings and death had been foretold by the prophets and had been ordained by God (2²³). But to reject and kill the Messiah was a monstrous sin and God would visit in His wrath those who had been guilty. (2³⁵).

That same Jesus would come again (1¹¹ 3¹⁹) on the appointed day and judge the world (17³¹). That day was at hand, for had not the Spirit been poured out upon all nations on Pentecost as the prophet Joel had foretold as a sign of the end of all things (2¹⁷). Only one hope remained of salvation from the divine vengeance: that too had been indicated by the self-same prophet (2²¹), namely that they should call on the name of the Lord (cf. Joel 2²⁸⁻³²). If therefore they repented and were baptised in the name of Jesus Christ (2³⁸), believed that He was the Messiah and that by His death He had redeemed them, then their sin was forgiven and they could face

the judgement that was upon them without fear (3¹⁹). "The gospel in the earliest preaching of the apostles is above all the Good Tidings of the possibility of escape from the wrath to come" (Dewick 239).

That there was beside this primitive theology an ethical undertone, which grew stronger as the Parousia receded from possibility and even in the epistles is stronger than in this record of the earliest preaching, has been perhaps the salvation of Christianity. For however conditioned the righteousness of these first converts was by crude beliefs it was at least righteous: there were no doubts as to the necessity for living a moral life, and that of the most exacting type, though in the heat of the moment it suffered from too little attention. But when much of the primitive outlook had been supplanted by a more adequate dogmatics, the attitude to practical life and its results upon character remained as the most constant witness to the efficacy and truth of the Christian faith.

At this early time however "salvation" from sin was not so much a matter of moral reform as certain beliefs which would save the individual from the just penalty that his race had incurred by denying the Christ and that he himself by his ordinary sinful life would bring upon himself. (cf. 2⁴⁰).

Jesus then was the Messiah, raised up by God and at that very moment seated at God's right hand: if they repented He would forgive them their sins (5³¹) and give them His Spirit to protect

them against the tribulations through which they must pass before they might enter the Kingdom (14²²). Only through belief in Him and His power was there any hope of escape from the wrath that threatened them, and every soul which would not hear that message would be destroyed (3²³). It is significant that in the later chapters of Acts the whole Kerugma is referred to simply as the preaching of the Kingdom of God (8¹² 19⁸ 28^{23.31}).

In view of this it is hardly to be expected that there would be much interest in what had gone before the Crucifixion. The events that led up to it would certainly receive attention but beyond that very little. Narratives concerning Him will only occur if they shed light upon His Messiahship and the question of salvation: traits and characteristics of Jesus recalled for their own sake should not appear. This is actually the evidence of the book.

In the first chapter Judas' betrayal finds mention not for itself but because its end was a fulfilment of prophecy: the life of Jesus is dismissed summarily as a going in and out amongst us, ἐν παντὶ χρόνῳ & εἰσῆλθε καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς, and leading up to the central fact ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ᾗς ἀνελήρατ. He who is chosen to be the successor of Judas is selected from those who had been with Jesus all that time, not to give information about His life ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ βαπτίσματος Ἰωάννου but to preach His Resurrection (1²²). It is as a witness of the Resurrection that he is wanted, and only as a

guarantee of that must he have been a witness of the life.

Peter's sermon (Chap.2) dismisses Jesus' ministry on earth as the work of ἄνδρα ἀποδεικνύμενον ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς δυνάμεσι καὶ τέρασι καὶ σημείοις, οἷς ἐποίησε δι' αὐτοῦ ὁ Θεὸς ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν, καθὼς αὐτοὶ οἴδατε, but the climax is clearly that καὶ Κύριον αὐτὸν καὶ Χριστὸν ὁ Θεὸς ἐποίησε, τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε. It is to this fact that the attention of his hearers is drawn, the foregoing is little more than a preamble.

References to the Passion are naturally common and compared with the epistles more elaborate: e.g. 3¹³ 15 "Jesus whom you delivered up and disowned in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to let him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked as a favour the release of a murderer". In 4²⁷ Herod's name is added. (cf. also 2²³ 4¹⁰ 10³⁹ 13²⁷)

The most comprehensive account of the Galilean episode is to be found in 10³⁷⁻⁴³ where the following statement occurs:

ὅμοις οἴδατε τὸ γινόμενον ῥῆμα καθ' ὅλης τῆς Ἰουδαίας, ἡρξάμενος ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐκέρυξεν Ἰωάννης, Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ, ὡς ἔχρισεν αὐτὸν ὁ Θεὸς Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ καὶ δυνάμει· ὃς διῆλθεν εὐεργετῶν καὶ ἰώμενος πάντας τοὺς καταδυναστευομένους ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου, ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ἦν μετ' αὐτοῦ.

Beginning with ὃς διῆλθεν this is the most biographical passage in the New Testament.

Jesus' ministry is located as extending throughout Judea,

following upon John's movement in Galilee. He is Himself described as a Nazarene, whom God had anointed with the Holy Spirit and power - though what incident, if any, this refers to is not clear. It is rather an affirmation of His Messianic identity than a recollection of a historic event. He went about doing good and curing all who were oppressed with the devil.

Now apart from the mere specification of time and place and His designation as a Nazarene, which may only relate Him to the Christians (cf. 24⁵), when the passage is examined closely there is indeed very little that is not called into being by the demands of faith. For if not the ἐπερχόμενος certainly the ἰσχυροί is as much a sign of Messianic powers as the possession of that same faculty in the apostles was a sign that surely accompanied the end of all things. (cf. 49-12 43¹ 13¹¹) Such miraculous manifestations especially the driving out of the devils, were but forerunners of the final rout of Satan. This had been recognised as such in the gospels: the working of wonders was a sure sign that the Kingdom of God was in the process of realisation, that it was come amongst them.

In Matt. 11⁵ (Luke 7²¹) the cures are represented as proofs of Messiahship, while in Luke 17²¹ the question of the Pharisees regarding the Kingdom of God is repulsed with the words: "The Kingdom is among you already" i.e. in the person of Jesus (ἐντὸς ὑμῶν = in your midst). Just as the Transfiguration was a token of coming glory, so the presence of miracle in

their midst was an earnest of the wonders that should usher in

τὰ ἔσχατα . That demons were put to flight was not of historic interest so much as redemptive and it is with this purpose that it is related. Thus what appears to have been dictated out of pure concern for the life of Jesus is seen to be included only because of its bearing upon the salvation of the present wicked age.

All that remains in Acts bearing upon Jesus' ministry has the same motive: He was of the seed of David (13²³) - which prophecy demanded; He was righteous (7⁵²) and holy (3¹⁴) or the holy Servant (4²⁷) - the attributes of the Messiah. The central fact is the Resurrection to which the apostles are witnesses: that they were also with Him in His lifetime is an experience which is to be evaluated in the light of His appearances after death (1²² 2³² 3¹⁵ 10⁴⁰). That is the focus of their preaching, just as His Advent is its dynamic: within that ambit lay the question and answer to the problem of redemption, and the Galilean ministry was only significant in so far as it affected present needs.

III. EXTRA CANONICAL WRITINGS.

Didache.

It is perhaps not to be expected in a moral and practical treatise of this nature, so exclusively consisting either of ecclesiastical government or ethical injunctions, that a biographical interest would be found, and it might be claimed that its absence indicates precisely nothing. Before considering that point however it may be advisable to examine what Christology and hope of the Parousia is to be found.

This latter is hinted at in various places (9^4 10^5) and openly expressed in the post-Communion prayer (10^6): "Let grace come and let this world pass away. Hosannah to the God (Son) of David. (If anyone is holy let him come, if anyone is not holy, let him repent.) Maranatha, Amen." (ἐλθέτω χάρις is clearly eschatological.- cf. Schaff p.197) But in the last chapter (16) no more convincing statement of the immediacy of the Advent could be desired: the familiar New Testament phrasing is here in full. They are told to be ready, for the hour of Christ's coming is any moment to be expected. They must assemble often and pray, awaiting the appointed signs which will precede the day when the Lord will be seen coming on the clouds of Heaven.

In line also with the New Testament writings there is a corresponding lack of reference to the humanity of Jesus in anything but the barest terms: He is the holy vine of David and

God's Servant (9^2), the (Son or) God of David (10^6), the Founder of the gospel (15^4), and Giver of commandments (8^2), but more often directly in terms of His exaltation as Lord (passim), as being present where what concerns Him is spoken of (4^1), as giving His name to the Sabbath (14^1), as a member of the Trinity (71), as the Kurios of the Septuagint (14^3 16^7). Comparable with the vague allusions to His humanity is the tenuous Soteriology: the Death and Resurrection are disregarded in favour of a salvation depending upon His revelation of knowledge and eternal life (9^3 10^2). On the other hand sayings from the Logia are quoted more fully here than in any other writing.

Thus there is to be found a vivid Parousia expectation coupled with an absence of detail of the earthly life of Jesus: a union which has been noted throughout the writings of the early Church. There is here as elsewhere the forward look: the writer's interest lies in the future and in the publication of moral precepts to fit men for the life that is to be ushered in by the coming of Christ. The historical Jesus therefore suffers at the expense of the Christ of the Parousia.

A most instructive comparison can be drawn in this connection between the Didache, dating from about 100, and the Apostolic Constitutions, a 4th Century production, originating like the Teaching in the East. (cf. The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles: Hatchcock and Brown pp. XLVII-LXIV; Schaff 259-287)

Book VII of this work consists of an enlarged form of the Didache with emendations and modifications to meet the changed

circumstances. It is these modifications that are of interest. For those passages of the Didache which speak of the Second Advent in no uncertain tone as an imminent event are in the apostolic Constitutions of necessity robbed of their urgency. The Lord had not come as had been expected and consequently while the doctrine remained the intensity of hope had been diluted. Thus in the paraphrase of Did. 16 (Apost. Const. VII 31) instead of being exhorted to prepare for the coming of the Lord, they are enjoined to act like men who wait for their Lord. The appeal is no longer directly to the hearers, rather are they likened throughout to men whose connection with them is remote. Instead of their living in the last days, they are warned against going astray in the last part of their lives. The concluding chapter of the book dwells on the Parousia as an event in the distant future.

Thus the eschatology has been modified but the significant fact is that with this comes the introduction of a fuller soteriology and more detailed biographical references. In Apost. Const. 2 (Did. 2²) the narrative of Judas' betrayal of Jesus is mentioned. Chapter II (Did. 4⁴) introduces the incident on the Sea of Galilee where Jesus rebukes Peter's lack of faith. Where instructions are given for baptism (22; Did. 7⁴) the following biographical account appears: "Then the Lord when He was first baptised by John and abode in the wilderness did afterwards fast forty days and forty nights". Nevertheless that disinterested biography is not yet sufficiently developed is shown by the use to which these facts are put. For He was baptised and then fasted that He might testify the truth

to John and afford an example to us. Wherefore Our Lord was not baptised into His Own Passion or Death or Resurrection - for none of those things had then happened - but for another purpose. But He who is to be initiated into His Death ought first to fast and then to be baptised". The fasting and baptism of Jesus are therefore related as a justification of these rites in the Church.

Chapter 23 (Did. 8¹) offers fairly extensive accounts of the betrayal by Judas, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection - all however in justification of keeping feast and fast days. Similarly also a long summary of the work of Christ is given in Chapter 25 where the Didache (9. 1-3) is content to refer to the "life made known by Jesus Thy Son".

Thus with a diminishing interest in the Parousia arises a growing concern with details of the earthly ministry: as yet embryonic in its scope, but nevertheless a visible tendency. Even yet the life of Jesus is still only a matter of concern in so far as it affects men's lives, but in that it is now adduced in justification of ritual as a normal practice of the Church it has advanced a stage from the purely personal and dogmatic scheme of salvation. The presence further of references to John and Herod (10) and allusions to the tales of Lazarus and the Pharisees (8) indicate the lines along which interest was developing.

Polycarp.

In this rather unimportant letter - presumably written about 150 - there is largely a conventional treatment of the life of Jesus.

The phraseology of the earlier epistles is simply appropriated and the theological framework is the sole interest. A few quotations from the Logia are introduced but it is plain that the apostle Paul is a much more living personality in the author's mind than Jesus (cf.3) and his words are treated with equal respect.

On the other hand the Parousia expectation is not immediate: where reference is made to the Second Coming it is rather as part of the traditional belief than as a matter of present concern. The letter is clearly written in a transition period where the apostolic conviction is giving place to a more measured but still hesitant apocalyptic.

Barnabas.

There is little of note in this Alexandrian epistle (circa 130) apart from what has already been observed. The writer believes that the Last Days are upon him: the Black One (Antichrist - ὁ μέλας) is about to appear (Chap.4). Judgment will follow for the quick and the dead and Christ will be seen "having a scarlet robe about His body down to His feet" and will found His Kingdom (7).

The nature and work of Christ are reproduced in conventional terms with the accustomed clothing of His human existence in prophetic language. His Baptism, His Sufferings and Death are shown in most obscure fashion to be fulfilments of Old Testament history and prophecy. It is noteworthy however that in spite of the intricacy of the author's reasoning and his ingenuity in finding Old Testament incidents and sayings which have a bearing on the life of Jesus, these are only adduced with reference to the theological corner-stones e.g. the (for this time elaborate) reference to His being offered gall and vinegar on the Cross (7). There is no citation of Elijah as a prototype of miracle working or of fasting, although Moses is in an obscure fashion upheld as having foreshadowed the Cross (12). He dwells upon the lives of Old Testament patriarchs and heroes, recalls incidental details, but neither displays equal interest in the manner of Jesus' activity nor brings forward Old Testament examples of anything but the

dogmatic skeleton.

The only passage which in a manner oversteps this is the short reference (5): "Moreover teaching Israel and doing so great miracles and signs He preached to him and greatly loved him". This preceding as it does a reference to the calling of the apostles, almost certainly borrowed from Matt. 9¹³, would imply perhaps that the above was a summary derived from knowledge of the material contained in that gospel. The fact remains that if as it is claimed the writer had knowledge of Matthew more or less as it stands (cf. Cunningham LXXXV-XCII) he has not thought it of sufficient importance to include anything more than a framework of Jesus' activity among men.

First Clement.

This epistle which comes within the period of the New Testament writings - dating from about 95 - is interesting in that it is the first of many similar productions of Latin Christianity: the strong emphasis on morality, the lack of speculation, and the absence of mystical concepts bring it closer to the epistle of James than any other in the canon. As there was in James a strong Jewish flavour so is there here an intense preoccupation with Old Testament Scripture. Examples of faith, humility, love, hatred, are taken without exception from the narratives of Israel, with on one occasion a prolongation into the lives of the early worthies of the Church.

This strong Hebraic background is to be observed in the treatment meted out to the historical detail of the synoptics: for where Jesus is not simply a doctrinal formula He is the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy and nothing more. "The blood of Christ was shed for our salvation" (7.21), "His flesh for our flesh and His soul for our souls" (49). "According to the flesh He was descended from Jacob" (32) and His Resurrection is an established fact (42). Beyond this there is nothing recorded and in the sole passage (16) where the earthly life of Jesus is dealt with at any length the description consists of Chapter 53 of Isaiah and Psalm 22 vv.6-8. It is not surprising therefore that the account of the Sufferings is introduced as those of the

Sceptre of the Majesty of God.

There is obviously not a vestige of interest in the historic ministry but an intense interest in Jewish prophecy. A further indication of the writer's point of view is that immediately following the excerpts from Isaiah which were designed to show how the Lord humbled Himself, he gives a list of those who have themselves exemplified the grace of humility, including among them David, Job, and Moses. That is to say however much he may recognise the earthly existence of Jesus, when characteristic examples of Christian virtues are sought he finds them among the Old Testament heroes, but wherever Jesus is concerned He becomes the Messiah of prophecy and is regarded as existing on a different plane.

When the death of upright men through the enmity and jealousy of others is his subject (5.45) the dramatis personae are men of Israel: he was writing to men who understood well the sacred scriptures (53) and as such they knew that the Jesus who had come was the Messiah and that all that was of any consequence in His life was what had been foretold by the prophets. His humbling of Himself had not altered His position in the scheme of salvation, He was "High Priest and Protector" (58) rather than Healer and Master.

He is in the eyes of Clement to be mentioned together with the name of God - at times synonymous with Him (2.19). Have we not one God and One Christ and we are members of Christ (46).

It was as the "flock of Christ" (54), the "elect through Christ" (58), that the growing Church was regarding itself. Paul's *ἐν Χριστῷ* has become a mechanical phrase and there is none of the deep religious consciousness of union with the Risen Lord, but it is clear that the Christ of this epistle is always the exalted Jesus and much less than in Paul is there a reference back to His human existence.

It is therefore all the more striking to find verbatim quotations attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ (13.27.46.). That these are regarded of supreme importance is obvious from the context, from their frequency, and from the authority placed upon them. His words equal in importance the pronouncements of *ἡ γραφή*. "Let Him who has love in Christ keep the commandments of Christ" (49).

Thus it appears that the writer's interest centres round what Jesus was rather than what He did. Actually this is largely true: as the Lord Jesus Christ He could leave commandments but by the same token all of consequence that He did was what bore upon men's salvation. For that salvation was as much bound up with righteous living on their part as with the sacrifice of Christ: therefore what was of moment to them was that they should have guidance for their lives as well as an effective atonement. Both are from the Lord Jesus and both of equal value.

So the ethical precepts obtain a place in the epistle beside the redemptive death and that for the same reason as

excludes any mention of the earthly life. What He did was not what mattered but what He did for them. It is of much more interest to Clement to repeat what Paul said about the Christ than to relate what happened in Judea. He had shed His blood for them, had left them injunctions, and now they were in obedience to these awaiting the final act. "Soon and suddenly shall His will be accomplished, scripture has promised it: 'The Lord shall suddenly come to His Temple, even the Holy One for whom ye look'"

(23). Even in the phoenix we observe a resurrection, how then can we doubt that we too shall experience it (24-26). Let us therefore live soberly and righteously that we may be protected from the judgements to come (28). The warning has been given to us of old: "Behold the Lord cometh and His reward is before His face, to render to every man according to his work" Isaiah 40¹⁰. "Therefore let us cry to Him earnestly that we may be made partakers of His great and glorious promises" (34).

How can we describe the rewards that await the faithful who do the will of God? (35) "By this means we find our Saviour Jesus Christ the High Priest of all our offerings, the Defender and helper of our infirmity. By Him we look up to the heights of Heaven. By Him we behold as in a glass His immaculate and most excellent visage. By Him are the eyes of our hearts opened. By Him our foolish and darkened understanding rejoices to behold anew His marvellous light" (36). At the visitation of the Kingdom of Christ (50), that Kingdom which the apostles taught was at

hand (42), the godly of all ages would be rewarded, let them beware lest through pride they be cast out from that hope (57).

Here then is the emphasis and the explanation of the writer's apathy towards biographical detail: the kingdom of the future is the proper sphere for the Messiah, it is as Ruler and Judge of that that he regards Him. It is impossible for him to narrate for their own sake episodes from the humiliation that found its only justification on the Cross.

Second Clement.

Lightfoot (II.191) judges this homily to be spurious but dates it between the beginning and middle of the 2nd century (v. also Dibelius II 58). In tone it is certainly early and betrays the characteristics of primitive Jewish-Christian thought in spite of its Greek tendencies.

The point of view of the author is determined in the first sentence: "Brethren, ye should think of Jesus Christ as of God". Consequently there is little distinctive reference to Him as God's Son, much less to His human existence. When He became flesh (9.14), and suffered (1), it was as God that He called us into life and so saved us (3). Our task is to keep His commandments that that life may become eternal. The writer quotes freely from the Logia, attributing to them the importance he gives to the sayings of the prophets, and on occasion regards them as the words of God Himself (13).

In Chap.5 there is quoted significantly for synoptic Formgeschichte, a conversation between Peter and Jesus which is not recorded in our gospels. The sayings of Jesus are found in Matt.10^{16.28} but the introduction and the reply of Peter are wanting. This is therefore fairly obviously a specimen of dialogue formation out of original independent sayings either by the writer or his source.

On the other hand the saying (9) "These are My brethren which do the will of My Father" is given without the synoptic

framework Matt. 12⁴⁶⁻⁵⁰, which Fascher believes would argue with Bultmann that the sayings were originally unattached and had a narrative fitted on to them, rather than with Dibelius that this was a paradigm from the beginning. It could however be argued that after the establishment of paradigms in the gospel material the same need was not felt to narrate the whole story in preaching, but only the saying. On the whole it is doubtful whether either point of view can profit by utilisation of this incident.

The past work of Jesus is closely related to that of the future. He is Saviour and Prince of Immortality (20), Judge of the living and the dead (1). That the early belief in His speedy return is still prevalent in this sermon is frequently attested. "The Lord said, I come to gather together all the nations, tribes and languages. Herein He speaketh of the Day of His Appearing (ἡμέρα τῆς ἐμφάνειας) when He shall come and redeem us each man according to his works. And the unbelievers shall see His glory and His might and they shall be amazed when they see the Kingdom of the world given to Jesus" (17). They are to await the Kingdom of God hour by hour (ἡ ὥρα) in love and righteousness since they do not know the Day of God's Appearing (12) - they are to repent while they have time for the Day of Judgement is coming even now like a "burning oven" as the prophet had foretold (16).

There is not perhaps the urgency of the earlier writers but the expectation is still strong and the conception of Jesus is still bound up with His coming reign and summons to all men dead and living to stand before Him and receive the reward of their deeds (9.19). No man can declare or tell those things which the Lord has prepared for His elect (14), but they know that they will partake of the mercy of Jesus (16). The sojourn of this flesh in the world is brief and transient but the promise of Christ is great and marvellous - even the rest (*ἀνάπαυσις*) of the Kingdom to come and life everlasting (5).

Thus as in First Clement the person of Jesus is essentially the Coming Lord: His Death has less force than the fact of His Incarnation; His commandments are the way of salvation and the guide to His Kingdom that is to be.

Hermas.

Although there is evidence that the author of this document was acquainted with the substance of the synoptics, especially perhaps with Mark (cf. Zahn, 457 ff), there is no passage where, as often in the epistles, a direct dependence on or employment of material from any gospel may be asserted.

There are only two sayings recorded: one (Com. 4¹) is used in such a context as to raise doubts whether it is quoted as a word of Jesus (e.g. from Matt. 5³²), the other may more probably be an echo of James (Com. 12⁶). Once for a brief instant the figure of Christ crosses his pages (Sim. 5⁵) amidst a wealth of allegory which apparently does not permit of His uttering a word or performing a deed, or in fact of taking a more notable position than part of a scheme in which vines and angels seem to be of as much account. Apart from this there is silence. Not a word of His death, or of His life, to remind us that this is a production of the Christian Church of early times still cherishing the memory of their Lord. Where He is referred to incidentally it is as the Son of God (Sim. 8.9) and the only development of this is in the direction of His return.

There appears to be a contrast between the Visions and Commandments and the Similitudes. In the first half of the work the eschatological expectation is at its height, in the latter half it appears to be less pressing an issue. Throughout

the book however it may be said that the significance of Christ is more than ever in the work which He is about to do.

The Visions serve to remind the Church that the Day of Reckoning is at hand: the tower is almost complete (Vis. 3^{4.8}); with its completion comes the Parousia (Sim. 9⁵). The last great oppression which is the signal lies before them (Vis. 2²). Above all in the Visions is this impression of the need for haste in repentance and preparation outstanding and although in the latter part of the work there is more emphasis on the obligations which individual believers must undertake in the indefinite interval before the end, still the point is maintained that not much more is to happen until the climax of history is reached (cf. Sim. 10⁴). In the Similitudes the Lord reserves the right to Himself to choose His time and place, but the "suddenly He can come" of 9⁷ is in a sense as specific as the more definite expectation of the Visions.

Diognetus.

"God Himself who is Almighty, the Creator of all things and invisible has sent from heaven and placed among men (Him who is) the truth and the holy and incomprehensible Word and has firmly established Him in their hearts. He did not as one might have imagined send to men any servant or angel or ruler or any one of those who bear sway over earthly things, or one of those to whom the government of things in the heavens has been entrusted, but the very Creator and Fashioner of all things - by whom He made the heavens - by whom He enclosed the sea within its proper bounds As a king sends his son who is also a king so sent He Him: as God He sent Him: as to men He sent Him: as a Saviour He sent Him and as seeking to persuade not to compel us: for violence has no place in the character of God. As calling us He sent Him, not as vengefully pursuing us: as loving us He sent Him not as judging us. For He will yet send Him to judge us and who shall endure His Appearing?"

(Chap. 7)

Nothing more specific than this either biographical or eschatological is found in the epistle. The writer claims to have been a disciple of the apostles (11), yet nothing could be less reminiscent of the Jesus of the gospels than the above passage. His purpose as outlined in Ch.1 is to expound the Christian religion to a Gentile: for that purpose apparently no reference to Jesus' ministry is necessary. It is sufficient

that He existed on earth: for the good life the enquirer is referred neither to His deeds or words but is exhorted to imitate the love of God in His work of Creation and Providence.(10).

It is an impersonal relationship which binds the believer to Christ, He is more than ever a cosmic necessity. His coming again does not appear to be of immediate concern although it is affirmed and the Kingdom frequently spoken of (9.10). The mysteries which the Word showed to His disciples (11) in His conversation consist of the scheme of redemption more than the secrets of His soul.

Ignatius.

So much confusion and doubt exist as to the date and authenticity of these letters as well as to the respective merits of the Shorter, Longer, or Syriac versions, that little weight can be placed on them as giving a reliable clue to the mind of the Church within the period of the New Testament writings. If the Syriac and spurious epistles may be disregarded there still remains much conflicting evidence as between the more or less genuine productions.

Examination of them from the standpoint of their interest in the life of Jesus and expectation of His Coming does not reveal that in one or the other a greater or lesser correspondence of these two ideas can be discovered. At one time there appears to be more emphasis laid on the ministry of Jesus in the Longer edition, at another it appears that both are equally interested,

It would be helpful if it could be shown that the Longer form is the later, since on the whole more traces of an interest in the facts for their own sake are to be found there, with on the other hand a diminution of a Parousia expectation. But it must be confessed that on many occasions this distinction breaks down, and any evidence which these aspects provide in the matter of establishing a date must be regarded as of neutral value.

The whole tone of the epistles it may be added is quite unlike that of any others in this period which have been subjected

to examination and differs very little in its settled outlook and absence of the characteristics of primitive Christianity from much later productions. If therefore they are to be taken as dating from the first quarter of the 2nd Century, as seems to be generally held, they must be classified rather as "born out of their time" than as being in harmony with the mind of the Church of that period. For just as the rigidity of the episcopal order and the solidity of the theological scheme bring to mind the regime of a century or more later, the same may be said for the attitude to the Second Coming.

Thus although in both Shorter and Longer versions there is occasional reference to a speedy termination of the world's history - The last times are come upon us let us stand in awe of the wrath to come (Eph.11). He will manifest Himself before our faces (Eph.15) - yet on the whole the atmosphere is calm: there is no tenseness or expectancy. On the contrary Greek philosophy begins to take the place of Judaic fervour. At most times the author seems to have in mind only individual immortality and not a general resurrection (Pol. 2; Phil. 3; Trall. 2; Eph. 16). When he speaks of the good things hereafter he implies not so much the Kingdom of God as eternal life, and that may be enjoyed in the Johannine sense even here (Smyr. 6). The Parousia of Christ is no longer in the future but in the past: a characteristic Hellenistic emphasis on the Incarnation (Phil.9).

Instead of looking for the Son who is to come, they are to "look for the Christ who was before time, yet appeared in time" (Pol.3).

One notable difference between the Short and Long Recensions lies in the presence in the latter of many more gospel sayings especially from John (Eph. 3.4.9.10.14; Mag. 4.7.12.; Trall.8; Rom.3; Phil. 3; Pol.1; Smyr. 3:6) but on the other hand a number of the Logia from Matthew is to be found in both (Eph.14; Rom.6; Pol.2; Smyr.6).

A second distinction lies in the fact that on sundry occasions in the Longer version the readers are exhorted to imitate Christ, which naturally presupposes an interest in the example which they must follow (Eph.3.4.10; Trall.8). This example appears however to consist mainly in His sufferings, although His having lived "a life of holiness without sin" is added to the Short account in Smyr.1.

Some additional material peculiar to the Longer Recension may be considered before proceeding to what is common to both. When instances of the wisdom of children are given (Mag.3) mention is made of events in the early lives of Daniel, Samuel, Solomon, Josiah, Timothy, but no references to the boy Jesus in the temple. Where examples of chaste living are sought (Phil.4) the names of Elijah, Joshua, Jeremiah, of John the Baptist, Titus, and Clement occur to him but not that of Jesus.

We may now consider the general attitude of the writer of the epistles to the life of Jesus in view of the data common to both versions. His main object is to combat Docetism: a heresy which is significant for this enquiry. For if there had

been sufficient attachment to the historic events in Galilee, with an appreciation of the personality of Jesus, a common knowledge and interest in the events of His ministry, there would presumably never have been any danger of denying the reality of His human appearance. "Later generations" says Lightfoot (I.39) "marvel that such a form of error could have caused even momentary anxiety to the Church of Christ. It seems so very unsubstantial: it is so directly antagonistic to the bias of later aberrations from the faith. To deny the truth of Christ's humanity, to question the reality of His Birth and Life and Death in the flesh is the shadow of smoke, is the dream of a dream to ourselves".

It may be that Docetism is to be traced to Hellenistic influence and to the impinging of philosophy upon the early faith, but may it not be regarded as a logical if dangerous development of the tendency which has been observed throughout the writings of the apostolic age, to regard Jesus as the exalted Lord, the Logos, or the coming King at the expense of His life on earth. In a time where little or no heed appears to have been paid to the events of those years it is not surprising that we find men beginning to doubt whether it was a real existence at all.

Nor does Ignatius combat this by adducing incidents from the gospels which would be enough to remind them of the full humanity of Jesus: His intercourse with men, His acquaintances and

followers, His teaching pilgrimages, or His conflicts with the authorities. It is of course obvious that if these had been recollected with any enthusiasm and cherished for their own sakes the heresy would never have emerged. But even now when it is a present danger Ignatius faces it not by having recourse to detail but by re-stating and re-affirming the reality of His Incarnation, His Passion, and Resurrection: in other words the validity of the Christian theology and not the Manhood of Jesus (Eph.7; Mag.11; Trall.6.9; Smyr.3).

He was the Way, the Rock, the Defence, the Key, the Shepherd, the Sacrifice, and the Door (Phil.9); He died for us in order that by believing in His death we might escape from death and by baptism be made partakers in His Resurrection (Trall.2). He was the Son of God, the eternal Word not spoken but essential Substance begotten by divine power (Mag.8); God existing in the flesh both of Mary and of God (Eph.7). The bread of life is the flesh of Jesus Christ the Son of God, who became afterwards of the seed of David and Abraham; and His blood is the drink of God which is incorruptible love and eternal life (Rom.7).

In view of this, the passage (Eph.15) where there is a reference to the "things which He did in silence" as being "worthy of the Father" may be understood to mean His work from the beginning as Logos, and not as Lightfoot suggests (II.69): "His retirement in childhood and youth, His refusal to allow His miracles or His Kingship to be published, His withdrawal for the

purpose of prayer, His silence before His accusers and the like: in short the passive side of Our Lord's life". It was the very fact that the early Church unlike ourselves regarded most of Our Lord's earthly life as passive which ensured that no interest in it would be displayed by the writers of the time. His activity for them consisted in His becoming man: in dying for their salvation: being raised for their justification: and coming again for their eternal blessedness.

If this hope of glory as a common experience awaiting the whole Church recedes into the background in Ignatius, to be explained perhaps by the author's own immediate prospect of martyrdom, perhaps by a reconsideration of the date of the epistles, the attitude to Christ remains more or less as it has been throughout the century.

In one instance only does there appear to be a gospel incident introduced for its own sake (Eph.17): "For this end did the Lord suffer the ointment to be poured upon His head that He might breathe immortality into His Church". (cf. Matt.26⁷). On the other hand on two occasions extra-canonical material is introduced (Eph.19 - where an exaggerated account of the Star of Bethlehem is given - and Smyr.3 - where a scene from the post-Resurrection appearances occurs, supposedly from the gospel of the Nazarenes).

What we might expect in a confutation of Docetism and as proof of the humanity of Jesus is found in the spurious epistles (Philippians 6.7.8.) where at great length the history of

Jesus is re-told more or less in accordance with the gospel picture. But this was presumably several centuries later when the situation both with regard to the interest displayed in details of Jesus' life and the primitive expectation of the Advent had completely changed. The Parousia had receded into the far-distant future and the mind of the Church looked backwards rather than ahead.

(C). CONCLUSION.

The investigation of the writings in circulation in the early Church within the first two centuries - apart from the gospels - has established the following facts: firstly, that at this time there was no interest in the Jesus of history, and secondly, that there was an intense expectation of His Second Coming.

The prophet of Nazareth, the wandering Teacher, the Leader of that little band of faithful followers, the picturesque kindly figure of Liberal Theology and modern preaching receives hardly a passing glance while the triumphant Son of God, mighty but merciful, whose Advent they await so eagerly, usurps all their attention.

Obviously these two facts are of complementary significance and mutually explanatory. Their relation to one another is causal: belief in the latter occasions apathy towards the former.

We must attempt to visualise the state of excitement that prevailed in Jewish religious circles at the time of Jesus: that earnest even passionate longing for the Day of God, the Day when with catastrophic suddenness the new era would be ushered in, when wrongs would be righted and the chosen people justified before the eyes of the world, when all the hopes and prayers of a down-trodden and suffering folk would find fulfilment and the reign of wickedness and sin come to an end.

For some among them that imminent event had become bound up with the person of Jesus. The long promised Messiah had appeared on earth, had been raised up into Heaven, and would once more manifest Himself, but this time it would be in indescribable glory as Judge and Ruler of all.

As Jesus of Nazareth He had lived among them: some had been with Him and had seen for themselves His miraculous powers, had been stirred by the tidings He had brought of the nearness of the Kingdom and had felt its urgency in His uncanny presence. They had become believers in Him on the evidence of their own eyes and through the intensity of His message. His journey to Jerusalem had been for them the prelude to the final act: but instead of a triumph there had come dishonour and rejection.

It is clear that for a little they were nonplussed by the fact of the Cross and its humiliation: they had hoped for so much and had been so bitterly disappointed. But this was only for a time: the faith that had been evoked in Galilee could not be extinguished. Death was unable to hold the Messiah in thrall, the grave was not the end but the beginning. For He had conquered mortality and risen again and had appeared to them to convince them that He was alive. The miracle had indeed happened: the signs that they had seen in Galilee were vindicated: now they understood that He must suffer and be raised up before His greater glory could begin, as the prophets had foretold. He had become the first-fruits of the Resurrection and they too would

in like manner ere long be privileged to meet Him: if they should finish the course before that day they would be loosed from death to join their loved ones in His presence.

It is difficult for us to avoid modernising the attitude of the first Christians: or reading into their beliefs a balanced and stable state of affairs such as prevailed in later centuries. The earliest stage of the faith, the very foundation of the Church, its source and impetus was religious enthusiasm. It did not begin with moral teaching, with dogma, with a reading of the Old Testament prophets, with legends or appropriations of the substance of the Mystery-cults.

The conviction of these men was that the end of the world was at hand: that little stood between them and eternity, and it was the urge of that belief induced by Jesus in word and action that gave them their indomitable courage and endurance, their unswerving devotion to the faith, in the knowledge that soon, how soon they knew not, their Lord would return in triumph to put all things under His feet.

It is obvious that in the light of what was to come such men could have no interest in writing reminiscences of past events. Awaiting a cataclysmic end to the world that they knew, they lived already partly in another sphere: the old age was passing away: to expect that they should be interested in something so bound up with this dying world, so obviously preliminary and preparatory as the Galilean ministry is to fail to do

justice to the intensity of their expectations.

Beside the mysticism of Paul and John and the practical piety of James we have seen this Parousia hope unchanged throughout the earliest writings. The last days are upon them as surely in 1 Thess. as in 2 Peter, in 1 Clem. as in Hermas, but they will not come out of the unknown for the central figure will be the Jesus who was crucified and who has now been exalted.

This then is the reason why, as well as their being in no mood to write a history of the recent events in Judea, in the particular case of Jesus such an eventuality is doubly excluded. They looked on Him as existing on a different plane. He was the Messiah, the glorified Lord: what concern was it of anyone what He had done in His youth, how He had prepared Himself for His task, who His friends and acquaintances had been, how He had conducted His affairs? He had come from God and gone to God and on earth had brought tidings of salvation and shown by His powers and Resurrection that it was true. To paint a picture of Him was the thought that was farthest from their minds. When they referred to Him it is either in terms of dogma, Old Testament prophecy, or their spiritual communion with Him. His existence as a man is rarely mentioned, to think of Him as a man was never possible.

Yet the fact remains that the impression which the gospels give at first sight is biographical. They appear to be a selection of incidents chosen from the life of Jesus, purporting to give an

accurate account of His words and deeds, and portraying Him as faithfully as they can in the atmosphere in which He lived: the story of Jesus told to show what manner of man He was and to satisfy the enquiries of His followers.

How is this to be accounted for? The gospel narratives came into being at the same time as the epistles, within the same Church, for the same people. The interest of one cannot be different from that of the other: that is to say the contradiction between the evidence of the gospels and the evidence of the epistles must be only apparent otherwise we are faced with the alternative that the gospels were written later than the New Testament period, which would remove them from the realm of reliable history altogether.

The difficulty is to allocate documents which appear on the surface to have been dictated by an interest in the Life of Jesus to a period in which such an interest was an impossibility.

When however in the book of Acts the author of one of the gospels gives no more indication of possessing a biographical outlook than do his contemporaries, then we must assume that he did not regard his gospel as reminiscence at all. If Luke had been written to satisfy a desire for information about Jesus it is out of the question that some traces of that desire and an attempt to meet it should not be seen in a work which is regarded as the second part of his history of Christianity. Therefore, either Luke's gospel - and this applies even more clearly to Matthew and Mark - appeared in a vacuum, or else it was circum-

scribed by the conditions of the period. These conditions as we have seen ruled out a Life of Jesus in our modern sense. Men were concerned not with the historical course of His existence on earth but with the great work that He had wrought.

The gospel material must therefore in its essence be a witness to the faith of the Church and not related out of a regard for history. Whatever impression a cursory glance at their completed form may give the reason for the original preservation of tradition cannot have been a contradiction of the essence of the Christian faith. That essence was hope in the supernatural and suprahistorical, and we cannot expect to find in the gospels the products of the calm and dispassionate survey of the professional historian and biographer.

That a historical background is there is beyond question. There is no ground for supposing the gospels to be an invention. But they are history seen through the eyes of faith not through the eyes of facts.

The argument against Windisch's claim that the evangelists did simply set down what had happened out of a desire to know all that had befallen Jesus, as Echekrates did in the case of Soerates, is to be found in the closing words of the Phaedo: "Such, Echekrates, was the end of our friend - a man as we should say the best of his time known to us and in every way most wise and just."

If Jesus had been merely that we should have had the reminiscences so eagerly desired by many today but we should not have had the Christian Church. "There would have been no tradition

concerning Jesus had there been no preaching about Jesus Christ". (Dibelius: Gospel Criticism and Christology p.45.) It was the conviction on the part of these early believers that Jesus was not a wise and just man, the best of his time, but that He was the Son of God about to return which differentiates the gospels from the Phaedo and gives them that claim to uniqueness of which a misguided modernism would deprive them.

The only permissible point of view regarding their material is that it was preserved because it concerned salvation and the Kingdom of God. The sayings of Jesus were remembered because they proclaimed it or enshrined it, the anecdotes were cherished because they told of the signs of its speedy approach. Both brought the "good news".

That outside influences were later at work and that more "worldly" elements found their way into the collection is undeniable, that some form of biographical interest is present in their finished form is also clear, but the original purpose of the fragments was to proclaim, to convert, and to persuade that Jesus was Lord and that His Kingdom was at hand.

It is thus that the deficiencies in the gospel records may be accounted for. No personal description of Jesus, no tales of His youth and upbringing, no accurate information as to the length of His ministry, no plan of His journeys are to be found because these were matters of no concern. That there are loop-holes in the narrative is inevitable since there was no desire to produce a connected whole.

We must not imagine a group of cultured disciples round a beloved teacher so much as a group of simple Jews under the power of the Kingdom of God.

The liberal-humanistic point of view which would make the life of Jesus in the gospels the basis for theology, which assumes that their purpose was to set up Jesus as an example to be followed, as a teacher or founder of an ethical system, or as a preacher of individual and social reform which would gradually bring about a better world, must recognise that these are purely modern conceptions of His work, that the men of His time had no enthusiasm or understanding for any of them, and that even all of them together would have been unable to give birth to the Christian Church.

Our attitude to biography today is to regard it more or less as a record of facts: the history and antecedents, the words and the deeds, the nature and character of the subject must be clearly and carefully set out for us. In the gospels we have no such information because there was no such interest but we may well ask whether they do not preserve a better and fuller picture of Jesus' activity than if they had been dictated by a purely informative motive.

They are distinct from such works as Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Arrian's *Epictetus*, or Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. These men were all writers of histories who claimed to be making contributions to literature, whereas as Hans von Soden rightly asserts: "If the gospels have a historical character for us,

that was in no way their original intention: they have no formal relationship either with ancient Biography or Memoir-literature."

The apologists and later Fathers whose task it was to establish Christianity as a religion for "civilised" peoples were forced to insist that the gospels had this character, and the judgements of Justin and Papias set the tone for succeeding ages. But it was a position which has no justification.

K. L. Schmidt in his *Stellung der Evangelien in der allgemeinen Literaturgeschichte* has examined this question at some length and shows satisfactorily that it is not in the nature of the gospels to provide a biography in our sense of the word. That would demand a portrayal of the life of a person carried out with artistic skill. It would embrace the inward and outward development of his personality: in this, arrangement of material, psychologising, and pen-painting would all have a place.

Such a result is of course not provided by the gospels. In their finished form they may be regarded as popular biographies, which is naturally no argument against their authenticity. In ancient times it is doubtful whether such a popular work was any less reliable than one which professed to be a literary production: the latter in fact usually gave more scope to an imaginative writer.

"We may speak of the gospels as stories about Jesus but not as a history of Jesus." (p.90) They are from a literary

point of view just such a collection of words, deeds, speeches, and stories as may be found assembled round the names of saints such as St. Francis. In such cases what results is neither a purely objective nor a purely subjective picture: the determining factor will much rather be the reverence with which the holy figure is regarded. Particularly in the case of the gospels their use in the worship of the Church may be reasonably supposed to be a development from the earlier use of the fragments in devotional life. Such practical considerations in the building of tradition may therefore be taken to have had a fairly strong influence.

In the introduction to his book of Baal-Schem, Buber writes: "I do not recount dates and facts, which in the mass might be called the biography of Baal-Schem. I build his life upon his legends in which are the dreams and desires of a people". We must allow for the same factors in the gospels without feeling that they lose anything thereby.

They were the product of a religious movement and cannot become history either by applying psychology or giving romance the rein. What framework there is may give colour to the belief that they record facts for their own sake but in reality the scheme is incidental. Their final stage may have been inspired by a desire on the part of the collectors to compete with the Greek biographies as Streeter suggests (Modern Churchman: Oct.1934 p.438) but it is more probable that they were simply handbooks for devotional or liturgical use.

Their origin was at all events neither "historical" nor "biographical" but missionary: and that propagandist element cannot be removed. "The origin and preservation of the tradition has throughout some connection with Christology, provided that by Christology we do not mean a doctrine of the person of Christ, but the preaching of the Saviour and faith in the salvation which is revealed in Him." (Dibelius: Gospel Criticism and Christology, p.42.) It may be said that the complete historical details are unattainable: this is in fact true. But to attempt to separate the bare bones of history from the picture as it has been handed down to us is a futile effort and would be untrue to the rise of Christianity. We must accept the tradition as it stands recognising it as the product of men's aspirations and beliefs as well as their interpretation of historical facts.

A religion springs not from a dogmatic or ethical system but from communion with a god and the relation of the worshippers to their divinity. Whatever is said of the god will be coloured by the consciousness of that relationship.

In the early Church Jesus did not become for them Messiah by some developing process, it was no reflection that induced them to call Him Son of God. It was the knowledge of something they could not explain in Galilee which made the Cross only the beginning, just as it was their knowledge of communion with the risen Christ which affected all their thoughts regarding Him.

The element of legend and myth was bound to enter in but as distinct from other cults it was a faith based on historical fact, its background was not a legend but an established human existence.

We cannot hope to unravel history from faith nor should we try. Historical criticism has its own province but it is incompetent to deal with religious belief. Goguel hints at this when he says (Harvard Theol. Review 1930 p.94) that there are three problems concerning Jesus; the Jesus of history; historic Christianity; and the religious value of Christ. Bertram (Die Leidensgeschichte Jesu p.100) is more definite when he declares: "Just as none of the evangelists feared the co-operation of his imagination in his portrayal of Christ, so should we not shrink from recognising myth and legend as divine means of expression for the tradition of Jesus, having regard to the times".

This has been recognised in the case of John. That we find there interpretation mingled with fact is acknowledged by most. In itself such an admission is a vast advance on the harmonists but it does not go far enough. For what applies to John applies likewise to the Synoptics if in a lesser degree. Divine and human mingle in all four in varying proportions. The earlier gospels show more trace of the historical because they consist largely of the earliest fragments, but it is false to regard them as more valuable on that account.

John looking back over a longer period of the Church's history sees more and more the divine element excluding the human. But in the main there is no difference between him and his predecessors: all alike have neither power nor desire to give a dispassionate account of the Galilean ministry but to show the author of their faith as Lord and Saviour. The material that lay nearest the collectors' hands in the case of the Synoptics was largely those anecdotes and sayings which shed light on the new life that Jesus had brought, whereas John wrote in a period when the Church looked more into its own experience for an evaluation of Christ than to these early fragments.

We must decline to attempt to sift out a historical kernel in Mark just as we have been forced to do in the case of John: we can at the best speak of mere probabilities. For it was only later that any interest in history for history's sake emerged, for example by the time of the spurious epistles of Ignatius. In that age gospel incidents were recorded for themselves and not for the salvation that they contained. They were regarded as authority because they had happened, whereas in the early Church it was because they brought news of the Kingdom.

This attitude towards the gospels as history persisted - hence their mistaken assessment as Lives of Jesus. His character traits and "personality" were of no account to the early Church however unpleasant that may sound to modern minds: it is only those who lay stress on the humanistic value of that personality

whom this absence of information will disturb. What knowledge we have of Him as He moved about on earth is secondary to the religious and didactic values which secured the preservation of material.

Verbal inerrancy of scripture having been discarded it is impossible to maintain the inerrancy of particular incidents. We must take the gospels as a whole and regard them as a general picture of Jesus' work, as much what He meant to the Church as what He was.

Bultmann's complete scepticism (cf. Jesus p.11) as to our ability to discover or say anything at all about the life and personality of Jesus is an unnecessary corollary to the above position. If the gospels consisted purely of legend, or fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, or dogmatic theology there might be some reason for such an attitude. Without a historical background Christianity would have collapsed: on the other hand interpretation of that history was an inevitable consequence of the Church's faith.

The foundation of that faith was the result of eternity breaking in upon time. Jesus brought a word and a power which were set free from contingency through His belief in the end of the world. If there had been no such belief there would have been no gospel. One of the mistakes of liberalism was to try to efface the Eschatological sections from the Synoptics and to apologise for the impression that Jesus gave of sharing the thoughts of His time. Actually it was that very conviction which gives significance to the beginnings of our religion.

The error of liberalism was to regard the attributing of eschatological beliefs to our Lord as something which detracted from His divine authority. But whether we look on His life on earth as a voluntary humiliation or not we are bound to recognise that all human existence is conditioned. We are perhaps fortunate in that we possess so little concerning His life, perhaps if more had been recorded the "Skandala" would have become more obvious than they are ere now. For since anything in history is subject to limitations, apart from the human fallibility of the recorders, His words and deeds cannot in their outward form be free from such disabilities.

We recognise by this time that our Lord's knowledge was not unconditioned, that the very fact of His being born a man imposed restraints, that nationality, upbringing, and tradition influenced Him as they would any other. No less is this the case in the question of His eschatological beliefs. We know now that the world did not come to an end as He expected, but that He should share this belief is no more surprising than that He should like his contemporaries be ignorant of wireless telegraphy.

The significance of Jesus was not epistemological but religious. What forms His thought took are matters of indifference. The primary fact is that He possessed something which induced the disciples to call Him Lord, which death was unable to conquer and which He communicated both in His life on earth and after His Resurrection to those who believed in Him, and that that same reality has been present in the Christian Church to this

day. We may call it divinity, the power of God, new life, the eternal, the world of the spirit, but whatever name we give it it is the same today as it was then. So long as He was on earth it was subject to the forms and concepts of the situation in which He found Himself - just as today that power in the world is limited by the outward circumstances of those who share it.

The form in which it expressed itself during His lifetime was that of the expectation of the coming end: through that belief His message, though outwardly conditioned, was inwardly the word of God with power. The belief in the end was admittedly mistaken but the reality behind it, the nearness and awfulness, the judgement and the mercy of God, was timeless and unrestricted.

It is necessary that we should distinguish between form and substance. If we have any belief in the supernatural our sense of its impingement upon life will not be dependent upon the historical framework in which it is clothed. For our own day belief in a catastrophic judgement is almost without meaning but the kernel of Jesus's proclamation of the Kingdom, namely that God intervenes and makes His demands upon us here and now, has as much urgency for us as for His early hearers. The historical form merely shrouds the substance which is beyond history.

Jesus brought neither systems of ethics nor programmes of reform but brought men face to face with God in the imminence

of the Kingdom. His miracles were signs of its approach, His words a heralding of its speedy realisation. Neither was unconditioned. His ethic was obviously an Interimsethik - every ethics is - but it is by no means robbed of its eternal significance thereby. For His contemporaries He brought new commands and deeds of wonder, for mankind an Ethos which underlies all transitory expressions of it and a power of which His miracles were the outward form. (cf. Dibelius: Evangelium und Welt p.59).

It was not that they were moved by His wisdom or His teaching but that they kindled their own lives from His. The comparative absence of quotations from His teaching in the epistles shows that they recognised that not the words but the new life in Him was what mattered. His sense of the nearness of God, expressed in His challenge to them to face the divine reality, and His avowed intention of shocking them into realisation of God by confronting them with the Kingdom, was to them what His presence with the Church throughout the ages has been to those who have drunk of the water of life which it has mediated. No formula has ever been invented which could define that power for salvation, that life which He brought and still brings from God. It was and is eternity in time, God in humanity, divinity in our midst.

It was as we have seen not a relationship of disciples to a master that founded the Church, not even a master who preached and suffered in a unique fashion, but communion with

the glorified Christ. That communion could only properly begin with His death when He was freed from the restraints of mortality: yet it was clearly possible to some extent during His life, not to be conceived of as sweet converse and friendship, but as a sense of awe and wonder not unmixed with fear. It was however on Easter morning that the new world had its beginning: the Resurrection of Jesus was the final proof, the corner-stone laid upon all the indications they had previously received. Their own dead would now rise in like manner and they themselves would be caught up to join their Lord and their brethren.

That the faith did not collapse as the Parousia hope receded into the distant future is the outstanding proof of its reality: no cult so dependent on a mistaken belief could possibly survive unless it had within it the substance of truth. Though the form was rejected the essence remained. Their sense of the other world was too strong to leave them: they could not go back to where they had been, they must go on with the assurance they had to formulate the faith in new ways.

The dogmatic development of Christianity has been regarded by many as its disaster, when the original fire could not survive in the rarified air of philosophic concepts. Admittedly Christian dogmas are a compromise, a concession to the world, but it was essential that there should be this surrender if the faith was to be preserved at all. All theology is a compromise between the knowledge that what we have to express is in the last resort

inexpressible, and the necessity for setting out our beliefs in an orderly and intelligible fashion. Criticism of the dogmatic development is no more justifiable than criticism of the eschatological outlook of the early Church. The initial enthusiasm of the faith never could exist in this world without being compromised, its habitat in time conditioned it from its very inception.

What we must realise is that beneath the hard exterior of the Christian controversies and symbols, men were conscious of that same power and reality which had appeared in Galilee, were as conscious of their inability to express it adequately, but were as compelled to proclaim it as the disciples.

When the belief in a pre-existent dying and rising Son of God was fully constituted as the Christian scheme of things it may be objected that this was a misconstruction amounting to a betrayal of the Gospel: but nothing could be more unlike the truth. There is no greater purity or originality in the Gospel narrative than in the dogmas, both spheres have to be penetrated in order to reach the fundamental reality which is the same in both, the word of God to man.

The Kingdom of God had gone, the Parousia had been discounted, but whether Jesus was in Galilee, or about to come, or raised beyond the skies forever, all that changed was the outward form, the circumstances or the environment, while the integral factor remained the same. Dogmatics therefore express more fully the Christian gospel than any attempted removal of them to obtain

an original faith. Such a faith is on the contrary as much expressed in the doctrine of "two natures in one person" as in the earliest belief in the risen Christ, and much more than in any attempt to reduce the faith of the epistles and later apologists to some imagined state of pristine innocence. There was no such initial stage for from the beginning Christian men have been moved to attempt to express in words what can only be symbolised.

The gospels are as much a product of this effort as the Christian creed: in both cases there was an endeavour to define or describe what is actually beyond description or definition. In both cases the surface must be pierced before the truth is apprehended: not that we can hope in the gospels any more than in the creeds to arrive at a primary and fundamental stratum. The fact that it is a religious and not a factual content prohibits us from making the attempt. We can only sense it as we sense the divine dynamic which is common to a Bach Oratorio and a Revivalist hymn.

A life story of Jesus in modern style is impossible of attainment because of the mixture of the rational and irrational that the gospels offer; they try to express what is inexpressible, and at the same time carry over features of the inexpressible into the expressible. Thus a history of Jesus, which by its nature must be rational and expressible, is unattainable: we are offered faith, which is neither, plus that which is capable of

being reduced to words, namely the account of things as they were.

If we exclude either the one side or the other we have something which may be simpler but is inadequate, because both were integral to the rise of the Church. To stress the importance of the personality of Jesus for Christianity is to misunderstand Christian origins. Our study of the epistles has shown how far such an interest lay from their minds, and that therefore we cannot expect to find it where it could not exist. What incidents are authentic and how far they are authentic it is beside the point to enquire. Neither Formgeschichte nor Literary Criticism can say with certainty, and even if they claimed to establish facts we should have at the best to recognise the limitations of scientific method when applied to a religious production.

We may see here and there what we believe to be a dogmatic motive, or a vaticinium ex eventu, a historicising of prophecy, the influence of extra-Christian beliefs but we should be content to take the whole as a picture of Jesus' work which the early Church considered to be sufficient for their needs.

They did not share our interest in Him as an example of good living or indeed as a good man at all but as the "instrument of God's revelation": when they required proto-types of virtue and piety they sought them in the Old Testament or among the saints. His kindness to children, chivalry to women, love of

nature, poetic temperament, humour and dialectic and all the qualities which are stressed so much today were matters of indifference to them: His work and not His nature was their concern. We should not think that because we should have written such an account and laid stress on such attributes that the disciples must have busied themselves with similar reminiscences. The difference between us lies in their eschatological outlook: they had no interest in history as history but as the history of their salvation. Their attitude to the gospel material was little removed from their attitude to the Old Testament: "they were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10¹¹).

It is not without significance that early Christian art as discovered in the Catacombs appears only at the beginning of the 3rd Century to take any notice of gospel incidents or indeed to portray Jesus at all: until then Old Testament and pagan motifs provided the material for most of the paintings, while the distinctively Christian message was depicted in the Eucharist or the symbolic fish.

Salvation was their concern: to look for anything else is to confuse incidentals with fundamentals. It was only later that what was originally not regarded as biography but as a framework to the proclamation of the Kingdom came to be regarded as the main purpose of the gospels. Biographical events were not recorded in the epistles where the gospels were known because

the gospels were not regarded as biography so long as the early expectation of the Kingdom was maintained.

Hence arose the whole host of apocryphal stories in the later evangelists. If the canonical incidents had been looked on as biographical how are these conscious inventions to be explained, bearing as they do no trace of the early urge which made men indifferent to accurate recording of events? It can only be that they felt the need of biography, such as the pagans possessed, and realised that their own religion had none. Much more at this stage in the Church's history can we speak with Streeter of a desire to compete with the Gentiles than at the early Synoptic period.

These latter are primarily concerned to bear witness to the power of Christ, to proclaim the signs of the coming Kingdom, to indicate what may be expected to happen in that new world, and to give guidance as to what attitude should be adopted towards it. "All that was written of old" - and also they would have added "and of more recent days".- "was written for our instruction" (Rom. 15⁴): "it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness". (2 Tim. 3¹⁶)

Yet that does not involve such a last word as that of Schweitzer: "He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lakeside, He came to those men who knew Him not". Jesus is no more a persona incognita to us than He was to them, and their knowledge of Him was sufficient to induce the belief

that He was the Son of God. Can we ask for more? The fallacy of today is that we do, and employ all the apparatus of psychology and imagination to read out of the gospel more than the Church ever put in.

Lightfoot's concluding words in his "History and Interpretation in the Gospels" sound perhaps an unduly pessimistic note. "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 gospel they yield us little more than a whisper of His voice: we trace in Him but the outskirts of His ways. Only when we see Him hereafter in His fulness 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." (p.225)

Formgeschichte is not merely destructive criticism: it can hardly be regarded as on the same plane as that scepticism to which Archbishop Whately replied with his famous "Historic Doubts as to the Existence of Napoleon Bonaparte". It does not cast reflection on the historicity of Jesus but discounts attempts to find in the gospel what is not there, and encourages us to make the attempt to see Jesus as He was seen by the early Church. Dibelius states its position fairly clearly in his latest book when he says: "That the intention of the evangelists is to relate a piece of history is certain; but that is not all; they want to

relate it in such a way that the reader may comprehend what God wanted to say to the world through the events in question" (46) and "to demonstrate that God Himself acted and spoke through Jesus of Nazareth" (66).

Its contribution towards the authenticity of the gospels is indeed more considerable than is generally recognised for even if we admit that what information we have about Jesus has been preserved as it were by accident, it is surely more satisfactory than to face the alternative that the whole of the narrative material is an invention - a conclusion which is almost forced upon us by a perusal of the New Testament writings outwith the gospels.

Either the purpose of these earliest isolated fragments was to win men, to persuade them, to confirm their faith, and for this purpose the introduction of actual details of the life of Jesus was secondary - that is, we have a reflection of the historical antecedents - or else we are faced with the possibility of their being totally unhistorical. Once the personal-memoir theory has been disposed of - and there is nothing to support it - Formgeschichte with its account of the "hidden years" of the tradition offers the most satisfactory solution.

It is probably right in holding that the sayings of Jesus were preserved with more accuracy than the narratives - we have observed traces of this tendency in the epistles - and in making a distinction in historic value between miracles which appear to

be intimately connected with the preaching of the Kingdom and those which betray no such interest (Paradigmen and Novellen). Whether Dibelius is correct in assuming that these paradigmatic fragments existed from the beginning as a whole or whether they were as Bultmann holds originally sayings for which an introduction was supplied may remain an open question.

The fact for theology is that we must recognise that the picture of Jesus is history-cum-faith and New Testament criticism is unable to say definitely where the line must be drawn. Nor would this be legitimate, for since the belief in the Kingdom of God constituted Christianity and not the human life of Jesus we are faced with something which is not reducible to ordinary categories, we are in the presence of the irrational and incalculable before which all criticism must bow its head. There we are in a world which transcends history and our everyday judgments must be suspended. We may criticise the form which that transcendent takes in the temporal but we cannot do more than strive to recapture the consciousness of the supernatural which those who formed the tradition possessed.