

CHAPTER I

ON THE FUNCTION OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS IN THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION: THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY

Seid begrüßt ihr, die auf Erden sein werden . . .
ein Weiser ist jeder, der hören wird, was die Vor-
fahren aus früherer Zeit gesagt haben."

Inscription in the tomb of
Rekh-mi-R, vizier under
Thutmoses III in Egypt 1490-
1436 B.C.E., taken from Klaus
Baltzer, Die Biographie der
Propheten, p. 140.

Auseinandersetzung ist echte Kritik. Sie ist die
höchste und einzige Weise der wahren Schätzung eines
Denkers. Denn sie übernimmt es, seinem Denken nach-
zudenken und es in seine wirkende Kraft, nicht in
die Schwächen, zu verfolgen. Und wozu dieses? Damit
wir selbst durch die Auseinandersetzung für die höchste
Anstrengung des Denkens frei werden.

Martin Heidegger, Nietzsche I,
p. 13.

The issue of the historical Jesus stands at the heart of this
project. I am trying to speak of soteriological meanings for the
symbol of the Kingdom of God in the teaching material of the his-
torical Jesus.

I limit the dissertation project to the symbol of the Kingdom
of God in the language of the historical Jesus for the obvious
reason of feasibility. I am not, however, calling for a separation
between "language" and "person," "words" and "deeds," "language"

and "world."¹ Such would be a linguistic docetism raising all of the problems of a distinction between a "possibility in

¹Paul Ricoeur suggests in his essay "Biblical Hermeneutics" in John Dominic Crossan, ed., Semeia 4: Paul Ricoeur on Biblical Hermeneutics (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975) how an adequate understanding of this linguistic material must, and can, move to the level of "deeds:" ". . . the process of 'intersignification' which goes on between the parables as a distinctive corpus, then between this corpus and the other 'sayings' of Jesus, must be followed a step further to the intersignification between the 'sayings' themselves considered as a larger corpus and the 'deeds' of Jesus. . . . The 'deeds' of Jesus are no less accessible--as meant by the texts--than are the parables and the other sayings of Jesus. The process of 'intersignification' remains itself contained within the boundaries of 'textuality': it interprets a text through another text within another larger text" (Semeia 4, p. 102). Though I suggest below why this task (without question necessary) goes beyond the limits of the present project and why in contrast to Ricoeur I would not include the miracles as part of the "deeds" of Jesus (See his claim in Semeia 4, pp. 102-103 and my discussion of the miracles below, p. 8), it is important in this context to speak quickly of the miracles here. The miracles perhaps indicate, as well as the language from the historical Jesus, that "the course of ordinary life is broken, the surprise bursts out," (Semeia 4, p. 103), but 1) the linguistic material and the "historical" deeds (e.g., the table fellowship and association with outcasts) do not need a claim for a disruption of the "natural order" to indicate their "extravagance" in terms of the disruption of "life world." 2) It is possible to isolate teaching material and deeds according to Norman Perrin's criteria of dissimilarity, coherence, and multiple attestation (see below, p. 51f). This first criterion of dissimilarity, however, would eliminate a claim for the miracles to be considered among the "deeds" (see below, p. 8, n. 3). The question takes us, in fact, to the same level as that concerning the "dead-end" of structuralism (see Semeia 4, pp. 64f.). Ricoeur writes: "I call dead end not all structural analysis, but only the one which makes it irrelevant, or useless, or even impossible to return from the deep-structures to the surface-structures" (Semeia 4, p. 65). This is not to be contested, but the value/dnager inherent in the structuralist approach must be emphasized which ". . . may be applied to any stage of the redactional process, leaving no privilege to the presumed 'primitive' stage" (Semeia 4, p. 64). This suggests the importance (necessity) of the movement within Ricoeur's work to a mutual interactivity of methodologies in the hermeneutical process. The "structuralist approach" can/must be supplemented with "historical criticism" (itself alone inadequate as the following discussion informed by the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer seeks to make clear, as well), "literary criticism" and eventually with "ontological description."

principle" and a "possibility in fact" introduced by the Bultmann discussion.¹

There are several reasons why, at least at this point in my work, I avoid concentration on the person of Jesus: a) because the symbol of the Kingdom of God in this teaching material offers new possibilities by itself for understanding our place in world and in relationship to ultimate reality (and I would agree with Hans-Georg Gadamer that all interpretation is application,² i.e., language is world, and understanding involves some form of action in a world both by the speaker and the hearer/reader); and b) too quickly concentrating on the person of Jesus runs the risk i) of seeing the extra-ordinary character of his activity (e.g., the table fellowship and association with outcasts of his social order, but not the miracles³) as justifying, or even demanding, a claim in

The priority of the primitive stage, however, rests on what a consideration of it enables, and, as the subsequent material wishes to argue, not because of its having an inherent authority. I agree with Ricoeur's conclusion: ". . . I am ready to admit that the initial application and interpretation . . . has a kind of priority and, in that measure, is controlling with respect to interpretation. But we must add, at the same time, that no interpretation can exhaust their meaning . . ." (Semeia 4, p. 134).

¹See this discussion in Schubert Ogden, Christ Without Myth: A Study Based on the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), pp. 111-126.

²See below, pp. 24-25.

³I find David F. Strauß' observation, that all of the miracle stories have their analogies in the stories concerning the OT prophets only that for Jesus they've been escalated (because obviously he is the greatest of all the prophets as the Messiah), a convincing "explanation" of the origin of such stories. See David F. Strauß, The Life of Jesus Critically Examined, trans. by George Eliot and ed. by Peter Hodgson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), pp. 83f., 86, and 440. Though, of course, the 18th century had already its logical reasons for rejecting the miracles as the

some sense of Messiahship for his person (as, for example, Ernst Käsemann wishes to do¹) or ii) an all too quick concentration on the "person," i.e., the deeds as we know them, runs the risk of re-introducing the person and his intention as the criterion for our understanding of faith. This latter is dangerous, I would suggest, for at least two reasons: 1) that we might lose the entire discussion in a new battle over objective "Truth" concerning who has "the real historical Jesus," resulting again in faith being understood as a building of fences (walling in those who

argument for both Messiahship or faith. There is Lessing's famous maxim: "Zufällige Geschichtswahrheiten können der Beweis von notwendigen Vernunftwahrheiten nie werden," i.e., the accidental truths of history can never be the proof for the necessary truths of reason. Though Lessing is not the only 18th century writer to whom we should refer. David Hume in his essay "On Miracles" in Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902) wrote: "Though the Being to whom the miracle is ascribed, be, . . . Almighty, it does not, upon that account, become a whit more probable, since it is impossible for us to know the attributes or actions of such a Being, otherwise than from the experience which we have of his productions, in the usual course of nature" (p. 129). He develops his argument further in "Of Particular Providence and of a Future State" in the same volume: "In general, it may, I think, be established as a maxim, that where any cause is known only by its particular effects, it must be impossible to infer any new effects from that cause; since the qualities, which are requisite to produce these new effects along with the former, must either be different, or superior, or of more extensive operation, than those which simply produced the effect, whence alone the cause is supposed to be known to us" (p. 145, n. 1). "If experience and observation and analogy be, indeed, the only guides which we can reasonably follow . . . both the effect and cause must bear a similarity and resemblance to other effects and causes, which we know, and which we have found, in many instances, to be conjoined with each other. I leave it to your own reflection to pursue the consequences of this principle" (p. 148).

¹See, for example, Ernst Käsemann, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus" in Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen, Erster Band, 2. Auflage (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960) and the discussion below, pp. 46f.

possess the Truth while walling out those who are "lost") rather than as the enabling of possibilities; or 2) that the insights of the new discussion in hermeneutics, e.g., introduced by Gadamer, Ricoeur, and others, concerning the avoidance of making the supposed intention of the author the criterion for our understanding, as well as, to the neglect of our new challenges and needs arising out of our experience in the world/universe today, might be forgotten.

A more challenging suggestion comes from this new movement in hermeneutics in Paul Ricoeur's insistence that we should not engage the linguistic material of the historical Jesus outside of its context within the Gospel:

Dominic Crossan . . . is right when he says that the redaction of the Gospel implied a shift of intentionality: "Jesus proclaimed God in parables, but the primitive church proclaimed Jesus as the Parable of God." This "restatement of intentionality," it seems to me, is grounded in the very act of composition which led to the redaction of the first Gospel. As soon as the preaching of Jesus as the "Crucified" is interwoven with the narratives of his "deeds" and of his "sayings," a specific possibility of interpretation is opened up by what I call here the establishment of a "space" of intersignification: by a specific possibility, I mean the suggestion to read the proclamation of Jesus as "the Parable of God" into the proclamation by Jesus of God "in parables." To entirely disregard this possibility would require that we disconnect the parables from the Gospel. But, then, we should have only an "artifact" created by historical criticism, which would tend to become meaningless as it becomes "pure" (partial emphasis added).

That a treatment of the teaching material of the historical Jesus within the context of the literary genre of the Gospel no doubt provides a "specific possibility" of interpretation does not mean that

¹Ricoeur, Semeia 4, p. 105.

it is the only, or the most adequate, interpretation a priori. It remains to be seen if the investigation of the "intersignifications" of the sayings themselves (i.e., the Kingdom sayings, the Lukan version of the Lord's prayer, the proverbial sayings, and parables) with their common horizon of the symbol Kingdom of God and the myth to which it refers, i.e., an appreciation of their "translatability" exploding the closure of their structure that ". . . the narrative structure recedes to the background and the metaphorical process proceeds to the foreground,"¹ in fact results in their becoming "meaningless." I wish to argue for the meaning(s) that such a "pure" investigation enables, but not to simply assert the priority of a hermeneutics informed by the historical critical method. The adequacy of the hermeneutical process rests on what it discloses for meaning, and that is the dialogue of faith. Hence, I would agree with Ricoeur that "The tension between the parable-form and the Gospel-form is unavoidably a part of the meaning of the parable as narrative and as metaphor,"² but not the exclusive meaning and, in fact, is secondary. This is an occasion, however, where what Ricoeur does takes priority over what he says, i.e., he proceeds in this essay to examine the parables without any relationship to the Gospels.

As suggested above, however, this is by no means to suggest that the language alone suffices for an understanding of faith. Application, i.e., action, in the world is never to be forgotten

¹Ibid., p. 102.

²Ibid., p. 106.

in the process that is the event of understanding. Jesus' actions, what little we know concerning them, certainly inform what is occurring in this language (e.g., above all, the shattering of the human attempt to impose social conventionalities, Weltanschauungen, or ideologies upon life to the limitation of possibilities of Being-in-the-world implied by Jesus' style of table fellowship and association with outcasts of his culture). A valuable, and necessary, step, I wish to suggest however, is to encounter the language in all of its subtlety, power, and surplus of meaning. Perhaps then we can see how revolutionary the historical Jesus actually was. I wish to emphasize, however, that there is nothing in the language or activity of the historical Jesus that demands of us the escalation of the importance of his person to name him the Messiah. I think it finally is the time that we recognize at least this much with David F. Strauß that ". . . we have outgrown the notion, that the divine omnipotence is more completely manifested in the interruption of the order of nature, than in its preservation."¹

Hence, the task of our age is no different than that of every age, i.e., to articulate the meaning and understanding of our experience in our world given our new situation and in light of our inherited tradition. Jesus himself did nothing other, nor have his hearers. We are not to be simply bound by their response(s), for, as Gadamer reminds us, the real power of the hermeneutical situation is not that it is reproductive alone, but that it is productive.

¹ Strauß, The Life of Jesus, p. 781.

Two issues play a central role in this task:

1) What we can name as "the intentional fallacy," i.e., the danger of reading our intentions back into the text as the intentions(s) of the author, or the fallacy of attempting to make the "intention(s) of the author" the criterion for determining the "correct" understanding of the text.¹

If anything at all,² what we have from the historical Jesus is a very limited body of material (What Norman Perrin divides into a) the Kingdom sayings, b) the Lukan version of the Lord's prayer, c) the proverbial sayings, and d) the major parables³). All of this material either explicitly or implicitly refers to the symbol of the Kingdom of God. In working with this material, one must maintain a clear distinction, however, between 1) the "what" of the symbol and the "how" of its functioning in this language itself; 2) what the early Christian communities understood as the Kingdom of God in terms of its being a "steno," apocalyptic symbol

¹This fallacy of the "intention of the author" is argued by many to be the criterion of all interpretation. See, e.g., E.D. Hirsch, Jr., The Aims of Interpretation (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976).

²It must be recognized that, whatever criteria used to determine and separate the levels of tradition found in the synoptic gospels, what one obtains, as Rudolf Bultmann named them, are "primary" and "secondary" levels of the tradition (see below, pp. 32-33). It is assumed that this "primary" material, because of its dissimilarity from both the Judaism of its age and the theological reflection and interests of the early church, comes from the historical Jesus.

³See Perrin, Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom, pp. 41-42. See, as well, below Chapter IV, pp. 321-330.

or sign;¹ and 3) what Jesus himself "intended" to mean with this symbol. The latter distinction is extremely important.

Most scholars of 19th century Liberalism agree with David Friedrich Strauß at least on the judgment that the major weakness of 19th century Liberalism (aside from the attempts to write a biography of Jesus) was the attempt to claim to know the self-consciousness of Jesus. Strauß writes in his The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History, which is a critique of Schleiermacher's Life of Jesus (This latter text, comprising of lectures given by Schleiermacher, was published posthumously, and depends upon the historical accuracy of John's gospel.),

Since it is widely recognized that Schleiermacher constructs his concept of Christ only by means of a conclusion traced back from the effect to the cause, he has no right to posit more² in the latter than he can demonstrate in the former.

Already in relationship to the "father of hermeneutics," Strauß is warning against reading our intention(s) back into the text as the

¹Perrin takes this distinction between "steno" and "tensive" symbols from Philip Wheelwright's Metaphor and Reality: "A symbol can have a one-to-one relationship to that which it represents, such as the mathematical symbol π , in which case it is, in Wheelwright's terms, a 'steno-symbol,'¹ or it can have a set of meanings that can neither be exhausted nor adequately expressed by any one referent, in which case it is a 'tensive symbol.' Perrin, Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom, p. 30. See the introductory comments of Chapter II of the present project for an analysis of the meaning of a "sign."

²David F. Strauß, The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History, trans. by Leander E. Keck (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p. 31. Strauß had already reached this conclusion concerning Schleiermacher's Christology in The Life of Jesus, p. 722: ". . . resting merely on a backward inference from the inward experience of the Christian as the effect, to the person of Christ as the cause, the Christology of Schleiermacher has but a frail support, since it cannot be proved that that inward experience is not to be explained without the actual existence of such a Christ."

intention(s) of the author (Though this is not a new charge with Strauß. Every "orthodoxy" accuses every "heretic" of doing the same.)

The contemporary discussion in hermeneutics, influenced and shaped by the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, warns us, in addition, against making the meaning of the author the criterion for our understanding. In his essay "Hermeneutics and historicism" to be found as a Supplement in Truth and Method Gadamer writes:

The present discussion of the hermeneutical problem is probably nowhere so lively as in the area of protestant theology. Here also the concern, in a certain sense, as in legal hermeneutics, is with interests that go beyond science, in this case with faith and its right proclamation. Consequently the hermeneutical discussion is interwoven with exegetical and dogmatic questions on which the layman can make no comment. But as with legal hermeneutics the advantage of this situation is clear: that it is not possible to limit the 'meaning' of the text to be understood to¹ the supposed opinion of its author (emphasis added).

At an earlier point in Truth and Method Gadamer writes:

We may set aside Schleiermacher's ideas on subjective interpretation. When we try to understand a text, we do not try to recapture the author's attitude of mind. . . . It is the task of hermeneutics to clarify this miracle of understanding, which is not a mysterious² communion of souls, but a sharing of a common meaning.

¹Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), p. 473 (German edition, p. 492). Is the "advantage" of this situation that the lay person cannot follow the discussion, or is it that the concern here "is with interests that go beyond science?"

¹⁶Gadamer, Truth and Method, pp. 259-260 (German edition, p. 276). See Paul Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary studies of the creation of meaning in language, trans. by Robert Czerny (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 220: "Hermeneutics then is simply the theory that regulates the transition from structure of the work to world of the work. To interpret

Not occasionally only, but always, the meaning of a text goes beyond its author. That is why understanding is not merely a reproductive, but always a productive attitude as well. Perhaps it is not correct to refer to this productive element in understanding as 'superior understanding'. . . . Understanding is not, in fact, superior understanding, neither in the sense of superior knowledge of the subject because of clearer ideas, nor in the sense of fundamental superiority that the conscious has over the unconscious nature of creation. It is enough to say that we understand in a different way, if we understand at all (emphasis added).

The conditions of the hermeneutical situation, then, prohibit our making the meaning/intention(s) of the author the criterion for the adequacy of our understanding. The task is that of understanding the text as it confronts us. As Gadamer suggests: "Die Aufgabe des Verstehens . . . geht in erster Linie auf den Sinn des Textes."²

a work is to display the world to which it refers. . . . I contrast this postulate with the romantic and psychologizing conception of hermeneutics originating with Schleiermacher and Dilthey, for whom the supreme law of interpretation is the search for a harmony between the spirit of the author and that of the reader. To this always difficult and often impossible quest for an intention hidden behind the work, I oppose a quest that addresses the world displayed before the work."

¹Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 264. Perhaps the words have the same meaning, but the German text says quite clearly "better understanding:" "Verstehen ist in Wahrheit kein Besserverstehen, weder im Sinne des sachlichen Besserwissens durch deutlichere Begriffe, noch im Sinne der grundsätzlichen Überlegenheit, die das Bewußte über das Unbewußte der Produktion besitzt. Es genügt zu sagen, daß man anders versteht, wenn man überhaupt versteht" (German edition, p. 280). I am indebted to an unpublished paper from Jean Grondin, entitled "Zur Entfaltung eines hermeneutischen Wahrheitsbegriffs," for calling the importance of this passage to my attention.

²Hans-Georg Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik, 4. Auflage (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1975), p. 354. See, also, p. 370. The question to be raised of Gadamer here concerns the meaning of Sinn. Is this the simple word "meaning," or is this the Fregeian Sinn (meaning) in contrast to Bedeutung (reference)? Ricoeur provides us with spatial metaphors for understanding the hermeneutical situation. The task is not one

In the case of the teaching material of the historical Jesus, the task is one of attempting to understand the meaning and function of the symbol of the Kingdom of God in this particular language.

of going behind the text, but of investigating the world "which the work opens up in front of the text:" "If we admit that the hermeneutical task is to conceptualize the principles of interpretation for works of language, the distinction between meaning /Sinn/ and reference /Bedeutung/ has its consequence that interpretation does not stop at a structuralist analysis of works, that is, at their immanent meaning, but that it aims at unfolding the sort of world that a work projects. This hermeneutical implication of the distinction between meaning and reference becomes completely striking if we contrast it with the romantic conception of hermeneutics in which interpretation aimed at recovering the intention of an author behind the text. The Fregeian distinction invites us rather to follow the movement which conveys meaning, that is, the movement of the internal structure of the work towards its reference, toward the sort of world which the work opens up in front of the text" (Semeia 4, p. 82). See, further, The Rule of Metaphor, p. 95: "The important point . . . concerns what I will call the production of meaning /le travail du sens/. It is the reader, in effect, who works out the connotations of the modifier that are likely to be meaningful. . . . No speaker ever completely exhausts the connotative possibilities of his words." This emphasis on the disclosive power of the metaphor (It's ability to disclose a world in front of the text.) is central to the avoidance of a mere "substitution theory" of metaphor (itself to be "substituted" by a "tension theory" of metaphor, see below Chapter II, "Paul Ricoeur's Tension Theory of Metaphor"). Reference to this concern is justified here, because for Ricoeur metaphor is not the exception in language, it is the exemplification of language as "living." "The dictionary contains no metaphors; they exist only in discourse. For this reason, metaphorical attribution is superior to every other use of language in showing what 'living speech' really is; it is an 'instance of discourse' par excellence" (The Rule of Metaphor, p. 97). He then adds: ". . . one could ask how we can speak here of semantic innovation, or semantic event, as something that can be identified and reidentified. . . . Only one line of defence remains open: one must adopt the point of view of the hearer or reader and treat the novelty of an emerging meaning as his work within the very act of hearing or reading. If we do not take this route, we do not really get rid of the theory of substitution. Instead of substituting (as does classical rhetoric) a literal meaning, restored by paraphrase, for the metaphorical expression, we would be substituting (with Black and Beardsley) the systems of connotations and commonplaces. I would rather say that metaphorical attribution is essentially the construction of the network of interactions that causes a certain context to be one that is real and unique. Accordingly, metaphor is a semantic event that takes place at the point

2) This brings us to the second central issue in relation to this teaching material from the historical Jesus. What authority does this language from the historical Jesus possess for us, and why make this language the object of our theological reflections? Does this language material and symbol have a claim upon us because of a particular authority inherent in the claim that this language and symbol come from the historical Jesus? Or does this material and symbol have authority, because they continue to call into question,¹ and to speak to, our contemporary experience in the world? These questions are rooted in the prior question: "What is a tradition?" or "What is history?" A detailed answer to this question is, of course, beyond the limits of the present project, but the following rough sketch is meant to be a helpful orientation.

where several semantic fields intersect. It is because of this construction that all the words, taken together, make sense. Then, and only then, the metaphorical twist is at once an event and a meaning, an event that means or signifies, an emergent meaning created by language. . . . Only authentic metaphors, that is, living metaphors, are at once meaning and event" (The Rule of Metaphor, pp. 98-99). This latter polarity (meaning and event) is a reference to Benveniste. "A linguistic system, precisely because it is synchronic, has only a virtual existence within the passage of time. Language really exists only when a speaker takes it in his possession and actualizes it. But at the same time as the event of discourse is fleeting and transitory, it can be identified and reidentified as 'the same'; thus, meaning is introduced, in its broadest sense, at the same time as the possibility of identifying a given unit of discourse. There is meaning because there is sameness of meaning" (The rule of Metaphor, p. 70). Of course, this presupposes an "ontology" which takes us, first, "from semantics into hermeneutics" (The Rule of Metaphor, p. 100), and, hence, into Chapter III of this project.

¹I am indebted to Wes Campbell for insisting upon an emphasis upon the text/tradition calling us into question, and not only as speaking to our contemporary experience (in the manner of helping us to make sense out of) of the world.

Given a linear understanding of history (i.e., a model of history that suggests that events are merely sequential, that events have beginnings and ends (D.F. Strauß describes linear history, in fact, in his Life of Jesus when he writes: "Our modern world . . . after many centuries of tedious research, has attained a conviction that all things are linked together by a chain of causes and effects, which suffers no interruption."¹), that perhaps history itself is to be thought of as having a beginning and an end), there is a positivistic presupposition that we can understand something in the past as a "closed" event (i.e., we know when it began, how long it lasted, and when it came to an end). The historian has simply to investigate that "closed" realm.

One who engages in the historical task, however, quickly learns that it is not so easy to draw lines in history. Der Sitz im Leben eines Textes or eines Ereignisses is far vaguer than our positivistic attitude leads us to believe, particularly when we recognize a distinction between Historie and Geschichte. "The distinction may be roughly expressed by saying that geschichtlich means belonging to the succession of events, while historisch means accessible to, or connected with, the methods of scientific historical research."² Such a "Kantian" view of history understands events as something "objective" or "in itself," but our knowledge of history to be an inadequate representation.

¹ Strauß, The Life of Jesus, p. 78.

² Gerhard Ebeling, Word and Faith, trans. by James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 28, n. 2.

More recent discussions of time/history (I am thinking of the discussion influenced by Edmund Husserl's Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins¹) speak not only of succession/sequence as characteristic of time (the "now" determines the uniqueness both of the subject, the I, and the object, what is encountered, in that it provides the specificity, the particularity), but in addition there is a speaking of simultaneity:²

The essential property which the term "temporality" expresses in relation to our experiences generally indicates not only something that belongs in a general way to every single experience, but a necessary form binding experiences with experiences. Every real experience . . . is necessarily one that endures; and with this duration it takes its place within an endless continuum of durations--a concretely filled continuum. It necessarily has a temporal purview concretely filled, and stretching away endlessly on all sides.

In more simple language, directed to the problem of history: an "object" (whether it be a text, a work of art, an event) cannot be thought of as simply isolated in the past as something foreign and other. Time/history sets us in a primordial relationship to a text as something not simply "past" in a sequence, but also "present" in simultaneity within the horizon of our life-world.

Gadamer expresses this understanding over against positivism in this manner:

¹Edmund Husserl, Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins, ed. by Martin Heidegger, 2. Auflage (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1980, original 1928).

²See below, Chapter III, especially, pp. 242f.

³Edmund Husserl, Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, trans. by Boyce Gibson (London: Collier Books, 1969), p. 217.

There is one thing common to all contemporary criticism of historical objectivism or positivism, namely the insight that the so-called subject of knowledge has the same mode of being as the object, so that object and subject belong to the same historical movement. The subject-object antithesis is legitimate where the object, over against the *res cogitans*, is the absolute other of the *res extensa*. But historical knowledge cannot be appropriately described by this concept of object and objectivity. The important thing . . . is to recognize the so-called subject in the mode of being of historicalness that is appropriate to it. /Es kommt darauf an . . . das sog. Subjekt in der ihm-zukommenden Seinsweise der Geschichtlichkeit zu erkennen.¹

If the text is not to be thought of as "object" standing over against a "subject," but as an "historical" encounter involving the simultaneity of tradition between the text and the reader/hearer, then the reader (Precisely because "Der Betrachter von heute sieht nicht nur anders, er sieht auch anderes."²) is not "free" to read the text according to whatever whim of the contemporary moment.

Does the fact that one is set within various traditions mean really and primarily that one is subject to prejudices and limited in one's freedom? Is not, rather, all human existence, even the freest, limited and qualified in various ways? If this is true, then the idea of an absolute reason is impossible for historical humanity. Reason exists for us only in concrete, historical terms, i.e., it is not its own master, but remains constantly dependent on the given circumstances in which it operates (emphasis added).³

That understanding is an "open ended process"⁴ does not mean that there is no structure, or that there are no limits, to understanding

¹Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 479 (German edition, p. 499).

²Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, p. 141.

³Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 245 (German edition, p. 260).

⁴See Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, pp. 283, 337-338, 355-357, 374, 434, 437-438, 505. See, in addition, Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor, p. 298: ". . . the power of signifying, in order to stress its operative and dynamic character, is the intersection of

and interpretation (Without structure/limits we would not be able to understand at all.). We are addressed by a text to which we are related in a tradition. The situation "limits" but also "enables" the process. Above all, we cannot escape the presuppositions and judgments of our situation.

This recognition that all understanding inevitably involves some prejudice gives the hermeneutical problem its real thrust. . . . /T/he fundamental prejudice of the enlightenment is the prejudice against prejudice itself, which deprives tradition of its power (emphasis added).

The task is not to escape from our prejudices, but to raise them to consciousness that those that assist understanding might be enhanced and those that hinder might be suspended.

. . . the discovery of the true meaning of a text or a work of art is never finished; it is in fact an infinite process. Not only are fresh sources of error constantly excluded, so that the true meaning has filtered out of it all kinds of things that obscure it,² but there

two movements. One movement aims at determining more rigorously the conceptual traits of reality, while the other aims at making referents appear (that is, the entities to which the appropriate predicative terms apply). This circularity between the abstractive phase and the concretizing phase makes this power of signifying an unending exercise, a 'continuing Odyssey.'

This semantic dynamism . . . gives a 'historicity' to the power of signifying." See, also, Ricoeur, Semeia 4, p. 35, where he speaks of religious language so: "Nowhere is religious discourse freed of a minimal attempt to interpret it. Kerygma and hermeneia go hand in hand. In this sense the connection between the narrative form and the metaphorical process paves the way for an open-ended series of interpretative attempts." See, also, p. 134.

¹Gadamer, Truth and Method, pp. 239-240 (German edition, p. 255).

²Gadamer teaches us, however, that this "process" is not to be assumed to be "progressive." Again, he warns against a belief that the understanding process leads to "better" understanding, as if one perspective would eventually be reached that was the "true"

emerge continually new sources of understanding, which reveal unsuspected elements of meaning. The temporal distance which performs the filtering process is not a closed dimension, but is itself undergoing constant movement and extension. And with the negative side of the filtering process brought about by temporal distance there is also the positive side, namely the value it has for understanding. It not only lets those prejudices that are of a particular and limited nature die away, but causes those that bring about genuine understanding to emerge clearly as such.

It is only this temporal distance that can solve the really critical question of hermeneutics, namely of distinguishing the true prejudices, by which we understand, from the false ones by which we misunderstand. Hence, the hermeneutically trained mind will also include historical consciousness. It will make conscious the prejudices governing our own understanding, so that the text, as another's meaning, can be isolated and valued on its own. . . . Understanding begins . . . when something addresses us. . . . We now know what this requires, namely the fundamental suspension of our own prejudices. But all suspension of judgments and hence, a fortiori, of prejudices, has logically the structure of a question.

The essence of the question is the opening up, and keeping open, of possibilities. If a prejudice becomes questionable, in view of what another or a text says to us, this does not mean that it is simply set aside and the other writing or the other person accepted as valid in its place. It shows, rather, the naivete of historical objectivism to accept this disregarding of ourselves as what actually happens. . . .

True historical thinking must take account of its own historicity. Only then will it not chase the phantom of an historical object which is the object of progressive research, but learn to see in the object the

perspective (Wahrheit und Methode, p. 505), or that an intellect "at the end" would be in possession of the final achievement of "improved" knowledge: "Neither is the mind of the interpreter in control of what words of tradition reach him, nor can one suitably describe what happens here as the progressive knowledge of what exists, so that an infinite intellect would contain everything that could ever speak out of the whole tradition" (Truth and Method, p. 419 (German edition, p. 437)). See, in addition, Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor, p. 302: "My inclination is to see the universe of discourse as a universe kept in motion by an interplay of attractions and repulsions that ceaselessly promote the interaction and intersection of domains whose organizing nuclei are off-centred in relation to one another; and still this interplay never comes to rest in an absolute knowledge that could subsume the tensions."

counterpart of itself and hence understand both. The true historical object is not an object at all, but the unity of the one and the other, a relationship in which exist both the reality of history and the reality of historical understanding. A proper hermeneutics would have to demonstrate the effectivity of history within understanding itself. I shall refer to this as 'effective-history' /Wirkungsgeschichte/. Understanding is, essentially, an effective-historical relation.

The task of interpretation is that of dialogue in which we are placed in question by a text, and, having been placed in question, our presuppositions and prejudices are brought into play. The latter we are not able to avoid; we can only attempt to make them clear. The challenge of the text is the challenge to our presuppositions and prejudices, and because of the temporal distance between ourselves and the text, i.e., precisely because of our presuppositions, a new event of meaning in the encounter with the text is possible.

When interpretation/understanding is thought through consistently as an historical process, then the open horizon of meaning that occurs in understanding results in a claim upon the reader/hearer:

In the course of our reflections we have come to see that understanding always involves something like the application of the text to be understood to the present situation of the interpreter. . . . For . . . we consider application to be as integral a part of the hermeneutical act as are understanding and interpretation.²

¹Gadamer, Truth and Method, pp. 265-266 (German edition, pp. 282-283). Ricoeur comes to a similar conclusion. See The Rule of Metaphor, p. 257: ". . . no discourse can claim to be free of presuppositions. . . . No discourse can be radically stripped of presuppositions; nevertheless, no thinker is dispensed from clarifying his presuppositions as far as he is able."

²Gadamer, Truth and Method, pp. 274-275 (German edition, p. 291). Ricoeur, again, concurs in the importance of application

Further:

The interpreter dealing with a traditional text seeks to apply it. . . . The interpreter seeks no more than to understand this universal thing, the text; i.e. to understand what this piece of tradition says, what constitutes the meaning and importance of the text. In order to understand that, he must not seek to disregard himself and his particular hermeneutical situation. He must relate the text to this situation, if he wants to understand at all (emphasis added).

What remains an open question, however, is why choose one text for the sake of understanding over against another? Gadamer suggests: "Das erste, womit das Verstehen beginnt, ist, . . . daß etwas uns anspricht. Das ist die oberste aller hermeneutischen Bedingungen."² It is the thesis of this project that the priority of this material, which has come to be identified as the teaching material of the historical Jesus, the priority of this material for our theological reflection is that it challenges and speaks to our experience in the world with a symbol that is comprehensive (and suggestive) in respect to our experience.

Seen from the point of view of the interpreter, 'event' means that he does not, as a knower, seek his object, 'discovering' by methodological means what was meant and what the situation actually was, if slightly hindered and affected by his own prejudices. This is only an external aspect of the actual hermeneutical event. . . . But the actual event is made possible only because the

for understanding. He first quotes Gilbert Ryle to this effect, see The Rule of Metaphor, p. 128, and later states, p. 213: "To understand is to do something." See, also, Semeia 4, pp. 133-134: "Even when the parable reaches us deprived of any explanation, it calls for some sort of 'application.'"

¹Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 289 (German edition, p. 307).

²Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, p. 283.

word that has come down to us as tradition and to which we are to listen really encounters us and does so in such a way that it addresses us and is concerned with us.¹

The symbol of the Kingdom of God, and the very structure of this material, call our everyday world-understanding into question at all levels, and enables the breaking in of new possibilities of Being-in-the-world for us today. Negatively stated, however, the authority of this material would then rest upon its continued ability to address our understanding of human experience in the world, and not on the "fact" that the historical Jesus uttered these words.

As both a demonstration of the hermeneutical situation, then, and as itself an exercise in hermeneutics, i.e., that the question that confronts us in the text is not simply a question from "back there," but in fact is a question with a Wirkungsgeschichte, I want to review representative figures of this century who have addressed the question of the historical Jesus. This serves, above all, two purposes:

1) to suggest four contemporary models (Bultmann, the New Hermeneutic, Käsemann, and Perrin) of how the problem has been engaged, and

2) to demonstrate that we are presently confronted with a new opportunity and challenge, not from the "person" of Jesus, in the sense of his person having an authority claim upon us, nor from the "Christ of faith," but from a distinctive language in our tradition that has authority because it engages us and our understanding of world.

¹Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 419 (German edition, p. 437).

CHAPTER VII

The Quest of the Teaching Material of Jesus
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The New Quest that Was Not

Martin Kähler is the father of 20th century German (and American) Protestant New Testament and theological studies like no other. It is well known that he directly influenced the work of three significant scholars of this period: Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, and Paul Tillich. I want to suggest that he articulated two principles that have tended to dominate the discussion of the relationship between history and faith in our century. These two principles are the following:

1) If historical research is meant to "lay the foundation"--the one and only foundation (I Cor. 3:10-11)--it will soon become clear that such a foundation will provide no real support. For historical facts which first have to be established by science cannot as such become experiences of faith. Therefore, Christian faith and a history of Jesus repel each other like oil and water as soon as the magic spell of an enthusiastic and enrapturing description loses its power (emphasis added).

2) We want to make absolutely clear that ultimately, we believe in Christ, not on account of any authority, but because he himself evokes such faith from us. This thought that Christ himself is the originator of the biblical picture of the Christ is implicit in what was said earlier.

Martin Kähler does not speak out of a vacuum, however, It is possible here only to give a suggestion of the intellectual atmosphere in which Kähler's work appeared. His The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ was first published

¹ Martin Kähler, The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ, trans. by Carl E. Braaten (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), p. 74. Obviously (?) a polemical title against David F. Strauß' The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History from 1865.

² Kähler, The So-Called Historical Jesus, p. 87. History is here, of course, understood positivistically, i.e., as a sequential, objective process.

in 1896. In 1892 the son-in-law of one of the most influential Liberal theologians of the 19th century (Albrecht Ritschl), Johannes Weiss, had published a little book that was explosive, i.e., Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God. The methodological level of Weiss' work is informed by source criticism:

The contemporary state of Gospel criticism justifies our excluding the Gospel of John almost totally from our investigation. . . . But even the synoptic Gospels can be used only with certain qualifications, for at precisely those points which relate to our theme we have to take note of secondary displacement of the original material. Many today would also concur in regarding Mark, or at least a writing "A" of like scope and composition to Mark, as the skeleton for both of the other Gospels. In addition, one may venture to acknowledge a source "Q" which contained predominantly sayings and which can be . . . reconstructed from Matthew and Luke. And one may also posit a special source for Luke "LQ" containing narratives, parables, and sayings.

What was distressing for the Liberalism of his day, however, were not his methodological presuppositions, but his theological conclusions: 1) Jesus possessed an apocalyptic vision of the Kingdom of God; 2) the actualization of that Kingdom has yet to take place; 3) not even Jesus can bring, establish, or found the Kingdom of God; only God can do so; 4) the messianic consciousness of Jesus consists of his certainty that when God has established the Kingdom, judgment and rule will be transferred to him; 5) Jesus initially hoped to live to see the establishment of the Kingdom, came to see his death as contributing to the establishment of the Kingdom, but was convinced he would return on the clouds of heaven within the

¹Johannes Weiss, Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God, trans. by Richard H. Hiers and David L. Holland (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 60.

lifetime of the generation which had rejected him; 6) with the coming of the Kingdom, God will destroy this old world which is ruled and spoiled by the devil, and create a new world; 7) at the same time the Judgment will take place; 8) the land of Palestine will arise in a new and glorious splendor, forming the center of the new Kingdom; 9) Jesus and his faithful ones will rule over this newborn people of the twelve tribes, which will include the Gentiles; 10) the rule of God is not suspended by the rule of the Messiah, but thereby actualized, whether it be that they reign together side by side, or that Jesus reigns under the higher sovereignty of God.¹ One familiar with the "comfortable Liberalism" of the 19th century will recognize the radical character of Weiss' claim that Jesus was an apocalyptic seer, that the Kingdom has yet to take place, and that Jesus himself cannot "bring, establish, or found the Kingdom of God." Schleiermacher, Herrmann, Ritschl, and Harnack had all represented the Kingdom as an evolutionary, steadily progressive (for the individual and/or the community) ethical recognition of the "reigning" of God in the world.²

Weiss was not alone in his theological conclusions. In 1906 Albert Schweitzer presented his review of 19th century studies on the historical Jesus known to us in English as The Quest of the

¹Weiss, Jesus' Proclamation, pp. 129-131.

²See Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, 2 vols. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963, original 1821/22); Wilhelm Herrmann, Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott (Stuttgart: J.G. Gotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1886); Albrecht Ritschl, Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung (Bonn: Marcus, 1895); and Adolf von Harnack, Das Wesen des Christentums (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1900).

Historical Jesus. He concurs with Weiss that Jesus was an apocalyptic prophet (we today would make a distinction between apocalyptic and eschatology, but Schweitzer does not).¹ And Jesus "knew Himself to be the Son of Man:"

That Jesus of Nazareth knew Himself to be the Son of Man who was to be revealed is for us the great fact of His self-consciousness, which is not to be further explained, whether there had been any kind of preparation for it in contemporary theology or not.

The self-consciousness of Jesus cannot in fact be illustrated or explained; all that can be explained is the eschatological view, in which the Man who possessed that self-consciousness saw reflected in advance the coming events, both those of a more general character, and those which especially related to Himself.²

Schweitzer hears the call of Kähler concerning history and faith, and concludes his study:

But the truth is, it is not Jesus as historically known, but Jesus as spiritually arisen within men, who is significant for our time and can help it. Not the historical Jesus, but the spirit which goes forth from Him and in the spirits of men strives for new influence and rule, is that which overcomes the world.

. . . The abiding and eternal in Jesus is absolutely independent of historical knowledge and can only be understood by contact with His spirit which is still at work in the world. In proportion as we have the Spirit of Jesus we have the true knowledge of Jesus.³

And what is the "Spirit of Jesus?"

. . . in reality that which is eternal in the words of Jesus is due to the very fact that they are based on an eschatological worldview. . . .

Because it is . . . preoccupied with the general, the universal, modern theology is determined to find its world-accepting ethic in the teaching of Jesus. Therein

¹ Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede, trans. by W. Montgomery (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1969), p. 367.

² Ibid., p. 367.

³ Ibid., p. 401.

lies its weakness. The world affirms itself automatically; the modern spirit cannot but affirm it. But why on that account abolish the conflict between modern life, with the world-affirming spirit which inspires it as a whole, and the world-negating spirit of Jesus? . . . There was a danger that modern theology, for the sake of peace, would deny the world-negation in the sayings of Jesus, with which Protestantism was out of sympathy, and thus unstring the bow and make Protestantism a mere sociological instead of a religious force. . . .

For that reason it is a good thing that the true historical Jesus should overthrow the modern Jesus, should rise up against the modern spirit and send upon earth, not peace, but a sword. He was not a teacher, not a casuist; He was an imperious ruler. It was because He was so in His inmost being that He could think of Himself as the Son of Man. That was only the temporally conditioned expression of the fact that He was an authoritative ruler.

I may be mistaken, but I hear an argument for the true "Spirit of Jesus" on the basis of an understanding of "the true historical Jesus." Certainly not to be denied is a hermeneutical circularity here.

The 19th century ended with the following conclusions determining for the most part² the theological atmosphere: a) we cannot reconstruct a biography of the life of Jesus; b) we have however, the teaching material of the historical Jesus in which c) his self-consciousness as the Messiah for an d) apocalyptic

¹Ibid., pp. 402-403. Schweitzer views Paul's teachings, as well, as thoroughly apocalyptic. See Albert Schweitzer, Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1981).

²There are, of course, major exceptions to this "neat" picture at the end of the 19th century. Not the least is the almost completely neglected Zürich theologian Alois E. Biedermann, Christliche Dogmatic (Zürich: Orell, Füssli & Co., 1869) and, in addition, Otto Pfleiderer, Religionsphilosophie auf geschichtlicher Grundlage (Berlin: Reimer, 1878). One would want to include the work of Ernst Troeltsch in this "circle."

Kingdom of God that is "other-worldly," at least in the sense that it stands in opposition to a Kingdom of God in this world understood as a progressively ethical kingdom, is proclaimed; and, finally, the two principles from Kähler e) historical facts which first have to be established by science cannot as such become experiences of faith; and f) Christ himself is the originator of the biblical picture of the Christ.

Given the atmosphere in which he begins his work, Rudolf Bultmann is a startling phenomenon. His Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition appeared in 1921 in the new methodological spirit established by Martin Dibelius in Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums¹ and Karl Schmidt in Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu.² For the purpose of comparison with the "conclusions" at the end of the 19th century, I suggest a quick look at the conclusions reached in Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition:

As the work on the synoptic problem reached the conclusion, that Mark is the oldest of our gospels, and that it provides the outline for Matthew and Luke, one went gladly a tremendous step further beyond this conclusion all too quickly and found again in the representation by Mark of the life of Jesus . . . the historical course. . . .

This picture is an illusion; the Markan gospel is the work of an editor from out of a congregation's theology, who ordered and arranged the inherited traditions according to the viewpoint of the congregations' faith,--that was the conclusion; and the task as a result for historical research: to determine and recognize the levels in Mark belonging to the old historical tradition that the editor had arranged.³

¹ Martin Dibelius, Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1919).

² Karl Schmidt, Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesus (Berlin: Trowitzsch & Sohn, 1919).

³ Rudolf Bultmann, Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition, 9. Auflage (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), p. 1. This

Out of this situation arose necessarily the attempt or the task, . . . to apprehend the individual saying and story as separate and to test them in terms of other spheres, . . . in order to attempt to recognize their historical location, i.e., their character as primary or secondary tradition or as redaction, by which it makes¹ no difference in the end in which source a piece arose.

One is immediately struck by the reality that here we are in a new methodological world. Not only may we not write a biography of Jesus, but there is a recognition that we are in a "theological environment" in the synoptic Gospels not an "historical environment." It is the task of the exegete to "distinguish" between history and tradition.

b) When we come to the historical Jesus, the criterion for authenticity for the sayings is sharpened. In terms of identifying "original" sayings, Bultmann suggests that we can deny the origin of the saying as the early Christian community,

is my translation of: "Als die Arbeit am synoptischen Problem zu dem Ergebnis gelangt war, daß Mk das älteste unserer Evangelien sei, das auch dem Aufriß des Mt. und Lk zugrunde liege, ging man, froh über das Ergebnis, vorschnell einen großen Schritt weiter und fand in der Darstellung des Mk vom Leben Jesu . . . den geschichtlichen Verlauf wieder. . . ."

Dieses Bild ist eine Illusion; das Mk-Evg ist das Werk eines in der Gemeintheologie stehenden Verfassers, der die ihm überkommene Tradition nach den Gesichtspunkten des Gemeindeglaubens ordnet und bearbeitet,--das war das Ergebnis; und die Aufgabe, die für die geschichtliche Forschung daraus folgte: die Schichten im Mk zu sondern und zu erkennen, welches die alte geschichtliche Tradition ist, die der Verfasser bearbeitet."

¹Ibid., p. 3. This is my translation of: "Aus dieser Sachlage entsprang notwendig der Versuch oder die Aufgabe, . . . die Einzelstücke in Spruch und Erzählung, für sich ins Auge zu fassen und die auf anderen Gebieten erprobte, . . . um so zu versuchen, ihren geschichtlichen Platz, ihren Charakter als primäre oder sekundäre Tradition oder als Redaktionsarbeit zu erkennen, wobei es schließlich gleichgültig ist, in welcher Quelle ein Stück gestanden hat."

the less it is possible to perceive a relationship to the person of Jesus or to the fate and interest of the church, and on the other hand, the more it shows a characteristic, individual spirit.¹

In addition, Bultmann provides a list of the material he believes to have been placed on the lips of Jesus by the tradition.²

c) Bultmann speaks of the self-consciousness of Jesus not as Son of Man (or Messiah) but rather as prophet. His judgment concerning the analysis of Mk. 8:38 par. ("For if anyone in this adulterous and sinful generation is ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."): ". . . so erscheint mir sicher, daß die Unterscheidung zwischen Jesus und dem Menschensohn primär ist. . . ." ³ Later in the text he suggests:

The review shows, that Jesus appears in all such secondary picturing not only as the prophet, who was sent in the hour of decision from God, but he is here the Messiah and world judge. . . . In contrast, the words from Mt. 11:5f. par. . . .; Mk. 8:38 or Lk 12:8f. . . . and no doubt also the rejection of the Lord-Lord speaker Lk 6:46 par. are in all probability from the primary tradition. From them, ⁴ speaks the prophetic self-consciousness of Jesus. . . .

¹ Ibid., p. 135. This is my translation of: ". . . je weniger die Beziehung auf die Person Jesu und auf die Geschehnisse und Interessen der Gemeinde wahrzunehmen sind, je mehr andererseits ein charakteristisch individueller Geist sich zeigt."

² Ibid., pp. 107-108.

³ Ibid., p. 117.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 162-163. This is my translation of: "Der Überblick zeigt, daß Jesus in all solchen sekundären Bildungen nicht nur als der Prophet erscheint, der in der Entscheidungsstunde von Gott gesandt ist, sondern er ist hier der Messias und Weltrichter. . . . Im Unterschiede hiervon sind die Worte Mt 11,5f. Par. . . .; Mk 8,38 bzw. Lk 12,8f. . . . und wohl auch die Abweisung der Herr-Herr-Sager Lk 6,46 Par. aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach primäre Überlieferung. Aus ihnen spricht das prophetische Selbstbewußtsein Jesu. . . ."

d) Bultmann denies, further, that Jesus was "in the strict sense" an apocalyptic prophet: ". . . for in late Judaism visions and auditory experiences are the things of the apocalyptic seer, and in the real sense of the term Jesus was not an apocalyptic seer."¹ In fact, Bultmann suggests that ". . . the oldest conception of the life of Jesus, which the synoptic material almost completely dominates, is the non-Messianic,"² and ". . . that the Easter experience of Peter was the hour of birth of the Messianic faith in the original church."³

Not only is the gospel a creation of the Hellenistic early church,

We encounter the model of the gospel for the first time in Mark; and one is permitted to say, that he created it. In no case is one of his sources to be seen as a gospel. One can naturally not prove that next to, or perhaps before, him no author existed, whose lost work could be understood as gospel. But neither Matthew or Luke used such a work; both rely on the outline of Mark. In any case, the gospel is a creation of the Hellenistic church. Its development rests on two factors: 1) on the taking over of the Palestinian tradition by the Hellenistic church; and 2) on the new motive of the latter, which resulted in the production of the gospel out of the material from the tradition,⁴

¹Ibid., p. 113. This is my translation of: ". . . denn im späten Judentum sind Visionen und Auditionen Sache der Apokalyptiker, und ein Apokalyptiker im eigentlichen Sinn ist Jesus nicht gewesen."

²Ibid., p. 267. This is my translation of: ". . . die älteste Auffassung vom Leben Jesu, die den synoptischen Stoff fast durchweg beherrscht, ist die unmessianische."

³Ibid., p. 277. This is my translation of: ". . . das Ostererlebnis des Petrus die Geburtsstunde des Messiasglaubens der Urgemeinde war. . . ." See, also, p. 314, n. 1.

⁴Ibid., p. 394. This is my translation of: "Der Typus des Evangeliums tritt uns erst in Mk entgegen; und man wird sagen dürfen, daß er ihn geschaffen hat. Auf keinen Fall ist eine seiner Quellen

but in the earliest gospel, Mark, we can obtain no information about Jesus's historical relationship to his audience: "It is . . . impossible to discern from Mark anything concerning Jesus' historical attitude toward his hearers, or about the development of their relation to him."¹

als ein Evangelium zu bezeichnen. Daß es nicht neben ihm und vielleicht vor ihm Schriftsteller gegeben hat, deren für uns verlorene Werke auch als Evangelien zu bezeichnen wären, kann man natürlich nicht beweisen; aber sehr wahrscheinlich ist es nicht. Denn weder Mt noch Lk haben ein solches Werk benutzt; beide legen den Mk-Aufriß zugrunde. Auf alle Fälle ist das Evangelium eine Schöpfung der hellenistischen Gemeinde. Seine Entstehung beruht also auf zwei Faktoren: 1. auf der Übernahme der palästinensischen Tradition von der hellenistischen Gemeinde; 2. auf neuen Motiven in dieser, die die Gestaltung des Traditionsstoffes zum Evangelium hervorbrachten."

An interesting new suggestion concerning the development of the gospel genre is offered by Klaus Baltzer in his Die Biographie der Propheten (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchen Verlag des Erziehungsvereins GmbH, 1975) who writes (pp. 184-185): "Wenn die Gattung der Idealbiographie im AT und darüber hinaus so verbreitet war, wie die Untersuchung gezeigt hat, ist schließlich zu fragen, ob sie nicht auch bei der Entwicklung der Form der synoptischen Evangelien eine Rolle gespielt hat. Es wäre zu prüfen, ob nicht für die Evangelien die erarbeiteten literarischen Kriterien ebenfalls zutreffen.

. . . Auf Grund der bisherigen Untersuchung der alttestamentlichen Biographien kann man den für die Evangelien genannten Kriterien nur zustimmen. Auch die alttestamentlichen Biographien haben in erster Linie kein Interesse an der Persönlichkeit des Dargestellten, sondern an seinem Amt und seiner Funktion. Die Legitimation in der Einsetzung ist wichtiger als Herkunft und Bildung. Die Darstellung einer Entwicklung tritt hinter die Aneinanderreihung und Verbindung bestimmter Topoi zurück. Und wichtiger als der menschliche Charakter ist die Darstellung des Verhältnisses zu Gott und zur menschlichen Gemeinschaft in der Erfüllung des Amtes. Es erscheint daher möglich, die Frage nach der Gattung der Evangelien noch einmal aufzunehmen." He proceeds to briefly examine the structure and content of the synoptics in light of the Ideal biography literary form he suggests is to be found in the OT modelled on the Ideal biography of ancient Egypt. That this Ideal biography as a literary form can be identified as having deep and wide influence in the prophetic tradition of Israel would not be an argument, necessarily, against Bultmann's conclusion that the gospel form itself arose in the Hellenistic church. It would, in fact, be confirmation perhaps of Bultmann's first of two factors leading to the creation of the gospel genre.

¹Bultmann, Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition, p. 368. This is my translation of: "Es ist . . . unmöglich, aus Mk irgend

After his detailed analysis of the "historical" character of the text (or, more adequately stated, of the limited historical character of the text), Bultmann returns to the theme of Martin Kähler:

One is able to say, that at some point it had to come to a connected representation of the life of Jesus on the basis of the available tradition from individual pieces and small collections. . . . And that one apprehended the tradition, in whose center stood a historical person, in the form of a connected, historical, biographical story. This does not suffice, however, as an explanation of the uniqueness of the synoptic gospels. Of course, their deficiency in terms of an actual biography and their gaps in the life story of Jesus are already explained due to the fact that their representation had to be created on the basis of the available tradition. But their distinctive (and by Mark created) character permits itself to be understood only out of the character of the Christian kerygma, to whose supplementation and demonstration the gospel had to serve. . . . The Christ, who is proclaimed, is not the historical Jesus, but the Christ of faith and of the cult. In the foreground of the Christian proclamation, therefore, stand the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the redemptive facts, which in faith are confessed and in baptism and communion are operative for the believer. The Christ-kerygma is Cult-legend as well, and the gospels are expanded Cult-legends. . . . This all means: that in it is the one who speaks, that in it from him is spoken, who as God's son on earth lived, suffered, died, rose, and was elevated to heavenly power. And, of course, the weight had to fall on the end of the representation, on the passion and resurrection. Mark created this kind of gospel; the Christ-myth gives his book, the book of the secret epiphany, of course, no biographical but an established unity in the myth of the kerygma (emphasis added).

etwas über Jesu geschichtliche Stellung zum Volk, über die Entwicklung seines Verhältnisses zu ihm zu erkennen."

¹Ibid., pp. 395-397. This is my translation of: "Man wird sagen dürfen, daß es einmal zu einer zusammenhängenden Darstellung des Lebens Jesu auf Grund der vorhandenen Tradition von Einzelstücken und kleinen Sammlungen kommen mußte. . . . Und daß man die Tradition, in deren Mittelpunkt eine geschichtliche Person stand, in die Form einer zusammenhängenden, geschichtlichen, biographischen Erzählung faßte, erscheint nur natürlich. Diese Erwägung reicht

Not only can we see the first of the principles found in Kähler here, but we have the kernel of an important distinction for Bultmann's theological reflections concerning the results of his methodological research. He begins his Theology of the New Testament with the statement: "The message of Jesus is a presupposition for the theology of the New Testament rather than a part of the theology itself."¹ The theology of the New Testament is concerned with the proclaiming of the Christ and not with the historical Jesus as Kähler had asserted at the end of the 19th century. The theologies of Paul and John represent for Bultmann the highpoint of theological reflection and proclamation in the New Testament. For them to be effective in the contemporary, "scientific" world, however, they must be de-mythologized.

aber doch nicht aus, um die Eigenart der synoptischen Evangelien zu erklären. Zwar ihr Mangel an eigentlich Biographischem, ihre Lücken in der Lebensgeschichte Jesu erklären sich schon dadurch, daß sie ihre Darstellung auf Grund der vorhandenen Tradition schaffen mußten. Ihr bestimmter, durch Mk geschaffener Charakter aber läßt sich nur verstehen aus dem Charakter des christlichen Kerygmas, zu dessen Ergänzung und Veranschaulichung das Evangelium dienen mußte. . . . Der Christus, der verkündigt wird, ist nicht der historische Jesus, sondern der Christus des Glaubens und des Kultes. Im Vordergrund der Christusverkündigung stehen deshalb der Tod und die Auferstehung Jesu Christi als die Heilstatsachen, die im Glauben bekannt und in Taufe und Herrenmahl für den Gläubenden wirksam werden. Das Christuskerygma ist also Kultuslegende, und die Evangelien sind erweiterte Kultuslegenden. . . . Das alles bedeutet: die Tradition mußte als Einheit dargestellt werden unter dem Gesichtspunkt, daß in ihr der redet, daß in ihr von dem erzählt wird, der als Gottessohn auf Erden gelebt hat, gelitten hat, gestorben, auferstanden und zur himmlischen Herrlichkeit erhöht ist. Und zwar mußte der Schwerpunkt auf den Schluß der Darstellung fallen, auf Passion und Auferstehung. Mk hat diesen Typus des Evangeliums geschaffen; der Christusmythos gibt seinem Buch, dem Buch der geheimen Epiphanie, eine zwar nicht biographische, aber eine im Mythos des Kerygmas begründete Einheit."

¹Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), 1: 3.

The task of demythologization concerns the discussion here to the extent that it confirms what Gadamer names as the "hermeneutical situation," i.e., that the "structure of application" informs the hermeneutical process.¹ Whatever "confusion" comes forth in the exegetical process, the task of understanding is not complete until the exegete has attempted to apply the insights of the process to contemporary experience.² The text places us in question.

It is common knowledge that Bultmann was influenced by Martin Heidegger in his theological reflections, but he equally insisted upon a "difference" between theology and philosophy (whether or not this insistence can be adequately justified is the subject of a significant discussion referred to above, p. 8.):

Above all Heidegger's existentialist analysis of the ontological structure of being would seem to be no more than a secularized, philosophical version of the New Testament view of human life. For him the chief characteristic of man's Being in history is anxiety. Man exists in a permanent tension between the past and the future. At every moment he is confronted with an alternative. Either he must immerse himself in the concrete world of nature, and thus inevitably lose his individuality, or he must abandon all security and commit himself unreservedly to the future, and thus alone achieve his authentic Being. Is not that exactly the New Testament understanding of human life? Some critics have objected that I am borrowing Heidegger's categories and forcing them upon the New Testament. I am afraid this

¹See Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, p. 508 and above, p. 25, where Gadamer makes the claim (Truth and Method, p. 289 (German edition, p. 307)): "He /the interpreter/ must relate the text to this situation /the particular situation in which the interpreter finds him/herself/, if he wants to understand at all."

²Or as D.F. Strauß with perhaps greater honesty said at the end of The Life of Jesus, p. 757: ". . . at the conclusion of the criticism of the history of Jesus, there presents itself this problem: to re-establish dogmatically that which has been destroyed critically."

only shows that they are blinding their eyes to the real problem, which is that the philosophers are saying the same thing, as the New Testament and saying it quite independently.

The question is not whether the nature of man can be discovered apart from the New Testament. . . .

No; the question is whether the 'nature' of man is realizable. Is it enough simply to show man what he ought to be? Can he achieve his authentic Being by a mere act of reflection? It is clear that philosophy, no less than theology, has always taken it for granted that man has to a greater or lesser degree erred and gone astray, or at least that he is always in danger of so doing. . . .

At the same time, however, these philosophers are convinced that all we need is to be told about the 'nature' of man in order to realize it. . . .

Is this self-confidence of the philosophers justified? Whatever the answer may be, it is at least clear that this is the point where they part company with the New Testament. For the latter affirms the total incapacity of man to release himself from his fallen state. That deliverance can come only by an act of God. The New Testament does not give us a doctrine of 'nature,' a doctrine of the authentic nature of man; it proclaims the event of redemption which was wrought in Christ.

That is why the New Testament says that without this saving act of God our plight is desperate, an assertion which existentialism repudiates.

Whatever our judgment concerning Bultmann's understanding of the relationship between philosophy and theology might be (A scholar of Heidegger encounters only a shadow of Heidegger in Bultmann's description, for example.), here we have a paradigmatic example of the attempt at "application" in the hermeneutical process, and at the same time further confirmation that for Bultmann it is not

¹Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology" in Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate, ed. by Hans Werner Bartsch, trans. by Reginald H. Fuller (London: S.P.C.K., 1953), pp. 24-25.

²Ibid., pp. 26-27.

the Jesus of history that is the concern of the New Testament but the Christ of faith.¹

The tradition does not stand still, and neither did the question concerning the relationship between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. Where one might be permitted to say that the "problem" of interpretation/application led Bultmann to philosophical descriptions, the two major figures of the New Hermeneutic, D. Ernst Fuchs and Gerhard Ebeling, had a theological "solution" which they took with them to the text. For them, the Christ of faith and the historical Jesus are one and the same not as a consequence of "historical" confirmation, but as a consequence of theological consistency. They represent the concretization of Kähler's second

¹See Werner G. Kümmel's comment in "Die Exegetische Erforschung des Neuen Testaments in diesem Jahrhundert" in Bilanz der Theologie im 20. Jahrhundert, 2. Bände, ed. by Herbert Vorgrimler and Robert V. Gucht (Freiburg: Herder, 1969), 2:326: "Bultmann hatte, wie schon erwähnt, in seinem Jesusbuch die Geschichte Jesu völlig beiseite gelassen und die Botschaft Jesu als 'Ruf zur Entscheidung' interpretiert. . . . Obwohl Bultmann es für überwiegend wahrscheinlich hält, daß Jesus selbst der Träger dieser Gedanken gewesen ist, fügt er hinzu: 'Sollte es anders gewesen sein, so ändert sich damit das, was in dieser Überlieferung gesagt ist, in keiner Weise' (S. 17). Kurz darauf hatte Bultmann dann erklärt, daß man nicht hinter das Kerygma zurückgehen dürfe, 'um einen 'historischen Jesus' . . . zu rekonstruieren. Das wäre gerade der 'Christus nach dem Fleisch' (2 Kor 5,16), der vergangen ist. Nicht der historische Jesus, sondern Jesus Christus, der Gepredigte, ist der Herr.' (Glauben und Verstehen I (Tübingen 1964), 208) Neben dem durch die Formgeschichte begründeten geschichtswissenschaftlichen Zweifel an der Möglichkeit, über das Leben und die Persönlichkeit Jesus etwas Zuverlässiges wissen zu können, trat damit die theologische These, daß für den Glauben des Christen nur die Verkündigung der Evangelien von Jesus Christus, nicht die unsichere Rekonstruktion eines 'historischen Jesus' wesentlich sein könne, und diese Entwertung der Frage nach dem historischen Jesus aus theologischen Gründen hat bei kritischen und auch bei konservativen Forschern weiten Anklang gefunden" (partial emphasis added).

principle above,¹ "Christ himself is the originator of the biblical picture of the Christ." It is an escalation of the Bultmannian insistence that the Christ of faith is what we are confronted with in the kerygma. Fuchs writes:

The so-called Christ of faith is in fact no other than the historical Jesus. But much more important is the statement that God himself wants to encounter us in the historical Jesus. The question of the historical Jesus converts itself now appropriately into the question concerning the reality of an encounter with God in preaching.²

The theological presupposition influencing the question of the historical Jesus is clear: central to faith is the preaching of the kerygma, i.e., the Christ, and Jesus and the Christ, as "word-event," are one and the same.

I am in agreement with Bultmann, that the exegete must have a relationship to the thing which he investigates as the content of the text. He will have to bring with him a stirring "pre-understanding" of faith, because the text concerns itself with faith.³

In this I am also in agreement with Bultmann. I proceeded like him from the What and insisted immediately on the How, so that the Pauline theology took on an

¹See above, p. 22. #

²D. Ernst Fuchs, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus" in Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1965), p. 166. This is my translation of: "Der sogenannte Christus des Glaubens ist in der Tat kein anderer als der historische Jesus. Aber viel wichtiger ist die Aussage, daß uns im historischen Jesus Gott selbst begegnet sein will. Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus verwandelt sich nun sachgemäß in die Frage nach der Wirklichkeit der Begegnung mit Gott in der Predigt."

³Ibid., p. 400. This is my translation of: "Ich bin mit Bultmann darin einig, daß der Exeget ein Verhältnis zu der Sache haben muß, die er als die Sache der Texte untersucht. Er wird also, weil es in den Texten um den Glauben geht, ein ihn bewegendes 'Vorverständnis' des Glaubens mitbringen müssen."

especially important meaning, as it did for Bultmann, for the entire procedure. Beyond that, I asked explicitly about the existential place of thinking faith, that is, I asked where something like believing thinking occurred, will be, as an event. So I hit upon the event-character of language in my own manner, as the Word of love and thereby upon the linguistic character of human existence (emphasis added). . . .

For there is apparently only one unique proper relationship to God: Jesus as the certitude of God. That is faith, for that conforms to the will of God, so that we not only have the right, but also the duty, to call God with the name of God; thereby showing our praise. We are then thinking in the manner that we exist. That is the domain in which the New Testament interpretation is attained, i.e., as soon as we no longer simply reconstruct but allow ourselves to be led by the text. Here² Jesus speaks, because God calls to faith through Jesus.

The "historical" as sequence is not to be found here. The characteristic of time as simultaneity has obliterated all attempts to distinguish "before" and "after." The "what" (i.e., the question "what happened?") has been overwhelmed by the "how." The text is a "word-event" and, given the linguistic character of human

¹Ibid., p. 402. This is my translation of: "Auch darin bin ich mit Bultmann einig. Ich bin wie er vom Was ausgegangen und habe mich sofort an das Wie gehalten, so daß die paulinische Theologie für das ganze Verfahren, so wie für Bultmann, eine besondere Bedeutung gewann. Darüber hinaus habe ich ausdrücklich nach dem existentiellen Ort des denkenden Glaubens gefragt, d.h. ich habe gefragt, wo so etwas wie glaubendes Denken geschah, Ereignis werde. So stieß ich auf meine Weise auf den Ereignischarakter des Wortes als des Wortes der Liebe und damit auf die Sprachlichkeit der menschlichen Existenz. . . ."

²Ibid., p. 404. This is my translation of: "Denn es gibt offenbar nur eine einzige echte Beziehung zu Gott: Jesus Gottesgewißheit. Sie ist Glaube, denn sie entspricht dem Willen Gottes, so daß wir nicht nur Recht, sondern auch die Pflicht haben, Gott mit dem Namen Gott zu nennen und ihm so die Ehre zu geben. Dann denken wir, wie wir existieren. Das ist der Bereich, in welchen die Auslegung des Neuen Testaments gelangt, sobald wir nicht mehr bloß rekonstruieren, sondern uns von den Texten selbst führen lassen. Hier spricht Jesus, weil Gott durch Jesus zum Glauben gerufen hat."

existence, Jesus is word-event. The assumption here is that since they both have to do with God and faith they are the same word-event. We have "an enthusiastic and enrapturing description," to quote Kähler, but not of the historical Jesus, rather of a Christ of faith.

Jesus became, then, indeed the content of faith. But that happened thoroughly in the name of God, who acted on and in Jesus, and who, along with Jesus, will especially act in the future, just as the confession of faith in its Pauline and later gospels shows.

Gerhard Ebeling answers the question concerning the historical Jesus for faith similarly:

Christology would be nothing other than the interpretive passing on of what came to language in Jesus. The historical Jesus would then be properly understood as nothing other than Jesus himself. And the propriety of belief in Jesus--and that is what Christology is all about--would then necessarily be, that faith is such a relationship to Jesus, which is in conformity with the historical Jesus, because it then accords with what has come to language in Jesus.²

The encounter with Jesus as the witness of faith is . . . without restriction an encounter with himself as he was. For the concentration on what comes-to-language in faith

¹ Ibid., p. 164. This is my translation of: "Jesu Person wurde nun wohl zum Inhalt des Glaubens. Aber das geschah durchaus im Namen des Gottes, der an und in Jesus gehandelt hatte und mit Jesus zusammen in Zukunft erst recht handeln würde, wie die Bekenntnisformulierungen, ihre paulinische Auslegung und später die Evangelien zeigen."

² Gerhard Ebeling, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus und das Problem der Christologie" in Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, 56 Jahrgang (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1959), Beiheft 1, p. 21. This is my translation of: "Christologie wäre dann nichts anderes als interpretierende Weitergabe dessen, was in Jesus zur Sprache gekommen ist. Der historische Jesus wäre dann, recht verstanden, nichts anderes als Jesus selbst. Und das Recht des Glaubens an Jesus--und darum geht es in der Christologie--müßte darin bestehen, daß der Glaube dasjenige Verhältnis zu Jesus ist, welches dem historischen Jesus gemäß ist, weil es dem entspricht, was in Jesus zur Sprache gekommen ist."

--and only that!--establishes the unity of "person" and "work," but for that reason as well, the totality of the encounter.

The historical Jesus is the Jesus of faith. The Jesus-understanding of faith must for that reason be made valid as the furthering of the historical understanding of Jesus. For faith itself is the realizing-of-the-goal which came to language in Jesus. Whoever believes, is in the presence of the historical Jesus (emphasis added).²

G. W. Kümmel points out that we have no real answer to the question of the historical Jesus here:

When Ebeling establishes that the appropriate question concerning what happened is not simply: "What happened?" . . . or something similar, but: "What came to language?" and definitively formulated: "The question of the historical Jesus is the question of the event of language that is the foundation of the happening of faith," in this way the meaning of the person Jesus, and the meaning of Jesus as God's consumating holy act, according to its own claim, inappropriately steps into the background, so that the question of the historical Jesus is in fact not the question of this historical person and his history.

Ebeling took up the question again in 1962 . . . and emphasized, that precisely the kerygma made the question of the historical Jesus necessary for two reasons: a) The fact, that the kerygma speaks of Jesus, demands taking historically earnestly this person, and b) the kerygma advances through its concentration on the name Jesus the question what support the kerygmatic expression concerning Jesus has in Jesus himself. Ebeling . . . turns properly against Bultmann's assertion that one need not go further than the "Daß." To be sure, he says also

¹ Ibid., p. 23. This is my translation of: "Die Begegnung mit Jesus als Zeugen des Glaubens ist . . . ohne Einschränkung Begegnung mit ihm selbst. Denn die Konzentration auf das Zur-Sprache-Kommen des Glaubens--und nur dies!--begründet die Einheit von "Person" und "Werk", darum aber auch die Totalität der Begegnung."

² Ibid., p. 24. This is my translation of: "Der historische Jesus ist der Jesus des Glaubens. Das Jesus-Verständnis des Glaubens muß sich darum als Förderung des historischen Verständnisses Jesu geltend machen. Denn der Glaube selbst ist das Zum-Ziel-Kommen dessen, was in Jesus zur Sprache gekommen ist. Wer glaubt, ist bei dem historischen Jesus."

here: "Encounter with the man Jesus means: Encounter with that which in him came to language," and thereby once again the history and the human form of Jesus, to which the kerygma refers, is not taken adequately serious.

This touches the heart of the matter for these theological reflections based on the Christ of faith without "real" reference to the Jesus of history. We are confronted with a docetic/"mythic" Christ. It is not a real person, who lived and taught among a community at a specific time in the past, who is the "object" of our faith. It is a "picture" of a person informed by a theological model of redemption that is the call to faith.

It is precisely this question that led Ernst Käsemann to engage the question of the historical Jesus for faith anew:

¹G.W. Kümmel, "Jesusforschung seit 1950" in Theologische Rundschau: Neue Folge, 31 Jahrgang, Heft 1 (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1965/6), pp. 32-33. This is my translation of: "Wenn . . . Ebeling aber feststellt, daß die sachgemäße Frage nach dem Geschehenen nicht einfach lautet: 'Was ist passiert?' . . . oder dergleichen, sondern: 'Was ist zur Sprache gekommen?' und abschließend formuliert: 'Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus ist die Frage nach diesem Sprach-geschehen, das der Grund des Glaubens-geschehens ist', so treten die Bedeutung der Person Jesu und des in Jesus nach seinem Anspruch sich vollziehenden Heils-handelns Gottes so ungehörlich zurück, daß die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus doch nicht wirklich die Frage nach diesem geschichtlichen Menschen und seiner Geschichte bleibt. Ebeling hat dann die Frage 1962 noch einmal . . . aufgenommen und betont, daß gerade das Kerygma die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus aus zwei Gründen notwendig macht: a) Die Tatsache, daß das Kerygma von Jesus spricht, fordert das historische Ernstnehmen dieser Person, und b) Das Kerygma stellt durch seine Konzentration auf den Namen Jesus vor die Frage, welchen Anhalt die kerygmatische Aussage über Jesus an Jesus selbst habe. Ebeling . . . wendet sich zugleich mit Recht gegen die Behauptung Bultmanns, daß man über das "Daß" nicht hinauszukommen brauche. Freilich wird dann auch hier gesagt: 'Begegnung mit dem Menschen Jesus heißt: Begegnung mit dem, was in ihm zur Sprache gekommen ist', und damit wird erneut die Geschichte und die menschliche Gestalt des Jesus, auf den sich das Kerygma zurückbezieht, nicht ausreichend ernst genommen."

. . . we . . . cannot do away with the identity between the exalted and the earthly Lord without falling into docetism and depriving ourselves of the possibility of drawing a line between the Easter faith of the community and myth. Conversely, neither our sources nor the insights we have gained from what has gone before permit us to substitute the historical Jesus for the exalted Lord.¹

Käsemann insists that there is a continuity between the "earthly Lord" and the "exalted Lord," but he observes this continuity from the perspective (or from this side) of the "exalted Lord;"² the Christ of the kerygma remains the kernel of the Christian faith.

Käsemann employs a "criterion of dissimilarity" similar to that of Rudolf Bultmann's (but with a significant addition) to reach the historical Jesus:

¹Käsemann, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus", p. 203. This is my translation of: ". . . wir die Identität des erhöhten mit dem irdischen Herrn nicht aufheben können, ohne dem Dokerismus zu verfallen und uns der Möglichkeit zu berauben, den Osterglauben der Gemeinde von einem Mythos abzugrenzen. Umgekehrt erlauben uns weder unsere Quellen noch die im Vorangegangenen gewonnenen Einsichten, den erhöhten Herrn durch den historischen Jesus ersetzen zu wollen."

²See, for example, *Ibid.*, pp. 189f. and especially p. 213 where he writes: "The question concerning the historical Jesus is legitimately the question concerning the continuity of the gospel in the discontinuity of time and in the variety of the kerygmas." Clearly, the view is one from (or in terms of) this side of the kerygma with the kerygma as exegetical presupposition. Though this is not to suggest that Käsemann sees only continuity. In fact, he writes: "He distinguished himself . . . just as much from late Jewish expectations as from the proclamation of his own church. He might not have presented a picture of the future, but have done what was required in the present; and not his person, but he could have placed his message in the center of his preaching. But his hearers could have understood the uniqueness of his mission as testimony, that they could answer his proclamation with their confession of Messiah and Son of God" (p. 211). Hence, the continuity justifies the early church's claim for Messiahship that saves its proclamation from docetism or "mysticism."

We have to a certain extent security in one case, namely, when the tradition out of whatever reason neither is traceable to Judaism or can be attributed to the early Christian community; especially, then, when the Jewish-Christian community either mitigated or reversed the meaning of¹ their received material, because it was too audacious.

The question then arises, "What can be identified as coming from Judaism and what from the early church?" Käsemann wants to claim that, unlike any Rabbi or prophet, who would have to stand under Moses and not be of equal or higher authority than the latter,² Jesus, especially demonstrated in the εγὼ δὲ λέλω ("but I say") of the antitheses in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5f.),³ claimed this higher authority for himself, and, furthermore, the unmediated certitude of his inspiration in contrast to Rabbinic practice, indicates his personal conviction of being an instrument of the living God.⁴ He suggests:

. . . the Jew, who does what here occurs, disassociated himself from the community of Judaism or--he brought the messianic Torah and is the Messiah. For the Prophet

¹Ibid., p. 205. This is my translation of: "Einigermaßen sicheren Boden haben wir nur in einem einzigen Fall unter den Füßen, wenn nämlich Tradition aus irgendwelchen Gründen weder aus dem Judentum abgeleitet noch der Urchristenheit zugeschrieben werden kann, speziell dann, wenn die Judenchristenheit ihr überkommenes Gut als zu kühn gemildert oder umgebogen hat." See Bultmann's criterion above, pp. 33-34.

²See Ibid., pp. 206 and 208.

³See Ibid., p. 206.

⁴See Ibid., p. 210: "In this unmediated conviction, to know and to proclaim God's will, that allows it to be united with the unmediated and bold perception of the wisdom teaching (and perhaps makes the latter possible for the first time), Jesus distinguished himself from Rabbinism. It makes no difference if he used the same vocabulary, he must have understood himself as the instrument of the Spirit of the living God, that was expected by the Jewish tradition in the end time."

stands not next to, but under, Moses. The scandalousness of these words testifies to their authenticity. . . . The only category, adequate to his claim, is completely independent from whether or not he himself used it or claimed it, and that is the one which his disciples measured him with as well, namely, that of Messiah (emphasis added).

Although Käsemann agrees that a life of Jesus is not to be written,² he writes:

I can, to be sure, not concede, that in view of the facts of the case resignation and scepticism have the last word, and permits leading to disinterest concerning the earthly Jesus. In such a case, would not only the early Christian concern for the identity between the raised and humbled Lord be undervalued or docetically emptied, but it would also fail to see, that there are in fact pieces in the synoptic tradition which the historian can simply acknowledge as authentic, if he wants to remain a historian. What concerns me is the identification, that, out of the obscureness of the historical Jesus comes forth relative sharply recognizable features of his proclamation with which the message of the early church is in agreement. The ambiguity of our problem rests in the fact, that the raised Lord almost completely absorbed the picture of the earthly, and the early church asserted nevertheless the identity of the raised with the earthly. But the solution to this problem in our opinion is not promising from presumed brute facts of history, but is solely to be undertaken in terms of the unity and tension between the preaching of Jesus and that of his church. The question of the historical Jesus is legitimately the question concerning the continuity of the gospel in the distinctintuity of time and in the variety of the kerygma (emphasis added).³

¹Ibid., p. 206. This is my translation of: ". . . der Jude, der tut was hier geschieht, hat sich aus dem Verband des Judentums gelöst oder--er bringt die messianische Thora und ist der Messias. Denn auch der Prophet steht nicht neben, sondern unter Moses. Die Unerhörtheit des Wortes bezeugt seine Echtheit. . . . Die einzige Kategorie, die seinem Anspruch gerecht wird, ist völlig unabhängig davon, ob er sie selber benutzt und gefordert hat oder nicht, diejenige, welche seine Jünger ihm denn auch beigemessen haben, nämlich die des Messias."

²See Ibid., pp. 212-213.

³Ibid., p. 213. This is my translation of: "Umgekehrt kann ich allerdings auch nicht zugeben, daß angesichts dieses Sachverhaltes Resignation und Skepsis das letzte Wort behalten und zum

We concern ourselves with the historical Jesus to avoid docetism or "mysticism." The historical Jesus is approached from the pre-supposition of the kerygma, and therefore the dogmatic principle from Kähler in fact maintains its effective force: "Christ himself is the originator of the biblical picture of the Christ."

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CHAPTER VIII

The Quest & the Teaching Material of Jesus:

The New Quest that Was

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On the other side of the Atlantic the question of the historical Jesus was, also, taking on extreme importance, but in a very different manner even if it was informed by the same methodological procedures of source, form, and redaction criticism associated with the Bultmannians and post-Bultmannians in West Germany.

In fact, Norman Perrin reverses the concern expressed by Käsemann. Rather than the question being whether the historical Jesus stands in continuity with the kerygmatic Christ, here the question is whether the kerygmatic Christ is consistent with the historical Jesus.

Desinteressement am irdischen Jesus führen dürften. Damit würde nicht nur das urchristliche Anliegen der Identität des erhöhten mit dem erniedrigten Herrn verkannt oder doketistisch entleert, sondern auch übersehen, daß es nun doch Stücke in der synoptischen Überlieferung gibt, welche der Historiker als authentisch einfach anzuerkennen hat, wenn er Historiker bleiben will. Worum es mir geht, ist der Aufweis, daß aus dem Dunkel der Historie Jesu charakteristische Züge seiner Verkündigung verhältnismäßig scharf erkennbar heraustreten und die Urchristenheit ihre eigene Botschaft damit vereinte. Die Problematik unseres Problems besteht darin, daß der erhöhte Herr das Bild des irdischen fast aufgesogen hat und die Gemeinde dennoch die Identität des erhöhten mit dem irdischen behauptet. Die Lösung dieser Problematik aber kann nach unsern Feststellungen aussichtsvoll nicht von vermeintlich historischen bruta facta, sondern einzig von der Verbindung und Spannung zwischen der Predigt Jesu und der seiner Gemeinde her angegriffen werden. Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus ist legitim die Frage nach der Kontinuität des Evangeliums in der Diskontinuität der Zeiten und in der Variation des Kerygmas."

Indeed, we would go further than Käsemann, who against Bultmann still wants to explore the question of continuity between the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ, for we would limit the question of continuity to the question of whether the Christ proclaimed in a form of the kerygma is consistent with the historical Jesus.¹

By means of the application of three criteria, Perrin proceeds to isolate from within the synoptic gospels² that material which can be attributed to the teaching of the historical Jesus. These criteria are: 1) the criterion of dissimilarity:

. . . the earliest form of a saying we can reach may be regarded as authentic if it can be shown to be dissimilar to characteristic emphases both of ancient Judaism and of the early Church, and this will particularly be the case where Christian tradition oriented towards Judaism can be shown to have modified the saying away from its original emphasis.³

2) The criterion of coherence: ". . . material from the earliest strata of the tradition may be accepted as authentic if it can be shown to cohere with material established as authentic by means of the criterion of dissimilarity."⁴ Less enthusiastically employed is 3) the criterion of multiple attestation (from C.H. Dodd): "This is a proposal to accept as authentic material which is

¹Norman Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus (New York: Harper and Row, Pub., 1967), p. 234.

²The gospel of John is not considered to be a reliable historical source. See Ibid., p. 48.

³Ibid., p. 39. As indicated above, the German discussion accepts a similar criterion (See Bultmann's above, pp. 33-34 and Käsemann's, p. 48, which in fact Perrin has simply taken over), and see Kümmel, "Jesusforschung seit 1959," pp. 43-44.

⁴Perrin, Rediscovering, p. 43.

attested in all, or most, of the sources which can be discerned behind the synoptic gospels."¹

These criteria do not make the judgment of authenticity easy, however. We recall how Käsemann claims that the εγὼ δὲ λέγω of Mt. 5f. indicates a claim to authority next to, or in opposition to, Moses. This difference from any other Rabbi or prophet justifies the claim, he maintains,² for its authenticity. Furthermore, it carries the weight for Käsemann that, even without personally claiming to be the Messiah, this authority justifies the early church making that claim for him, i.e., this is the core of the continuity between history and kerygma for Käsemann and what prevents the kerygma from being mere docetism or "mysticism." But the question coming from Perrin would be: Does this use of εγὼ δὲ λέγω not in fact demonstrate the theological vision of the author of Matthew, i.e., is it able to be identified as itself from the early church?

For Perrin suggest:

A major emphasis of the gospel of Matthew is . . . that the present of Jesus is the fulfillment of the past of Judaism. The teaching of Jesus fulfills the Torah, and the events of this life fulfill what the prophets speak of. . . . Of course, it is commonplace of Christian apologetic that Jesus fulfilled the Jewish scriptures, but Matthew carries the fulfillment of the Jewish revelation in Jesus to new heights with these careful formula quotations, none of which have parallels in his sources, Mark and Q. They are clearly important to him, and also to us in attempting to understand his gospel. For Matthew it is not a returning to the Torah and the Prophets in Jesus.

¹Ibid., p. 45.

²See Käsemann, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus," p. 206, and above, pp. 48-49.

Another way Matthew makes this same point is by organizing the teaching of Jesus into five major discourses and their formula endings inevitably recalls the five books of the Torah and necessarily implies that here is the new Torah, the new revelation that supersedes the old.¹

The perception of the kerygma as the New Torah is the scandal of/for Matthew, and the εγὼ δὲ λέγω is expressing the escalation of the law as Matthew understands it. It is true, then, as Käsemann claims, that here we have a claim that cannot be made by a Jew, but Käsemann failed to see that it was a claim made not by Jesus but by the early church.

A further indication of the contrast between Käsemann and Perrin is that Perrin identifies only the 4th and 5th antitheses (and then only as they can be "reconstructed") from the Sermon on the Mount as belonging to the authentic teaching material from Jesus.² Käsemann, on the other hand, suggests that the first, second, and fourth are authentic.³ The point here is not for us to decide who is correct. It is to note how Perrin concentrates not on the claim of Messiahship for the person Jesus, but on the language. He suggests that this material belongs to

. . . the most radical of the proverbial sayings of Jesus. Indeed, they are so radical that they shatter the form of proverbial saying altogether and become something quite different. Where proverbial sayings normally reflect upon life in the world and are

¹Norman Perrin, The New Testament: An Introduction (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1974), pp. 173-174.

²Perrin, Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom, p. 41.

³Käsemann, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus," p. 206.

concerned, as Beardslee puts it, "to make a continuous whole out of one's existence," these sayings shatter the whole idea of orderly existence in the world.¹

Here we see that Perrin would agree with the process, when not with the content, of Käsemann's observation of Jesus:

There is no question concerning the fact that Jesus did not defend a metaphysical dualism . . . or that he knew himself to be sent not to fight the devil, but to serve humanity. This is enough for us to formulate our first conclusion: Jesus was able to pass over the wording of the Torah and the authority of Moses out of his scandalizing sovereignty. This sovereignty shook not only the foundations of late Judaism and caused decisively thereby his death, but destroyed in addition the world-view of antiquity with its antithesis between cult and profanity and its demonology.²

That the teaching material of the historical Jesus calls all Weltanschauungen into question is something to which Perrin would certainly agree, but he would leave this calling into question of our attempts to "organize the world according to Weltanschauungen or Ideologie" to the power, function, and claim not of the person of Jesus as Messiah, as Käsemann wishes to claim, but to the language itself.

Perrin's work on the language from the historical Jesus is contained in his book Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom in

¹Perrin, Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom, p. 51.

²Käsemann, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus," p. 208. This is my translation of: "Es ist keine Frage, daß Jesus keinen metaphysischen Dualismus vertreten hat . . . und sich nicht zur Bekämpfung des Teufels, sondern zum Dienst am Menschen gesandt wußte. Doch mag das genügen, um unser erstes Ergebnis zu formulieren: Jesus hat mit einer unerhörten Souveränität am Wortlaut der Tora und der Autorität des Moses vorübergehen können. Diese Souveränität erschüttert nicht nur die Grundlagen des Spätjudentums und verursacht darum entscheidend seinen Tod, sondern hebt darüber hinaus die Weltanschauung der Antike mit ihrer Antithesis von kultisch und profan und ihrer Dämonologie aus den Angeln."

relation explicitly to the functioning of the symbol of the Kingdom of God in this language. He indicates that this symbol is one having extremely deep roots in the tradition, and Jesus has employed the symbol in all of its suggestiveness and surplus of meanings to "force" his hearer to call his/her world into question and to seek a new gestalt. He commences his analysis, however, with a warning which must be heeded:

It will be argued . . . that the extensive discussion of Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus has been bedeviled by the fact that scholars have thought of Kingdom of God as a conception rather than as a symbol. Conceptions are very different things from symbols, and one asks very different questions about them. For almost a hundred years scholars have been asking questions about Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus that have proven unanswerable; I shall argue . . . that they are unanswerable precisely because they are questions which are only proper, if Kingdom of God is a conception, which it is not.

He is warning us against asserting the "what" (or the content) of the symbol as either a "steno" symbol (one that has a univocal and universal meaning) or as a "speculative idea," i.e., in both instances against the attempt to state the "what" of the Kingdom of God in an exhaustive conception. [In Chapter II, however, it will be suggested that a "conceptual" understanding may be of an entirely different order.] Rather than an attempt to provide an exhaustive definition of "what" the symbol of the Kingdom of God means, a "conceptual" understanding may be a clarification of "how" the symbol may work.

At this point, however, it is valuable to represent Perrin's discussion of the historical critical study of this symbol.

¹Perrin, Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom, pp. 5-6.

Originally the symbol of God's kingship was shared by all the ancient Middle Eastern religions, for it evoked the "cosmogonic myth" of God as creator of the world, king over his creation, and source of the annual renewal of the fertility of the earth (symbolic of the constant struggle between God and the principle of death and devastation for control of the earth). The Canaanite people's religion was in relationship to such a cosmogonic myth as an agricultural people. Though the people of Israel occupied the land of Canaan at least in part by 1100 B.C.E., it was not until the rise of the monarchy with David and Solomin (1000 to 922 B.C.E.) that this symbol of God's kingship over creation came to attain significance for them.¹ It appears in several

¹There are, of course, those who would not accept Perrin's "neat" separation of King-consciousness on the part of Israel between a pre- and post-monarchical phenomenon. Among these is Klaus Baltzer, Old Testament scholar at the university in Munich. He wishes to argue in Die Biographie der Propheten that the beginning of the prophetic tradition reaches back to the charismatic leaders and influences what occurs in the period of the Judges before its "classic" manifestation at the time of the monarchy (See pp. 194-5; see, as well, Walter Wifall, "Israel's Prophets: Viziers of the King" in Biblical Theology Bulletin, 10/4 (1980), pp. 169-175.). The strongest integrating element of this tradition, which he identifies down into the New Testament, is what he calls the "Ideal biography." The Ideal biography is not to be understood as a biography or autobiography as we would understand it today. The private life of the individual is not its goal, but rather it intends to present the public, and, above all, the public service performed by the individual. The "outline" of the Ideal biography is for all intents and purposes from the time of installation in the "office" to death (p. 20). The Ideal biography has its roots in ancient Egypt (Baltzer finds an early model in Rekhmi-R, vizier to the Egyptian king 1490-1436 B.C.E.) (pp. 137f.). This literary form, consisting of 1) title and geneology of the installee, 2) call of the installee, 3) place and time of the installation, 4) audience before the installer, 5) words of installation, 6) area of responsibility, 7) duty instructions, 8) instructions for the particular situation, 9) words of encouragement, and 10) performance in office (p. 193), indicates, well before

Psalms, called "enthronement Psalms," from this period: notably 47; 93; 96; 97; 98; and the 99th. Not until the rise of their own monarchy could the symbol of God as king evoke any real significance for the Israelite nation.

The "constituting" myth of the Israelite people, however, from the time of the amphictyony until the rise of the monarchy (the amphictyonic period extending from the time of the establishing of sanctuaries in Palestine following the "occupation" down to the formation of the monarchy; these tribal sanctuaries played an important role in the religious consciousness of the people even after Joshua convinced them of the significance of the central sanctuary at Schechem and of the priority of Yahwism) was that of the "salvation history" myth found in the ancient credos of the Old Testament: the earliest available form of which is to be found in Deuteronomy 26:5-11. The central significance of this myth for the people of Israel was its representing God's activity on behalf of his people in history.

These two myths, the "cosmogonic" and the "salvation history," were brought together probably during the reign of Solomon with the writing of the Yahwist narrative known as the "J" source.

Israel had a monarchy of its own, that its leaders were "installed in office" after the model of the royal court in Egypt. There are differences found in Israel, to be sure. Israel understood its "monarch" to be God. The installation of the charismatic leader, Judge, prophet placed them in direct contact with this monarch--this was not so of the political monarch (p. 92). That Israel symbolically represented its God as king prior to its having a political monarchy of its own, however, does not destroy the main thrust of Perrin's argument, i.e., that in Israel the two myth strands of the "cosmogonic" and the "Heilsgeschichte" were here brought together.

This was the first narrative account of the history of the Jewish people stretching from the creation down to the occupation of the land of Canaan. As the "constitutive history" of the Davidic monarchy, it sketched the history of Israel in terms of the promise to the patriarch Abraham of the land, and the Yahwist writer(s) had come to understand the Davidic monarchy as the ultimate fulfillment of this promise by Yahweh. All of creation was understood to have been leading to this achievement by the people of Israel.

In this narrative we find the bringing together of the cosmogonic myth of creation and the lordship of Yahweh with the "salvation history" myth of the promise to the patriarchs, the descent into Egypt, deliverance, Sinai, the wilderness experience, and the occupation of the land. Further, in the Yahwistic narrative we find the combination of this documentation of God's activity on behalf of his people announced as of significance for all nations.

With the combination of these two myths, the symbol Kingdom of God came to evoke the activity of God on behalf of his people perhaps more than it evoked the meaning of the old cosmogonic myth (Certainly the suggestion from Baltzer that from the time of the Judges God "installed" the prophetic/charismatic leaders of Israel would imply an understanding of the divine reality as providing for the needs of the people of God in his role as "monarch" indicating a priority of the Heilsgeschichte.). Creation has come to be understood as itself an activity by God on behalf of his people, so that the symbol of God as king from the cosmogonic myth came to be tied directly to the meaning evoked in the salvation history myth. This "J" source, then, serving as the "backbone"

for the combination with the "E" source from the Northern Kingdom, succeeded in combining the ideas of kingship in relation to the Israelite understanding of God and the salvation history.

As the people of Israel endured the vicissitudes of their history, following the arrival of Alexander the Great in 333 B.C.E. and the shifting of their fortunes between the subsequent Ptolemaic kingdom in Egypt and the Seleucid kingdom to the north (The victory of the Macabees in 187 B.C.E. only was followed a century later by the dashing of the hopes of the people of Israel for perpetual peace and prosperity under their own rule as Pompei arrived in 63 B.C.E. What had been thought to be the promised restoration of the Davidic monarchy, in a kingdom that for the first time since David reached the equivalent territorial extensiveness, was destroyed.), the symbol of the Kingdom of God and the myth(s) it evoked of the activity of God, sustaining, assisting, and protecting his people, increasingly escalated in its meaning. Where in the past the tragedies of their historical situation were interpreted by the prophets (also by the Deuteronomists) as the punishment by God for their apostasy, and the periods of growth and prosperity were associated with renewal of the covenant, the expectation increased that God would make a decisive act on behalf of his people, which would mean the destruction of the Gentiles, decisively smashing the forces of evil, and once-and-for-all inaugurate the Kingdom of God--with his people, of course, at the head of all creation.

Recent work on the apocalyptic tradition in Israel confirms the thesis presented here from Perrin that this tradition is

coherent with earlier eschatological expectations of the pre-exilic prophetic tradition, but responding to a "new context." For example, ". . . apocalyptic eschatology is the mode assumed by the prophetic tradition once it had been transferred to a new and radically altered setting in the post-exilic community."¹ Paul Hanson provides concise definitions of prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology:

Prophetic eschatology we define as a religious perspective which focuses on the prophetic announcement to the nation of the divine plans for Israel and the world which the prophet has witnessed unfolding in the divine council and which he translates into the terms of plain history, real politics, and human instrumentality; that is, the prophet interprets for the king and the people how the plans of the divine council will be effected within the context of their nation's history and the history of the world.

Apocalyptic eschatology we define as a religious perspective which focuses on the disclosure (usually esoteric in nature) to the elect of the cosmic vision of Yahweh's sovereignty--especially as it relates to his acting to deliver his faithful--which disclosure the visionaries have largely ceased to translate into the terms of plain history, real politics, and human instrumentality due to a pessimistic view of reality growing out of the bleak post-exilic conditions within which those associated with the visionaries found themselves. Those conditions seemed unsuitable to them as a context for the envisioned restoration of Yahweh's people.

These definitions attempt to specify the essential difference between prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology: the prophets, affirming the historical realm as a suitable context for divine activity, understood it as their task to translate the vision of divine activity from the cosmic level to the level of the politico-historical realm of everyday life. The visionaries, disillusioned with the historical realm, disclosed their vision in a manner of growing indifference to and independence from the contingencies of the politico-historical realm, thereby leaving the language increasingly in the idiom of the cosmic realm of the divine warrior and his council.

¹Paul Hanson, The Dawn of Apocalyptic (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1975), p. 10. The important thesis stressed by Hanson is that apocalyptic eschatology in Israel is not to be explained as a result of Persian dualism, but is already deeply rooted in its own tradition. See Ibid., pp. 5f., pp. 402f.

Despite this difference in the form of prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology, it must be emphasized that the essential vision of restoration persists in both, the vision of Yahweh's people restored as a holy community in a glorified Zion. It is this basic continuity which compels us to speak of one unbroken strand extending throughout the history of prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology.

Again, however, what is claimed by Paul Hanson, as in the case of Klaus Baltzer above, is a difference of dating and not a difference of basic thesis from Norman Perrin's suggestion. Perrin wishes to claim that in the apocalyptic literature there is an escalation of the imagery suggesting a literal, decisive act on the part of the divine reality to destroy the enemy and the old and to inaugurate the new by restoring the people of God to their rightful place at the head of all creation. This basic thesis in apocalyptic is not denied by Hanson, it is only placed in its origin in the immediate post-exilic age in III Isaiah:

The basic hopes of the prophetic circle thus remained in essence the same from the time shortly after the ministry of Second Isaiah to the period of oppression represented by the present oracle /III Isaiah/. But the context within which the fulfillment was to occur had shifted from the context of the real historical events of the nation Israel--both within her community and with foreign nations--to a context which seems detached from participation in the political order. The effort to relate the activity of the deity to the events of plain history has been abandoned. Myth has provided a means of envisioning the restoration on a plane insulated against the frustrations of an historical order which had demonstrated itself to the visionaries to be completely hostile. Though the presence of the prophetic promise is thus retained, the relinquishment of the task of interpreting the prophetic message and the corresponding vocation of the

¹Ibid., pp. 11-12.

chosen people within the historical context heralds the death of prophecy and the birth of apocalyptic eschatology.¹

This rise of an apocalyptic understanding for this symbol occurred during the reign of the Macabees and subsequently the representation made in the writing of the Wisdom of ben Sereach (180 B.C.E.) and the book of Daniel.² Among the apocalyptic sects which developed (the Qumran sect being one among many with its War Scroll describing the final battle between the Jews and the Gentiles where the latter would be decisively crushed and God would once-and-for-all establish his reign), the symbol of the Kingdom of God escalated in its meaning to signify this decisive final act on the part of God for his people.

¹Ibid., p. 161. Epistemologically (i.e., Phenomenologically), the naive distinction here between myth and history can not be maintained as Chapter II below entitled "On Metaphor, Symbol, and Myth" and Chapter III's discussion of intentional consciousness wishes to demonstrate. "History" is "myth," i.e., an ordering (or in the natural sciences a heuristic modelling). At the core of myth is symbol/metaphor which, by means of the "is"/"is not," points to the priority of movement/act rather than conventionality/order/stasis in experience. Hence, a simple distinction between myth as static and history as dynamic can not be maintained. We are no longer able to approach history positivistically, as Gadamer has decisively demonstrated. Phenomenologically we can speak of an "objective correlate," but one that we approximate "adequately" (more or less) rather than grasp indubitably. The choice, then, becomes one of between metaphors, between symbols, i.e., between myths.

²Paul Hanson, as indicated, disagrees. He suggests that Second Isaiah is "proto-apocalyptic," Third Isaiah and Zechariah (late 6th to 5th century B.C.E.) are to be seen as "early apocalyptic," arising out of conflicting understandings of the "how" of the restoration. Though Zechariah itself is not, in contrast to Hartmut Gese's judgment, to be understood as "the oldest and best known apocalypse" (Ibid., p. 250). Rather Zechariah 9-14 are two "early apocalyptic booklets" redacted into a prophetic eschatological program offering the eschaton of the "visionaries," but the temple and court cult program of the "realists" (See Ibid., pp. 245f., especially 251-252). "Full blow apocalyptic" arises with the visionaries of the second century.

Yet this apocalyptic understanding of the symbol was not the only understanding which the symbol evoked among the people of Israel. In order to distinguish this second meaning, Perrin introduces a distinction between "steno" and "tensive" symbols:

A symbol can have a one-to-one relationship to that which it represents, such as the mathematical symbol π , in which case it is, in Wheelwright's terms, a "steno-symbol," or it can have a set of meanings that can neither be exhausted nor adequately expressed by any one referent, in which case it is a "tensive symbol."¹

Steno symbols predominate in apocalyptic. Hence, these symbols involve a once-and-for-allness to their meaning which is to be exhausted in their fulfilment in the event which they anticipate.

Indicative that apocalyptic, steno symbols did not completely prevail in consciousness at the time of Jesus is the use of the Kaddish prayer in the synagogue. Here the symbol of God's Kingdom is invoked within a structure remarkably similar to the Lord's prayer, i.e., in a manner which indicates it is still working in terms of the ancient salvation history myth:

Magnified and sanctified be his
great name in the world that he
has created according to his will.
May he establish his kingdom in your
lifetime and in your days and in
the lifetime of all the house of
Israel, even speedily and at a
near time.²

God is here being invoked to act on behalf of his people, but here the symbol/myth is speaking to each individual uniquely, resulting

¹Perrin, Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom, p. 30.

²Ibid., p. 28.

in its "surplus of meaning" functioning in the life-world context of the individual as well as for "the house of Israel" as a whole. In any case, here the symbol is open to more than the single meaning found in apocalyptic.

It is in this context that the symbol of the Kingdom of God is used in the teaching of Jesus. In the material here, the symbol of the Kingdom of God is of decisive, if not central, importance. In the kingdom sayings the symbol is functioning to evoke the ancient myth of God's activity on behalf of his people; in the proverbial sayings, that activity is understood as challenging the order and structure of the hearer's world; and in the specific perenetical material, forcing the hearer to respond in judgment upon his/her world; in the parables, all either explicitly or implicitly speaking of the Kingdom of God, we find this challenge to "world" heightened by a particularly powerful pedagogical tool; while the Lord's prayer in Luke evokes the kingdom as intimately concerned with the sustaining of, and providing for, the people in their everyday lives by the divine reality.

Betrayed in all of these applications of the symbol in the teaching material of the historical Jesus is the possibility of our understanding it as evoking the salvation history myth of ancient Israel, i.e., disclosing the activity of God not in the steno symbolism of apocalyptic but in terms of tensive symbolism. There is enough cohesiveness provided by our understanding the symbol as working in this manner within this material to justify our interpreting the symbol thus. The claim is made that we have

sufficient material, and that the self-understanding of the "world" of this material, allows our employing such an interpretive judgment that the symbol is here working precisely as a tensive symbol. It will be the symbol's disclosive power for our "world" that will either justify or deny our understanding of the symbol in this manner.

Perrin's discussion of the symbol in the teaching material coming from Jesus places before the contemporary theologian two questions: 1) Is this symbolic language alive, dead, or dormant; and 2) is the salvation history myth, which mediates its claim to speak of the "inner meaning of the universe and of human life,"¹ is this myth alive, dead, or dormant?² The subsequent chapters of this present project seek to attempt an answer to these questions.

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Summary

This review of, in fact, five approaches to the "problem of the historical Jesus" in our century allows us to state the following:  The analysis of the new quest that was not may be summarized as follows:

1) The beginning of the 20th century saw two significant influences regarding the question of the historical Jesus: a) that represented by Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer, i.e., that the historical Jesus was fundamentally an apocalyptic seer, unable himself to introduce the Kingdom of God, but possessing a self-consciousness as Messiah and the expectation that the Kingdom would

¹Ibid., p. 22.

²Ibid., p. 202.

come in the life-time of his generation; and b) we have the two principles from Martin Kähler: i) "historical facts which first have to be established by science cannot as such become experiences of faith," i.e., the Christian faith and a history of Jesus (or the search for "historical knowledge" concerning Jesus) repel each other like oil and water, and ii) "Christ himself is the originator of the biblical picture of the Christ."

2) The exegetical insights gained by form and redaction criticism, particularly in the work of Rudolf Bultmann, in relationship to the question of the historical Jesus had equally two dimensions: a) that the historical Jesus of Weiss and Schweitzer is more a Jesus of the early Christian community, i.e., Jesus himself is to be understood as a prophet and did not see, or claim to be, himself the Messiah; and b) in terms of Christian faith, however, the historical Jesus is a presupposition, "das Daß," with the theological task being that of demythologizing the Christian kerygma that the hearer today be confronted with the proper "call to decision."

3) Ernst Fuchs and Gerhard Ebeling follow Bultmann, but go further in that they claim (following Kähler's second principle that "Christ himself is the originator of the biblical picture of Christ") that Jesus and the Christ are one and the same: the kerygma is a word-event, Jesus is a word-event, they both have to do with the same reality, God, and, therefore, they ultimately coincide for the believer.

4) Ernst Käsemann perceived the docetism and "mysticism" inherent or explicit in the work of Bultmann, Ebeling and Fuchs, and

argues for at least historical continuity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. There are certainly differences between the two, but the Jesus of history does not contradict (he actually confirms) the later judgments made by the early Christian community concerning his person as Messiah.

The analysis of the new quest that was may be summarized as follows:

~~5~~ Norman Perrin takes a decisive step beyond Käsemann concerning the historical Jesus. The fundamental criterion employed to "isolate" the teaching material of Jesus is that of "discontinuity." He concludes that in fact that provides enough material (contrary to the judgment of Käsemann) to allow us to obtain a comprehensive understanding concerning this material as it is informed by the symbol of the Kingdom of God, a symbol deeply rooted in Jesus' (and our) tradition.

The difference between the position of Käsemann and that of the American discussion led by Perrin, Crossan, Tannehill, Via,¹ and others rests upon a distinction between the authority of the person as Messiah and the authority/power/challenge of the language. The American discussion has moved beyond source, form, and redaction criticism to engage, in addition, literary criticism and linguistics in relation to the text.

This present project proceeds by accepting the new direction in hermeneutics represented in the work of Gadamer and Ricoeur, i.e., that we are "on this side of" the text and that the hermeneutical

¹See, for example, John Dominic Crossan, In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus (New York: Harper and Row, 1973); Robert C. Tannehill, The Sword of His Mouth (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975); and Dan Otto Via, Jr. The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967).

task is the disclosing of the world "in front of" the text, rather than making the intention(s) of the author the ruling criterion for understanding.

An important question was also presented at the beginning of this Chapter: does the authority of this material, identifiable as the "primary" material of our tradition, rest on an authority claim for the person of Jesus to be in some sense the Messiah, or does its authority rest in the continuing power of this language to speak to us today?

Based upon my understanding of the hermeneutical situation in general (again, as that is informed by Gadamer and Ricoeur) and upon the actual condition of our contemporary relationship to these specific texts and the question of the historical Jesus, I find the importance of this material not to rest on a claim that Jesus, the Messiah, said these words, but to be its continued ability and functioning to call us and our understanding of world into question today, and, in addition, to inform our search for understanding in our lives/epoch.

Käsemann insists that ". . . neither our sources nor the insights we have gained from what has gone before permit us to substitute the historical Jesus for the exalted Lord."¹ I find that

¹Käsemann, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus," p. 203. See, as well, above, p. 47. The task, however, is not one of substitution, but to perceive and preserve tension (to "stretch" Ricoeur's tension theory). As Ricoeur suggests: "We certainly have not preserved all the parables of Jesus, but the selection which has been made by the tradition of the church seems to be enough to let a common pattern of sense appear" (*Semeia* 4, p. 100). The parables themselves must be taken as a whole, Ricoeur suggests, when we are

a false alternative. We are not confronted with a choice between the historical person, Jesus, and the exalted Christ of faith. We are confronted with multiple layers of tradition, stories, myths, symbols, metaphors, allegories, analogies, and legends in our tradition, and, on the other hand, we are constantly being forced to try to come to some understanding of human experience in the world and in relationship to ultimate reality. This is not just any world in general. It is the specific world of our experiences as individuals and in community today. The tradition offers us incredible variety as aide for our attempts to understand our world and our responsibilities. It would be false to claim that the truth of our tradition forces us to decide between one form, or collection, of articulations over others, when in "fact" what occurs is that the richness of the tradition calls us into question, and we will retell those stories, myths, employ those symbols, metaphors, etc., that help us to understand who we are. We cannot afford to reduce the variety of the tradition! It may tomorrow call us into question in a new way, or our experience(s) may demand the use of other stories, myths, symbols, metaphors, etc., for our understanding tomorrow.

Hence, the choice between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith is, I believe, a false choice: we need both, und noch mehr!

to approach this "common pattern of sense," but that is no claim that this "common pattern of sense" is the ultimate truth of the tradition to replace all other hermeneutical processes. It is one among many.

On the other hand, what we have of the historical Jesus is not a biography, not a claim of authority on the basis of his being the Messiah, but a collection of teachings and linguistic material with a central symbol informed by their "horizon" (its myth and including the knowable activities of Jesus' ministry, e.g., the table fellowship and association with outcasts). It is this material, however, which above all calls us into question, and not the person of Jesus as Messiah. There is nothing about the actions or teaching of Jesus, that we can with relative security identify, that would lead us to have to, or even want to, make a claim about either a special or exceptional relationship between himself and the divine reality which we would then name as Messianic (hence, removing the enabling of certain possibilities of Being-in-the-world for ourselves which would be completely in contrast with the claim of the language of this teaching material).

In addition, as said above, we know enough about the dangers in assuming we know the intention of the author for us to claim, from what material we do have, what is/was the intention of Jesus. Therefore, the choice is not the comfortable claim: "Now we can finally relax, we have the 'real' historical Jesus." Neither our tradition nor our experience affords us the luxury of assuming that we have arrived at the final, authoritative, and absolute truth! The hermeneutical process is an open-ended process, because life is open-ended.

A final word, then, about the implied pluralism/relativism in this project. Pluralism/relativism does not mean solipsism.

I may not at whim create my own world or my own tradition. There is structure to my/our experience, and that applies not only to our encounter of a world in the present. It includes the fact that we are in a tradition that claims us. We should not assume that pluralism/relativism leaves us with nothing to say, or with no claims to make. The hermeneutical situation forces us to raise our prejudices and presuppositions to consciousness and to examine them for their adequacy--but the options are not unlimited. That is the dialogue of faith. We must engage in the dialogue for the sake of truth, i.e., for the sake of understanding.

The Chapters of this project which follow are an attempt to clarify at least some of the presuppositions of this author (to the extent that they can as yet be articulated) at work in his reading of the soteriological implications of the symbol of the Kingdom of God in this teaching material of the historical Jesus. The task, now, is to obtain a clearer understanding of what a symbol is, i.e., how do symbols function?