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Hermeneutical and Theological
Presuppositions of the New
Quest for the Historical Jesus

by Hans Weder, B.D.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Philosophy
in the
University of St. Andrews

Zürich, 19th January, 1974



I hereby testify that I myself composed this thesis;
that the work of which it is a record has been done by
myself, and that it has not been accepted in any previous
application for a higher degree.

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I hereby testify that this thesis has been composed and written in accordance with the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations of the University of St. Andrews.

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A Statement of Higher Study and Research

In 1966 I began my studies in Divinity at the University of Zürich. I did the first examination ("propädeutisches Examen") in October 1968 (magna cum laude) and the final examination ("theologisches Schlussexamen") in September 1971 (B.D., summa cum laude). During my student days at the University of Zürich, I worked as an assistant of Prof.Dr.E.Schweizer (New Testament) for one year.

I worked in a parish near Zürich from October 1971 till September 1972 and I was ordained for the ministry of the Church in June 1972.

I was admitted to St.Mary's College, The University of St.Andrews, under General Ordinance No. 12 and began my terms of residence in October 1972.

Hans Weder

Preface

The field of different disciplines covered in this paper is far too wide for a beginner. Consequently the following considerations bear the mark of a sketch.

Although the field is far too wide, I think it is of utmost importance that beginners are given a chance to escape for once the laws of specialization. The following paper is my attempt to find my own way through a set of problems which I hold to be one of the most decisive in modern theology and through which it is vital for any student of theology to find his own way.

The footnotes are in no way complete, the literature referred to is in no way representative. It is rather a selection, governed by the needs of finding that way through. The footnotes, then, merely indicate the communal character of thinking.

It is almost impertinent, when a German-speaking student undertakes to write a thesis like this in English. But for me it has been a most welcome opportunity to learn about the ways of thinking in a theological climate different from that on the continent. It would not have been possible to achieve that aim without the help of my teachers and my fellow students at St. Mary's College.

Especially I should like to thank very much for the help of my supervisor, Dr. E. Best, who never stopped

encouraging me with his wide knowledge of the field involved, and with his refreshing sense of humour. I should like to thank as well Prof.Dr.M.Black, the Principal of St.Mary's College, for his kind advice. My thanks also belong to Dr.A.J.M.Wedderburn and Mr. Iain Torrance who shared in the task of correcting grammatical mistakes in the provisional manuscript.

The literature is quoted in abbreviated form. The abbreviations refer to the bibliography (see below, pp. 223-229).

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1.0 The Significance of the Quest for Jesus

Christian faith and Christian theology have always been concerned in some way with the figure of Jesus. As far as the statement just made goes there is general agreement among modern scholars. The problems arise, however, when we try to say in what way the figure of Jesus is meaningful for Christian faith and theology. Still further problems are caused if we ask what we mean by "the figure of Jesus". It is the goal of this paper to think about these two crucial questions.

To enter the whole area of the problems I think it best to report the main reasons for theology to ask after Jesus.

1.1 Why does theology ask after Jesus ?

The Christian faith has an intimate relation to history, because it believes in a God acting in history. Therefore faith is forced to look for its God in history. It cannot look elsewhere without ceasing to be this particular faith. God is by definition to be found in history. Christianity "depends upon a valuation of historical events as the medium of God's self-revelation in action"¹.

1) Cf. Dodd, History, pp. 11ff, especially pp.22f.

This rather general way of speaking, however, is not quite accurate. Christianity is indeed a historical faith, but in a very particular sense. It is not just any event or any series of events which our faith has such an intimate relation to. It is rather a particular history that is so important: a history of God's actions focused in the life and death of Jesus Christ.¹ At this very point, though, the complexity of the relation to history becomes obvious. What kind of historical enquiry is adequate to deal with that historical figure? Is it a historical question at all? Or what other tools do we have to learn about Jesus Christ? A few of these problems will be analysed below. For the moment it suffices to state the enormous interest of Christian theology in the "figure of Jesus Christ", whatever we mean by this expression.

There is yet another reason why theology is so much interested in Jesus. Not only is our faith a "historical faith", but also it is the particular character of Christian theology that it is concerned with christology. Actually Christian theology is christology. Contemporary theology holds axiomatically that we can only speak about God by speaking about Jesus Christ. For it belongs to the

1) Cf. Dodd, op.cit., "Obviously it does not mean that any striking episode in history ... may be indifferently regarded as the self-revealing act of God, ..." (p.23). It does not mean that God can be known from an inductive examination of general history (p.24). Christianity is concerned with the life of Jesus (p.19); cf. also Anderson, Jesus, p.307 and passim; Hanson, "Enterprise", p.68 and many others.

foundations of faith that God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ.¹ Therefore, every theology finds its foundation in christology. Christology itself has a constitutive relationship to Jesus.² Even more, a contemporary dogmatician can say that "Jesus is the criterion of Christology"³. Christological ideas and formulas are expressed to describe who Jesus really was. They have, therefore, to undergo the test of adequacy. And in this context the Jesus of history becomes important, because christology is looking for a criterion which is not just another (perhaps more ancient or more modern) christology. Christology wants to be measured by its own subject and to be judged by what it intends to describe.

Another important reason for the great interest in Jesus is to be mentioned. The Christian apostles and preachers have always confessed and proclaimed that the Christian faith does not begin with itself. Just as a Christian community cannot be founded on the visions of an apostle,⁴ so it cannot be founded on the faith or feeling of any other human being. Christian faith comes out of $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\eta$ ⁵; an $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\eta$ which consists of the "wonderful

1) Cf. e.g. Dodd, History, pp.33.35: "In the coming of Jesus Christ, . . . , the prophecies have been fulfilled and the Kingdom of God revealed."

2) Cf. Ebeling, "The Question of the Historical Jesus", p.288.

3) Cf. Ebeling, op.cit., p.289 (italics mine).

4) Cf. Paul's making a strict difference between his "visions" (2Cor 12) and the appearance of Christ (Gal 1f), on the former one cannot build a church, but on the latter.

5) Cf. Rom 10,6ff, especially 10,17.

deeds of God" making possible faith in that God. What God did for man must not be identified with man's response to it (faith); on the contrary, God's action has to remain separated for the sake of that very faith.¹ The question is, then: Where are we to search for that action of God, which sets before us the possibility of faith? The answer to this question represents another reason for our interest in the Jesus of history. If we are looking for the actions of God not invented by human minds, it is obvious that we look at the field of history. And, more sharply, since history is the only place where we find events not invented by human minds, this seems to be the only place to look for a criterion of faith.² "An event or series of events in the life of someone who was an historical figure ... can serve much more effectively as a norm of faith ..."³ So, we look into the history of Jesus in order to find both a criterion^{and} a basis of faith. Both of these important points have been made by E.Käsemann in his famous essay⁴ opening afresh the debate on the "quest of

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- 1) In the recent movement of the "kerygma-theology" we have to point to the danger of confusing God's action with human response. If the kerygma alone (which is an expression of faith) is the criterion of faith, we are in a dangerous circle. Faith is not capable of being a criterion of faith, it is only a criterion of certain ways of faith.
 - 2) Cf. Mcquarrie (quoted from Downing, Church, p.182): "How can we know that it is a genuine possibility that is being set before us, unless it can be pointed out in history?" History, of course, is understood here as a field of events "extra nos".
 - 3) Cf. Hanson, "Enterprise", p.68.
 - 4) "Das Problem des historischen Jesus", ZThK 51(1954) 125ff.

the historical Jesus". For him, the revelation of God tying itself up with (concrete) history lays the ground for our possibility of decision.¹ God acting in history provides a possibility of faith which is not dependent on faith again. Since faith can only be understood in analogy to "answer", it follows that there must be a "call" inducing that "answer". This "call", namely God's revelation, has been completed within our earthly "bodiness"². Therefore revelation of God is not only a theological but also a historical problem. Käsemann, while describing the aim of the Synoptic gospels, comes to the central point of the whole problem: by telling the story of Jesus, the Synoptics want to show that the "extra nos" of salvation is "given" to faith.³ The phrase "extra nos" indicates that the question of history and faith, of Jesus and the believer, is not only a question of general philosophy or a question of practicability of historical research, but rather a central theological question.⁴ It is the theological problem

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- 1) Käsemann, "Problem", p.139: "... die Kontingenz der Offenbarung, die sich in ihrer Bindung an eine konkrete Historie bekundet, spiegelt die Freiheit des handelnden Gottes und begründet die Möglichkeit unserer Entscheidung."
 - 2) Cf. Käsemann, op.cit., p.140: "... mit der Historie ... auch die irdische Leiblichkeit als Bereich der Offenbarung steht und fällt."
 - 3) Cf. Käsemann, op.cit., p.141: "Sie (sc. the Synoptics) wollen ... das extra nos des Heiles als Vorgegebenheit des Glaubens herausstellen."
 - 4) Cf. Käsemann, op.cit., p.142: "... der Kampf um den historischen Jesus (hat) ein echtes theologisches Problem zu seinem Gegenstande"

of salvation that is at stake here. For the dispute is about whether salvation is achieved by human faith or whether a saving act of God in history enables man to live in freedom and to believe in the grace of God. Closely connected with the "extra nos" of salvation is the problem of a norm of faith already quoted from R.P.C.Hanson.¹ Those two, the "extra nos" of salvation and the criterion of faith appear to be the central theological grounds for the interest in the figure of Jesus.

1.2 The Necessity of a New Foundation for Christian Faith

Until now we have only considered strictly theological motifs for the quest. Christian faith in itself demands our looking for the "extra nos" and guides us to look for it in history.

The present situation of Christian faith, however, is determined by two developments in the general history of thought. There is on the one hand the critique of religion originating in the nineteenth century, which made the search for an "extra nos" urgent in a new way, and on the other hand there is the breakdown of metaphysical philosophy, which - now almost completed - posed the problem of "God-talk" before us in a way never seen before.

1.2.1 The Critique of Religion

I shall confine myself to a short characterization of the

1) See above p.4,n.3.

three main figures concerned with the critique of religion: Feuerbach¹, Marx², and Freud³. All three scholars came to a very similar conclusion, though each of them had a different approach towards the issue.

Ludwig Feuerbach is the theologian among the critics of religion; yet his love for theology "seems to have been an unhappy one, for in effect what he practised was anti-theology"⁴. Nevertheless, his approach to criticism was theological, for he did not intend to abolish theology, but rather his aim was to change the traditional estranged theology into its adequate essence. There is no "extra nos" in religion, an "extra nos" can only be stated with regard to objects approachable by man's senses. While it is the very nature of these objects that they exist outside of man, it is the essence of God, as the object of religion, that he exists inside man.⁵ It is the necessary consequence of this standpoint to "turn theology ... completely and finally into anthropology ..."⁶. Feuerbach was not afraid of drawing such a conclusion, and indeed, he considered the transformation of theology a real progress in the history

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- 1) L. Feuerbach, Das Wesen des Christentums.
 - 2) K. Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right".
 - 3) S. Freud, "Die Zukunft einer Illusion".
 - 4) K. Barth, From Rousseau to Ritschl, p.355.
 - 5) Cf. Feuerbach, Wesen des Christentums, p.38: "Der sinnliche Gegenstand ist ausser dem Menschen da, der religiöse in ihm, ein selbst innerlicher - ...".
 - 6) Cf. Barth, op.cit., p.355.

of mankind.¹ The stage of a theological religion has to be overcome, the sooner the better, since this stage is caused by, and causes, a disunion of man with himself.² In making God an objective being, different as well as independent from man, man deceived himself in relation to his true character and his great value. He attributes values to God that he ought to attribute to himself. Thus, an anthropological religion has to replace a theological one. The former gives us the true insight into the character of man (!), a thought not so far away from modern (extreme) existentialist theology.

The important point which Feuerbach maintains with considerable strength is that God did not make man, but rather man made (and makes) God. This thoroughgoing perversion of any faith in God's creation is an approach towards religion that is common to all the different kinds of this movement of thought. It should be noted that the mentioned perversion is a pure assertion, as axiomatic as the confession of God's creation of the world, and that it does not have any legitimate claim to be more scientific than its opposite.

Feuerbach, however, would not have been prepared to argue about his assumption. He did not want to destroy it,

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- 1) The progress is marked by the analogy of child and adult. "Die Religion ist das kindliche Wesen der Menschheit..." (Feuerbach, Wesen des Christentums, p.40).
 - 2) "Die Religion ist die Entzweiung des Menschen mit sich selbst: er setzt sich Gott als ein ihm entgegengesetztes Wesen gegenüber" (Feuerbach, op.cit., p.65).

for he did not want to extinguish the basis of religion. He rather was committed to bringing back religion to its authentic purpose. He intended to give back to man the faith in the immensity and truth of his own being.¹ "He wanted to turn away from heaven towards the earth, from faith towards love, ... from all, but really all, supernaturalism towards real life."² He aimed to restore the self-consciousness of man which had been lost since man first spoke of God-consciousness.³ That was the "Magnificat"⁴ Feuerbach had chosen to sing. He was not able to see another way to man's self-consciousness than the way of denying any truth in man's consciousness of God. He could not see another way to earth than the way of destroying heaven. He was not able to see a faith originating love. Therefore, he had to criticise the "extra nos" of faith. And he was not the last to do so in history.

Karl Marx put forward a different view of religion. He worked out an explanation of religion that was identical with its destruction. He attempted to explain religion by arguing that it originated from certain social conditions. Being in a "vale of tears"⁵ man produces religion, because

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- 1) "... der Glaube an Gott (ist) daher der Glaube des Menschen an die Unendlichkeit und Wahrheit seines eigenen Wesens..." (Feuerbach, Wesen des Christentums, p.253).
 - 2) Barth, From Rousseau to Ritschl, p.355.
 - 3) "Das Bewusstsein Gottes ist das Selbstbewusstsein des Menschen, die Erkenntnis Gottes die Selbsterkenntnis des Menschen" (Feuerbach, op.cit., p.39).
 - 4) Cf. Barth, op.cit., p.356.
 - 5) Marx, "Contribution", p.44.

he is too weak to stand the heavy burden of his world. Marx, like Feuerbach, held the basic assumption that "man makes religion; religion does not make man"¹. It is important, though, to see the meaning of the concept "man". Man is not the single man, not even a sum of individuals, but "man is the human world, the state, the society"². On the background of general marxist theory according to which conditions make man and not "vice versa", the assumption "Man makes religion" is to be understood in the sense of conditions, states, societies making religion. The same is also indicated by Marx's view that "criticism of religion is ... the embryonic criticism of this vale of tears"³. In any case, religion (including God) is a fabric of a suffering human society. From the point of view of the individual, religion is in fact based on an "extra nos", but this "extra nos" happens to be an entirely worldly one. With regard to mankind (as "world" and "society") there is no "extra nos" in religion at all. Moreover, the "fantastic reality of heaven" is only man's "reflection"⁴, God is only the "semblance"⁵ of man himself. To seek God and to look for

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- 1) He considers this statement "the basis of irreligious criticism"; cf. Marx, "Contribution", p.43.
 - 2) Marx, op.cit., p.43.
 - 3) Marx, op.cit., p.43.
 - 4) "Man who has found in the fantastic reality of heaven, where he sought a supernatural being, only his reflection, will no longer be tempted to find the semblance of himself - a non-human being - where he seeks and must seek his true reality"; cf. Marx, op.cit., p.43.
 - 5) See n.4.

heaven is a temptation that man must resist. Man has no reason for seeking heaven, he has to look for his "true reality"¹. This task, however, seems to be too great for human beings; they have always tended to renounce the "vale of tears" they were not able to bear. By doing so they deceived themselves of their true reality. They were taking the "opium of the people"². Marx differs from Feuerbach, in so far as he cannot see a point in changing religious thought. He wants to abolish it. That does not imply, however, that religion does not have any meaning. Religion has indeed a certain significance: above all, religious suffering is meaningful, for it is "at the same time an expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering"³. Religious suffering is an indicator of real suffering. If one knows how much opium a man needs, one also knows how ill he is! And religious suffering is a protest against real suffering, in so far as it contains the dream of a better world. The most important function of religion, then, consists in its own abolition. To abolish religion means to draw the people's attention to the true reality. To take away the world's halo (namely religion) is to denounce the true reality of the world. And to know this reality motivates man to change it.

Sigmund Freud, again, came to similar conclusions by another type of approach to religion. His critique is,

1) See p.10, n.4 (italics mine).

2) Marx, "Contribution", p.44.

3) Marx, op.cit., p.43.

like Marx's, an explanation of its genesis that equals its destruction. The origin of religious ideas is to be found in the wishes of man.¹ In other words: religious ideas are "illusions"². Although an illusion is neither the same as an error, nor necessarily an error,³ Freud is quite clear about his opinion that religious ideas are not the outcome of experience, nor even the result of thinking.⁴ Their origin is (in contrast to Marx) not a reality outside of us, but rather an inner reality, the reality of our psyche, especially the reality of our wishes. So, a whole set of ideas has been created, generated by our need to make human helplessness bearable.⁵ This phenomenon is generally known as "wishful thinking" and it occurs quite often as an argument against the truth of religious ideas. As if everything fulfilling our needs were "a priori" untrue!

According to Freud, however, faith is an illusion. This is so, because wishful thinking dominates the motivation of faith.⁶ Everything dominated by wishes is to be considered infantile, since only infants live in a

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- 1) Freud, "Zukunft einer Illusion", p.352: "Diese (sc. the religious ideas) ... sind Illusionen, Erfüllungen der ältesten, stärksten, dringendsten Wünsche der Menschheit..."
 - 2) Freud, op.cit., p.352 and passim.
 - 3) Freud, op.cit., p.353: "Eine Illusion ist nicht dasselbe wie ein Irrtum, sie ist auch nicht notwendig ein Irrtum."
 - 4) Freud, op.cit., p.352: Religious ideas "... sind nicht Niederschläge der Erfahrung oder Endresultate des Denkens..."
 - 5) Freud, op.cit., p.340: "So wird ein Schatz von Vorstellungen geschaffen, geboren aus dem Bedürfnis, die menschliche Hilflosigkeit erträglich zu machen,..."
 - 6) Freud defines illusion in that way: "Wir heissen also einen Glauben eine Illusion, wenn sich in seiner Motivierung die Wunscherfüllung vordrängt,..." (op.cit., p.354).

world of wishes and illusions. And it is part of their growing up that they abandon their illusions and face the rough reality of our world. Thus, faith is a permanent regression into the childish world of wishes. Faith is to be replaced by realism.

Freud was not able to see that faith could possibly be founded in reality, and further, that faith could possibly present a reality that transcends the reality of such common sense. Freud could not see any serious foundation of faith; he explained the strength of faith otherwise. The secret of the strength of faith is the strength of our wishes.¹

According to Freud it is impossible and useless at the same time to argue about faith, for religious ideas are neither provable nor disprovable.² The only way to deal with these ideas is to deny them. This concept, however, turns against Freud himself, for it becomes obvious (and Freud seems to admit it) that he can contrast religious faith only by another (so-called more realistic) faith.

1.2.2 The End of Metaphysics

We cannot dare even enter the discussion of metaphysical problems in so short a paragraph. We shall confine ourselves to the very basic issues of metaphysical ^hthought; more in the form of a description of general trends than as an exact analysis.

1) Freud, "Zukunft einer Illusion", p.352.

2) Freud, op.cit., p.354 ("unbeweisbar" and "unwiderlegbar").

The nominal definition of metaphysics tells us that this area of human thinking is concerned with a reality which is $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\ \varphi\upsilon\sigma\iota\kappa\acute{\alpha}$; i.e. beyond the worldly phenomena accessible to our senses. Metaphysicians, however, do not go beyond the world for the sake of the transcendent reality. On the contrary, they are concerned with our worldly reality and are intending "to determine the real nature of things"¹. To achieve this, many great philosophers have undertaken to establish another world besides our world, a transcendent world of ideas besides our immanent world of phenomena. The various systems may differ from each other considerably, but there is one thing they all have in common: the transcendent world possesses another way of being, a more intensive one, different in kind, for that transcendent world has to guarantee (or even to create) the lower reality of the immanent world.²

It is very understandable that theology from its beginning felt attracted by that type of metaphysical thought.³ Theology welcomed that unique possibility of

1) Cf. Walsh, "Nature of Metaphysics", p.301.

2) I am sure that a complete description of what metaphysics exactly is would fill whole libraries. For our purpose, however, this imperfect definition is sufficient, because it is mainly this aspect of transcendence that has become most relevant for theology as well as for the problem of basing faith.

3) The subject of metaphysics is normally treated in terms of "theologia naturalis" (cf. Richmond, Theology and Metaphysics, pp.1ff, identifying metaphysical and natural theology), which takes a very important place in the prolegomena (!) of dogmatics.

God-talk provided by the philosophers. The philosophical concept of transcendence enabled theologians to speak of God as a super-human and super-worldly being whose mode of existence is entirely different from every worldly mode of existence. Metaphysical philosophy prepared the categories of language that seemed to be necessary to bring God to expression. Not only that, in the light of metaphysics the existence of God was self-evident¹, and further, some philosophers considered the existence of God to be a necessity of thought.² So, the existence of God was not disputed at all; it was common sense to assume it. The particular contribution theology had to¹add was to describe the "essentia" of God.³ Here the special revelation recorded in the Bible had its legitimate place. And there were many things to say about the nature of God. The overall frame, though, was metaphysics, and speaking of God received its authority and a good deal of its evidence from the generally accepted assumption of a world beyond our world. Thus, to take an example, that super-worldly reality made it possible to speak legitimately of the omnipresence of God, it made God understandable as a being not bound to the laws of space and time.

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- 1) One may think of systems like those of Aristotle or Thomas Aquinas.
 - 2) Particularly instructive is Descartes' claim for the necessity of God (he grants the possibility of knowledge).
 - 3) E.g. the "Thomist tradition" mentioned by Richmond, Theology and Metaphysics, pp.3f.

Metaphysics in the sense sketched above belongs to the past.¹ It has been destroyed by the successors of those who constructed and established it.² The language describing transcendent realities has been proved mendacious and non-sensical. Metaphysical thought has come to an end and metaphysical language has ceased to be useful.³ Was theology not also bound to perish together with its former ally? It has not perished until now, but the final word is yet to be spoken over this matter. One thing is sure: if theologians continue to use metaphysical categories and to base their God-talk upon supernatural realities, then they will have nothing to say to the present and future world. The end of metaphysics is absolutely fatal for any metaphysical theology.

But even if theology perceives the signs of the time, if it stops talking about God metaphysically, the problems will become immense. How can we express the non-worldliness of God if we are bound to use only immanent language? How is it possible to bring to expression the principially different quality of being which we would like to ascribe to God? Can a non-metaphysical age understand

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- 1) There is, of course, a strong indication that most activities of the human mind, and with it of theology too, cannot dispense with some sort of metaphysics, taken in a very wide sense; compare Richmond, Theology and Metaphysics, p.XI and passim. That is no alibi for closing one's eyes to the fact that most theological definitions of God are still attached to a form of metaphysics which really is past.
 - 2) Richmond, op.cit., mentions Kant (pp.5ff) and Luther's understanding of faith (pp.6ff) as "two huge, complementary influences" (p.4) against traditional metaphysics.
 - 3) It is not possible to argue from the absurdity of the

God at all? If our language is not able to transcend the boundaries of our world responsibly, do we have to keep silent about God? How can we understand God as our Saviour, if he is either only an idea or merely a man like us having lived once upon a time in Palestine? All these questions are caused by the death of the metaphysical God. I think the best way to reach a responsible answer is to think about the relation of world and non-world as regards the historical Jesus.

1.3 Jesus as Basis of Christian Faith

Christian theology was brought into jeopardy by the end of metaphysics, and Christian faith was urgently challenged by the critique of religion. These two developments in the history of thought have shaken (and are still shaking) the very basis of faith and theology. It seems to me that the only way to take stock of these questions is to search the essence of faith and (so I hope) to show its truth and reality to be greater than the reality and truth of its challengers. The way that must be gone will be sketched now.

1.3.1 Non-Metaphysical God-Talk

The main concern of the modern critique of metaphysics is to show that our language can only describe what human

of the God-less world in order to show how intelligible natural theology is (Richmond, op.cit., p.118 does so). Modern man has shown clearly enough that he can very well live with non-sense as his purpose.

beings have experienced, and that our mind can only judge what is accessible to our senses. On this background, there seems to be only one possibility of legitimate God-talk. God must in a certain way be a matter of experience. He must have come among us into our immanence, since we are not capable of transcending our limits. At any rate, if we want to speak of God legitimately, we must be able to narrate events. We must think inductively, since the deductive way to learn about God has turned out to be wrong. Christian theology has never ceased to maintain that talking about God is identical with talking about Jesus Christ, unless it has ceased to be Christian theology. That means that God is known among us as one to be seen and heard, to be experienced. Granted that, the death of the metaphysical God does not entail the death of the Christian God. On the contrary, the development in metaphysics has freed theology from the temptation of inauthentic God-talk.

Christian faith, according to its self-understanding holds itself based upon experience. It narrates indeed events to describe who God is. The question is now, whether this self-understanding is true or not. Is there some evidence that can be produced in order to prove the early Church right in interpreting Jesus as Christ (i.e. God)? Does the Christ-side of our confessions also originate in experience? Or is it due to the imagination of some pious minds? That introduces the next question: How is it possible to

experience a non-worldly reality within the boundaries of our worldly reality? And further, how is it possible to speak of such an experience authentically? The answer to all these questions is tied up with the problem of the relationship between the historical Jesus¹ and the Christ of faith. If there is an answer to these questions, then there is a possibility of non-metaphysical God-talk.

1.3.2 Non-Religious Faith

At first sight, the famous distinction between religion and faith - introduced by Karl Barth - seems to be a sufficient answer to the critique of religion. Yes, it is true, one argues, that religion is made by man. It is true that religious systems are just illusions, invented by wishful thinking in order to overcome the miseries of our world. Concerning religion, one agrees entirely with the great critics. But - one goes on to say - Christian theology has never spoken of religion, at least has never meant religion, when it talked about faith. For faith is entirely different; it is not our own work, but the work

1) The term "historical Jesus" is ambiguous. It could e.g. mean "Jesus as he really was", i.e. the earthly Jesus. Considering the history of the term (cf. the interesting outline given by Ebeling, "The Question of the Historical Jesus", pp.290-295) I should like to define it as "Jesus as he can be known by the present historical method". Some people would say, of course, that this equals "Jesus as he really was". I do not have so great a confidence in the historical method.

of God in and among us. It does not belong to our possibilities, it is essentially a gift of God. So, faith does not seem to be in danger, for only religion as an expressively human enterprise is met by the acid critique of religion. And further, faith is not only untouched, it is engaged in being the best ally in the common fight against religion.

The problems evoked by the critique of religion, however, are far from being solved. Is there not a danger of making pure assertions distinguishing faith from religion? Who is able to show the truth of that distinction? One may point to the Bible and its description of faith. And it is true, that for the Bible faith is quite the opposite of religion. But who is going to prove (or at least to show) that faith is not itself an invention of man?

Again, we are coming back to the question of Jesus Christ. If it be possible to show that he originated the faith of man, an answer to the critique of religion would be available. The New Testament does not know anything of the historical Jesus desiring men to have faith in himself. He called people to follow him, or called people to believe in God, but so far there is no fundamental difference between Jesus' call and the call to faith of any other human being. Jesus' call to faith in God does not show the truth of that faith, unless our faith "includes" Jesus "as belonging to" that God and therefore as trustworthy. This inclusion of Jesus in our faith in God was expressed by the

early community in terms of Jesus as the Christ. That means that the truth of our faith depends essentially on the question whether Jesus really was Christ. Is the christology of the early Church based on an "extra nos", or is it just the same religious enterprise as any other? The question is again: how can the relation between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith be described? Was the step from Jesus to Christ necessary or accidental? It depends on the answer we can give to this sort of question whether there is any answer to the critique of religion. The truth of maintaining, that faith was made by God and not by man, depends on the character of the relationship between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith.

If there is a necessary connection between those two, the historical Jesus becomes an essential factor in the origins of our faith. For in this case, we can point to a historical figure in whom God was among us in the midst of our reality. The objection of wishful thinking finds its counterpart in the "extra nos" of history. The reproach of the flight from reality is countered by the Christian confession that faith was generated in reality and remains related to reality even as far as suffering and death.

But again we must remind ourselves: none of these answers to the critique of religion is valid unless we are able to show that it was in fact God who acted in our reality and bound our faith to realism. That equals the question of continuity between Jesus and Christ.

1.3.3 The Appeal to Experience

We must add here some short considerations of the problem of experience. We have seen already that the only possibility of establishing non-metaphysical faith and non-religious belief is given by their foundation in experience. This term is still to be defined. Normally, "to know something by experience is to know it by direct acquaintance, say, by one's own observation, rather than to have read about it ..."¹. The appeal to this kind of experience is made in order to establish the truth of claims (e.g. the claim of God being almighty). So, one could well argue that the truth of Jesus being Christ depends on our present experience of him ("I have experienced that he is alive today"). Then the whole problem of the "extra nos" would have been solved by replacing it with the "extra nos" of present experience, which warrants the claims of Christian faith. Religious claims, though, are fundamentally different from claims like e.g. the claim that gravitation causes things to fall. These can be warranted by experience. Religious claims, however, cannot be experienced without a previous frame of interpretation.² For example, nowadays nobody

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- 1) Cf. Hebblethwaite, "The Appeal to Experience in Christology", p.265 (*italics mine*).
 - 2) Similarly expressed by Hebblethwaite, op.cit., p.266, although he places "interpretation" after "experience". "The interpretative scheme makes sense of my subjective experience, and this enables me to construe it as experience of God." (pp.266f). I would like to go a step further by saying that the "interpretative scheme" causes personal experience.

would be justified in claiming that he had experienced God by being saved in a road accident. Our experiences, even the spiritual ones, are secular, just as well as our world is world only and not God.¹ So, how does the appeal to experience apply to the claims of our faith, if we accept that we live in an entirely secular world? The appeal to present experience in the sense defined above cannot bear the burden of establishing faith, since faith is the presupposition of that experience (and not only of its interpretation). Faith - as a frame of interpreting our secular experience - is at stake, and again, it cannot be based on itself.²

Indeed, the witnesses of the New Testament are talking of an experience of God. They do not mean some personal, subjective experience, but their common "objective" experience of Jesus being God amongst men.³ Their experience of the earthly Jesus was as such secular and, too, needed interpretation: Jesus was interpreted as Christ. If it were

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- 1) The original Christian distinction between world and God leads necessarily to an entirely secular world-view.
 - 2) Cf. Hebblethwaite, "The Appeal to Experience in Christology", p.267.
 - 3) Paul's view of "religious experience" in contrast to the experience of Christ is again very instructive, see p.3, n.4.

true that "Christ" was an adequate (and necessary) interpretation of Jesus, then we would have a type of experience of God which was not caused by interpretation. On the contrary, that experience would have forced the disciples to give this particular interpretation. Those people, by remembering and transmitting their experience of God's final word, have enabled mankind living after them to experience God by listening, namely by listening to their witness.¹ Whether that is a valid experience of God or not, depends on the validity of their testimony. Or in other words: it depends on how far we are prepared to trust in the truth of their experience. At any rate, we cannot have a blind trust, rather we want to examine the trustworthiness of those testimonies. Was it really God they experienced or was it only their own imagination? To ask this question is again to ask after the legitimacy of preaching the historical Jesus as Christ. It is to seek a historical foundation for our faith.

It is this very question which led into the struggle of the nineteenth century "Quest for the historical Jesus".

1) I cannot see why there should be a fundamental difference between our own experience and that of others transmitted to us. If we listen to their witness, we, too, are having experience of God; cf. the similar view of Downing, Church, p.173 (in a different context).

2.0 An Outline of the "Old Quest"¹

"In viewing the work of others we cannot but feel that although they came out to him with swords and clubs, 'passing through the midst of them, he went away'."² This judgement about the imposing enterprise aiming to find the historical Jesus stems from one of the most distinguished critics of the life-of-Jesus movement, Martin Kähler. The judgement is final: they did not meet him where they sought him. The whole enterprise turned out to be a disaster. The reasons for this depressing result lie in the character of that movement.

Therefore we must have a brief look at the basic assumptions of the nineteenth century quest for the historical Jesus. First of all, the quest came into being because theologians were looking for a sound foundation of Christian faith in history.³ Indeed, they were looking for an "extra nos" of faith. They thought they had found the true basis of faith in the historical Jesus, who was an object of scientific investigation. For them, the term

1) I am using this term in a purely historical sense.

2) Kähler, The So-called Historical Jesus, p.45.

3) The "Ritschlian school" may serve as a typical example: these theologians "were determined to ground the truth of Christianity upon the one certain historical basis which could be empirically investigated..." (Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, pp.121f); see also Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, p.19; Dodd, History, p.11.

"historical Jesus" meant the same as "Jesus as he really was";¹ they wanted a basis of faith established by detached objectivity. In the background of the quest we notice the general nineteenth century concept of historiography. Historiography is able to find out "what really happened", because its methods are scientific. The historian is beginning to take a detached point of view. He is investigating facts for their own sake, his mind is now free from all unscientific prejudices. The historian's mind has overcome the "long night of ecclesiastical dogmatism" which had dominated the Occident for more than a thousand years.² This historiography is, of course, in itself another dogmatism; a more dangerous dogmatism, however, for it is disguised by its scientific clothing. It bears in its very essence the claim of being non-dogmatic, i.e. realistic. Still today there is a positivistic historiography which makes that claim. However, positivistic historiography promised to be a tool in the hands of the theologians by which means they could lay the foundation of "reasonable faith".

That leads us to the second feature of the old quest: the life-of-Jesus movement was decisively antidogmatic. It was generally believed among its representatives that the

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- 1) Robinson who points out that the "original quest" identified "historical" with "all that happened" interprets the movement similarly (New Quest, p.26).
 - 2) See Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, pp.103ff.

Church had badly misunderstood and distorted the true character of the founder of Christianity.¹ Now, "through the instrumentality of scientific historical reconstruction, a needed corrective could be supplied"². The early Christian Church (including the gospel-writers) was charged with having invented its interpretation of Jesus.³ Christology anyway was held to represent the "primal fall" of the Church, concealing the truth for many centuries. Thus, the life-of-Jesus movement attempted to fulfil what they thought a very necessary task, viz. to replace the religion about Jesus (or: the faith in Jesus) by the religion of Jesus (or: the faith of Jesus).⁴ In fact this was the only way to rule out the false interpretation of Jesus put forward by the Church. We are here at a very important point. As soon as one rules out the Church (which - in its way - mediates the "once for all" of Jesus), one has to produce another possibility to express that "once for all" of Jesus' life and significance. This possibility was seen in introducing the "religion of Jesus" as a hermeneutical category. That entailed a quite different attitude towards

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- 1) Cf. Anderson, Jesus, p.18; compare also Schweitzer, Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung, p.14.
 - 2) Cf. Anderson, op.cit., p.18.
 - 3) Cf. Downing, Church, p.18.
 - 4) Hanson, "Enterprise", writes about the liberal scholars: "They were fond of contrasting the religion about Jesus which they viewed with suspicion, with the religion of Jesus which was the true basis and origin of Christianity" (p.29).

Jesus: the life-of-Jesus movement was no longer speaking of the "once for all"-character of the event Jesus (as indeed the New Testament does)¹, but rather of the "once for all"-meaningfulness of his ideas. Jesus became in the hands of the "questers" merely a revealer of a true religion. He himself did not necessarily belong to the creed any longer. His part was to reveal and to initiate faith. He is an exemplary personality, who had the right faith for ever. This leads us to the two most important terms of the old quest: personality and example.

2.1 The Admirable Personality

The life-of-Jesus movement has deprived the Church of its mediatory task. Consequently, a new bridge between the historical Jesus and the present believer had to be built. This bridge was supposed to be the encounter of two personalities. The personality of Jesus, freed from any dogmatic distortion, was supposed to make such a strong impression on modern personalities that they were induced to believe in the God of Jesus². In fact, the basis of Christian faith was not a set of meaningful events, but the everlasting meaningfulness of a past personality whose features could be established by scientific historical

1) See e.g. Hebr 9,26.

2) This concept fits well with the widespread individualism of the nineteenth century.

research.¹ The mediation between past and present was not achieved by historical interpretation and hermeneutical reflexion, but rather by taking Jesus as eternally admirable personality. Historiography, in this concept, was an immediately theological discipline; its results had immediate theological significance. The interpretation given by the Church was considered old-fashioned, whereas Jesus' personality had "per definitionem" a timeless relevance.

This relevance, however, was not a real one; moreover, it was achieved by the historian projecting his own personality into the personality of Jesus.² Ironically, the evil they had undertaken to expel returned with even greater strength. Not only in heaven did man find his own resemblance - as Marx already had pointed out³ - , but also in history the historians discovered merely the reflexion of their own thoughts.

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- 1) See Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, p.123: "The personality of the historical Jesus ... was a fact of history ...".
 - 2) Kähler judged very sharply: "... the biographer who portrays Jesus is always something of a dogmatist in the derogatory sense of the word" (The So-called Historical Jesus, p.56), since "disguised as history, the historian's theory passes imperceptibly into our thought and convictions as an authentic piece of reality" (ibid.). So, the historian in that sense is in fact worse than the dogmatist, for he disguises his dogmatic assumptions so that they appear to be reality; cf. Schweitzer, Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung, p.4.
 - 3) See above p.10.

The "hermeneutical" concept of the life-of-Jesus movement, however, had at least one considerable benefit: by the means of "personality-hermeneutics" one was able to base religion on immanent (natural) grounds, for the ground of faith was a human personality accessible to immanent and scientific research.¹ No holy Spirit nor any other supernatural being was needed to explain the fact that modern men believe in Jesus. The impact of a historical person on subsequent personalities made any supernatural explanation unnecessary. This achievement of the old quest is considerable. The price paid for it, though, is not less considerable. According to the nineteenth century concept it was no longer possible to make a fundamental distinction between Jesus and man, for if Jesus' importance was expressed in terms of "historical personality", his distinction from other personalities could only be a gradual one. Jesus was thought an astonishing genius, an extraordinary human being,² but his qualities and attitudes (as a human being) are on principle imitable; indeed, they are meant to be imitated by his disciples of every age. The divine nature of Christ had to be sold in order to buy the approval of our enlightened times.

1) Cf. Barth, Die protestantische Theologie, p.505, who notes that the correlation of faith to Christ is a relationship within the immanence of history.

2) Cf. Barth, op.cit., pp.505f; Jesus is certainly an admirable and extraordinary personality, but as personality on principle a human personality

2.2 The Example

The perfect personality of the historical Jesus was held up as man's model for religious thought and moral behaviour, especially the latter. That was the role left to be played by Jesus. The example-character of Jesus was inevitable as soon as theologians were more interested in his personality than in his meaning for the Church. And indeed, that is the highest authoritative function a historical personality can gain: to be an example for every age.

Yet, can people be saved by examples? As a matter of fact, examples have the quality of forcing us to imitate them. Any example brings along pressure, as soon as we have accepted it as a good example. No example can ever help us to do things, it can only tell us what we ought to do. Jesus, loving his enemies, can at best lead to our commitment to that kind of love. But are human beings really capable of loving their enemies, unless they are freed to do so? Examples never free us to do things, but rather they lead us into an imprisonment by their high moral standards. The historical Jesus, taken in this aspect of the nineteenth century quest, possesses a legalistic character.¹

1) It is not for nothing that the idea of permanent progress in moral behaviour was so popular in that time. The only way to escape the pressure of the moral example was to create the idea of progress: it is enough to be on the way to perfection, as in fact the whole society is; nobody needs to be perfect (like Jesus). The idea of progress was expressed in terms of God's Kingdom as in the state of being realized.

2.3 Albert Schweitzer

Although Schweitzer is generally considered to have ended the nineteenth century quest by writing its history,¹ it seems to me that he was not the scholar who delivered the "funeral oration" of the old quest. For Schweitzer himself did quite the same thing as any nineteenth century "quester": he "himself presented a reconstruction of Jesus which he regarded as objective .."². Although Schweitzer criticises the pictures of the historical Jesus drawn by the contemporary theology,³ for him nevertheless the personality of Jesus is fundamentally important.⁴ Schweitzer's objection to liberal theology is that it had not been sufficiently objective.⁵ But he did not doubt at all the possibility of achieving objectivity by historical methods; nor did he doubt the theological interest the nineteenth century had paid to its historical results. His really objective reconstruction of Jesus was only different in degree from the nineteenth century attempts. Therefore Schweitzer himself belongs to the old quest, too.

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- 1) The famous words of Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, p.13 point to that direction.
 - 2) My view of Schweitzer accords with that of Robinson, New Quest, pp.32ff; the quotation is on p.33.
 - 3) Schweitzer, Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung, p.VI: "Dieses Buch kann zuletzt nicht anders, als dem Irrewerden an dem historischen Jesus, wie ihn die moderne Theologie zeichnet, Ausdruck geben ..." (italics mine).
 - 4) Schweitzer, op.cit., pp.633f states: "Wir haben das unmittelbare Empfinden, dass seine Persönlichkeit ... eine weitgehende Bereicherung auch unserer Religion bedeutet."
 - 5) See Anderson, Jesus, pp.18ff.

He has it in common also with the nineteenth century quest that he, too, held the historical Jesus to be the ground and subject of faith. More precisely, he, too, considered the teaching of Jesus the most decisive factor.¹ The only difference is that he liked to emphasize that this Jesus is not immediately accessible to modern men, but rather that he is a total stranger.² Schweitzer put the stress upon Jesus' apocalyptic eschatology, which made the latter incommensurate to our age. Therefore, Schweitzer sharply criticises all nineteenth century attempts as illegitimate modernizations of Jesus.³

Nevertheless, Jesus as a historical figure and an admirable teacher remains of fundamental importance for every Christian. Only, until now he had not been understood as he really was. Our age was not able to grasp the real greatness of Jesus.⁴ For Schweitzer, the reasons for that inability were quite obvious. Since Jesus in his natural and deep morality, combined with Jewish eschatology, expressed the hope and the will of an ethical world-perfection, the way to understand Jesus is to share in the same will and the same hope.⁵ Schweitzer accuses his age of

1) "Die Tat Jesu besteht darin, dass seine natürliche und tiefe Sittlichkeit von der spätjüdischen Eschatologie Besitz ergreift und so dem Hoffen und Wollen einer ethischen Weltvollendung in dem Vorstellungsmaterial jener Zeit Ausdruck gibt" (Schweitzer, Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung, p.635).

2) Schweitzer, op.cit., p.632: "Aber er blieb nicht stehen, sondern ging an unserer Zeit vorüber und kehrte in die seinige zurück."

3) Schweitzer, op.cit., p.4. 4) Schweitzer, op.cit., p.636.

5) Schweitzer, op.cit., p.635.

lacking the equality of will, hope and longing.¹ This lack made it impossible to know really who Jesus was and to grasp his significance for our age. If a religion does not have a strong and passionate faith in the Kingdom of God, it never will understand the historical Jesus.²

So, although Jesus himself is a total stranger in our age, his will and hope is on principle the same as ours and understandable for every age. The only difference between us and Jesus is that Jesus' will and hope were waiting for a divine intervention to complete the Kingdom, whereas we have to create it by ourselves in doing moral work.³ A considerable change! The Kingdom of God has become an immanent stage of society which can be achieved by human work. Thus, we must conclude, that Jesus is - as in the old quest generally - nothing more than an example of an highly moral personality. This conclusion turns out to be right. For Schweitzer, Jesus is not even the revealer of the true morality. A revealer is actually superfluous in this matter, since we know the idea of morality from within us.⁴ Jesus' part, then, is to help so that this idea comes to power

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- 1) Schweitzer, Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung, p.637.
 - 2) "In einer Religion ist so viel Verstehen des historischen Jesus, als sie starken und leidenschaftlichen Glauben an das Reich Gottes besitzt" (Schweitzer, op.cit., p.638).
 - 3) Schweitzer, op.cit., p.639.
 - 4) The idea of moral perfection "... liegt in uns und ist mit dem sittlichen Willen gegeben" (Schweitzer, op.cit., p.640).

within us,¹ as it had power in him. Jesus is in so far important, as he is the incarnation of a moral idea. We notice here an attempt to overcome the gap between the past Jesus and the present believer, which is slightly different to the "personality-hermeneutics" of the old quest: It is not the personality which is the bridge, but rather it is Jesus' idea that provides for connection thanks to its everlasting truth. This concept of hermeneutics was developed in the Enlightenment: the significance of historical events and persons consists in helping us to realize eternal truths which we know from reason.² This hermeneutical principle made it possible for Schweitzer to take the historical Jesus right into our age, despite the latter's strangeness.

Schweitzer's critique of the old quest remained entirely within the system of the nineteenth century theology. Thus, it cannot have been the cause of the quest's end, although it may have opened many eyes to see that nineteenth century enterprise in a more critical light. The quest was brought to an end, however, by a more radical and more fundamental criticism, the kerygmatic theology.

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- 1) Jesus "hilft ... dazu mit, dass sie (sc. the idea of moral perfection) auch in uns zur Herrschaft gelange" (Schweitzer, Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung, p.640, italics mine).
 - 2) See Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, pp.100ff, who quotes Hume: "Its (sc.of history) chief use is only to uncover the constant and universal principles of human nature" (p.102, italics mine).

3.0 The Kerygmatic Theology

At the beginning of the twentieth century theology changed its attitude towards the historical Jesus. I would like to summarize this movement under the term "kerygmatic theology", although this is - strictly speaking - a term only applicable to Bultmann. And yet, this classification seems justified, for it was in fact with Bultmann, that the "revolt against the old quest of the historical Jesus ... reached its climax"¹. Although the term "kerygmatic theology" does not apply to all theologians partaking in this movement, it does mark a tendency that is significant for the whole movement. The interest of the theologians shifted away from the historical Jesus towards the "Word of God"², the interest in the words of Jesus was replaced by the interest in the words about Jesus, the main trust was no longer upon history, but upon kerygma.

The rise of form-criticism was a sign of the time.³ The form-critical approach, although it understands itself strictly as a method, is based on the fundamental insight that the gospels are not written by historians, but rather that they are "devotional literature" written by theologians.⁴ This insight was one of the main reasons for the end of the

1) See Anderson, Jesus, p.24.

2) Dodd, History, p.13 mentions the antagonism between "simply historical" and the "Word of God". He describes the new movement with the term "theology of transcendence".

3) See Robinson, New Quest, p.36.

4) Robinson, op.cit., p.35.

original quest. And the results of the form-critical approach showed that the new view of the gospels was not wrong. Therefore, the Jesus of the gospels became afresh the focal point of Christian theology, whereas the historical Jesus was abandoned. The revival of the risen Christ led to the notorious silence about the historical Jesus.

Within this theological movement there are - I think - three central figures, who, at one and the same time, were driven by that development and pushed it forward: Martin Kähler, Karl Barth, and Rudolf Bultmann.

3.1 M.Kähler: The Living Christ

"Kähler's prophetic book on the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith anticipates some of the most urgent problems in present day theology."¹ When Kähler wrote his book, he was almost alone against an overwhelming climate of opinion in favour of the historical Jesus. But nevertheless, he had to utter his "cry of warning"²: "The historical Jesus of modern authors conceals from us the living Christ."³ Kähler, like A.Schweitzer some years after him, was concerned with the problem of how Jesus Christ has a significance for the present believer. And he felt that the quest for the historical Jesus was not and

1) P.Tillich, "Introduction", p.XI.

2) Kähler, The So-called Historical Jesus, p.43.

3) Kähler, op.cit., p.43.

would never be able to solve that problem: "Passing through the midst of them, he (sc. Jesus) went away"¹. Kähler's basic insight was that the historical Jesus is "per definitionem" a remote figure in the past and that he can never be raised afresh by historical methods. The present Christ is the living Christ of faith. Thus, Kähler's book is one great objection against the life-of-Jesus movement.²

To begin with, Kähler objected against the historical Jesus, because he shared with the reformers the dogmatic assumption that faith cannot legitimately attempt to demonstrate (objectively) its own basis (i.e. revelation) without ceasing to be faith.³ "'Christ is Lord' - this certainty neither flesh nor blood can attain...".⁴ There is no other access to Jesus Christ than the access of faith. Historical research, on the other hand, is the access of unbelief, since it is the attempt to establish an objective basis of faith (a contradiction in itself!).

Furthermore, Kähler rejects basing faith upon so shaky a foundation as that given by the historical Jesus.⁵ Still further, the historical approach which is either

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- 1) Kähler, The So-called Historical Jesus, p.45.
 - 2) Kähler, op.cit., pp.46ff; a good deal of his book is concerned with the arguments "against the life-of-Jesus movement" (ibid., p.46).
 - 3) See Tillich, "Introduction", p.XII, and Braaten, "Revelation, History, and Faith in Martin Kähler", p.27 who regards Kähler as defending faith against every attempt of demonstration.
 - 4) Kähler, op.cit., p.64; also Braaten, op.cit., p.29.
 - 5) Cf. Braaten, op.cit., pp.10,26; Tillich, op.cit., p.XII.

"interest in antiquity or in a modern psychological interpretation of some well known event", is "an obstacle to a true estimate of Christ's worth for our day"¹. Kähler recognized the dangers which lie in the essence of any historical approach, and he was convinced that such an approach to Christ was bound to fail, not even to mention the not very encouraging situation with regard to the sources.² The nature of the sources may show the impossibility of the quest, but Kähler himself was much more interested in its illegitimacy, caused by the nature of historical approach. He saw very clearly that this approach necessarily led to a total relativism, since it is not possible to make differences in kind between historical phenomena. So, the historical approach, which can only establish distinctions of degree, leads "ipso facto" to the loss of the true nature of Christ: "the distinction between Jesus Christ and ourselves is not one of degree but one of kind"³.

Kähler saw yet another danger of the historical approach. He realized that the biographers portraying Jesus are always "dogmaticians in the derogatory sense of the word"⁴, though they pretend to be objective. "Disguised

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- 1) Kähler, The So-called Historical Jesus, p.71.
 - 2) Cf. Kähler, op.cit., p.48. His basic insight in the nature of the gospels ("every detail of the apostolic recollection of Jesus can be shown to have been preserved for the sake of its religious significance", ibid., p.93) was yet to have its great future.
 - 3) Kähler, op.cit., p.53; see also p.69: "if Jesus is merely a religious genius surpassing the rest of us only in degree ...".
 - 4) Kähler, op.cit., p.56.

as history, the historian's theory passes imperceptibly into our thought and convictions as an authentic piece of reality, as a law emanating therefrom."¹ We could call that danger the danger of ideology, for it is the nature of ideologies to make people believe that they describe reality. Kähler was one of the first theologians who discovered the methodological problem underlying the so-called detached historical research. The historical method of the nineteenth century is based upon a set of philosophical presuppositions which have little to do with objectivity.

Because Kähler knew of that danger, he was anxious to distinguish the "historical Jesus" from the "earthly Jesus".² He no longer acknowledged the nineteenth century assumption: historical Jesus = Jesus as he really was.³ He introduced the distinction between the historical Jesus (= result of the nineteenth century research) and the "historic Christ of the Bible".⁴ That was the alternative he had to offer.

Who is that "historic Christ"? Kähler describes him in many ways. He is the Lord Christ who cannot be known by "flesh and blood"⁵, and as such he is the

1) Kähler, The So-called Historical Jesus, p.56.

2) Braaten, "Revelation, History, and Faith in Martin Kähler", p.20.

3) See above p.26,n.1.

4) Kähler, op.cit., p.65 (italics mine).

5) Kähler, op.cit., p.64.

"living Christ"¹, the "real Christ"²; he is accessible to faith because he is the "Christ who is preached"³. He is quite distinct from the historical Jesus, for he is the "risen Lord"⁴. He is not "behind the Gospels, but the Christ of the apostolic preaching, of the whole New Testament"⁵. As he has always been since the days of the early Church, he is nowadays, too, the only possible object of faith, and, what is more, the "object of faith in a 'strictly religious sense of the word',..."⁶.

It may seem that Kähler intends to deny any kind of critical approach to the Christ of the Bible, and that he delivers us into the hands of the early Christian writers. Of course, Kähler has seen this danger of "authoritarian faith"⁷. He does ask himself whether the picture of Christ as given by the Bible, was an invention.⁸ Kähler's solution is quite simple: "The reality of Christ himself has left its ineffaceable impress upon this picture."⁹ More than that, "Christ himself is the originator of the biblical picture of the Christ ..."¹⁰, and therefore

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- 1) Kähler, The So-called Historical Jesus, p.43.
 - 2) Kähler, op.cit., p.66.
 - 3) Kähler, op.cit., p.66.
 - 4) Kähler, op.cit., p.65.
 - 5) Kähler, op.cit., p.65.
 - 6) Kähler, op.cit., p.68; by "religious sense of the word" he seems to mean neither objectively nor subjectively accessible to any human enterprise.
 - 7) Kähler, op.cit., p.74.
 - 8) Kähler, op.cit., p.79.
 - 9) Kähler, op.cit., p.79.
 - 10) Kähler, op.cit., p.87.

a critical approach is not necessary. Kähler was aware of the possibility that the picture of Christ could have been distorted during the long period of oral transmission. At this point Kähler uses a supranatural factor whose task it is to guarantee the accurateness of the Christ-picture: "the more obscure the course of events remains ... the more certainly can we sense the invisible hand of Providence..."¹. Kähler can also call that "the guidance of the Spirit"². Here we can no longer agree with Kähler, for he tries to rule out the legitimate and necessary question whether the biblical witnesses handed down an accurate picture of Jesus, by a dogmatic presupposition which is itself in question (it depends to a great extent on the answer to the question of accurateness whether there is at all such a thing like the guidance of the Spirit!). Kähler could not really avoid the danger ^{of} authoritarian faith in the biblical picture of Christ. Even faith must have the right to question its basis. As a matter of fact, faith can never trust uncritically in others' faith and their picture of Christ.

But nevertheless we have to keep in mind Kähler's "cry of warning": he showed very clearly the insuperable

1) Kähler, The So-called Historical Jesus, p.90.

2) "Under the Spirit's guidance they remembered Jesus, his words, his deeds, his life" (Kähler, op. cit., p.94 cf.96).

contradiction between faith and the "historical Jesus". He also showed that we ignore the nature of our sources if we go behind them. Further he showed the impossibility of avoiding relativism, if we pursue a historical approach to Jesus. And finally he recalled to our minds that faith and objective detached research have quite different natures and interests.

3.2 K.Barth: God in Christ

With M.Kähler¹ Barth shared the conviction that to go behind the texts of the New Testament is both historically and theologically inadequate.²

It is historically inadequate for the simple reason that the New Testament itself as well as the early Church never attempted to picture Jesus Christ apart from his resurrection and ascension.³ In doing so, the early Christians solved the historical problem of the existence and history of Jesus in the only appropriate way.⁴ Barth cannot see why modern theology should not acknowledge this very obvious fact.

To go behind the texts is theologically inadequate, because Jesus Christ stands before his believers (the Church) not in a "certain objectivity", but as their Lord who lives.⁵ The historico-critical method - in Barth's

1) See above pp.37ff especially p.41.

2) Compare Anderson, Jesus, p.23.

3) "Die Kirche hat von Anfang an - .. - von und mit dem Jesus des Neuen Testamentes, u.zw. (= und zwar) des von seiner Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt her geschriebenen und gelesenen Neuen Testamentes gelebt" (Barth, KD IV/2, p.174; italics mine).

4) Barth, KD IV/2, p.174.

5) Barth, KD IV/2, pp.589f.

point of view - is looking for objectivity, looking for an objectively granted basis of faith, and therefore removes Jesus from his present Lordship and confines him to the dead past. "Living Lord" and "historical Jesus" is a contradiction, since every historical event is past and dead.

For Barth, the historical Jesus is an equivalent for the concealed God as well as for the God who is far away from us, while the Jesus Christ of the New Testament stands for the "revealed God", the God who is near, and living Lord of the Church.¹ That view of the historical Jesus is based upon Barth's general assumption that, before resurrection, the earthly Jesus was not revealed as who he really was, namely as God's revelation. To confine oneself to the earthly Jesus is bound to lead to the concealed God.

However, Barth never denied the historicity of Jesus, nor did he consider it irrelevant. Indeed, Jesus is "a figure in world history", and naturally he existed like all men, and as such he is visible to everybody.² And yet, the historian "qua historian" (or: "qua" secular man) does not know Jesus Christ, although he knows of him, and indeed, the historian is bound to misjudge Jesus Christ.³

1) "Denn eben als der, der als der so Erhöhte der Ihrige, ihr Bruder ist, ist er ihnen im Unterschied zu den Andern - ... - nicht verborgen, sondern offenbar, nicht ferne, sondern nah, kein 'historischer Jesus', sondern ihr lebendiger Herr" (Barth, KD IV/2, p.596).

2) See Barth, KD IV/2, p.100.

3) Barth, KD IV/2, p.100 holds that the "sogenannte historische Wissenschaft ... ihn (kennt) und seine Existenz, aber sie erkennen ihn nicht, sondern sie verkennen ihn und sie, ..." (Italics mine).

The reason for that lies in the nature of Christ's existence. Jesus Christ exists only as Son of God,¹ and therefore the point is to realize God in Christ's humanity.² Thus he cannot be known, on the contrary, he can only be misjudged, if one approaches him in his abstract humanity.³

This basic insight gave Barth the explanation for the failure of the nineteenth century quest. The problem of Jesus' life and its events is not commensurate with the problem of a personality's life.⁴ And that again causes the failure of any attempt to write his biography. Biographies in the commonly accepted sense are appropriate to human personalities only.⁵ To treat Jesus like a personality must produce a "torso", similar to a sentence consisting only of a predicate, without subject.⁶ This factual situation concerning the existence of Jesus prevented the biblical writers from reporting Jesus' life biographically. And the failure of the nineteenth century quest was due to that situation, too.

1) Barth, KD IV/2, p.100.

2) "Es geht also darum, in seiner Menschlichkeit Gott zu erkennen, ..." (Barth, KD IV/2, p.112; italics mine); see also ibid., p.113: "Als Menschensohn und als menschlich existiert ja Jesus Christus überhaupt nur in der Tat Gottes: ...".

3) Barth, KD IV/2, p.113.

4) Barth, KD IV/2, p.184.

5) Barth, KD IV/2, pp.183f; see also ibid., p.113.

6) "Die Menschlichkeit Jesu an sich und als solche wäre ... ein Prädikat ohne Subjekt" (Barth, KD IV/2, pp.113).

Beyond all these judgements about the life-of-Jesus movement lies Barth's concept of history and revelation. "Barth's basic position was that the 'theme of theology' is 'God's revelation', rather than any given concepts in the history of ideas."¹ In fact, Barth was interested in this God remaining God even in his revelation. History is not "per se" revelation and therefore not an object of faith.² And that is why the "historical Jesus", who was discovered and invented in order to provide an access to Jesus Christ apart from his "godhood", is neither the object of faith nor the subject of preaching.³ If God acts in history, he is accompanied by miracles - and indeed, that God acted in history (= revealed himself) was the miracle for Barth - , miracles, which cannot be grasped by human minds. The historico-critical method wants to explain away the miraculous character of God's actions in history and is therefore equal to an attack on God's revelation itself.⁴ Any attempt to grasp revelation by human means is bound to fail, because revelation can only take place in the freedom of God to be free for us.⁵ It is not a human possibility to come to God, unless he comes

1) So Robinson, New Quest, p.45.

2) Barth, KD I/2, p.150.

3) Barth, KD I/2, p.150.

4) Barth, KD I/2, p.71.

5) "Wo Offenbarung geschieht, da geschieht sie auf alle Fälle nicht durch das Mittel dieser unserer Einsicht und Kunst, sondern in der Freiheit, die Gott hat, für uns frei zu sein ..." (Barth, KD I/2, p.72); cf. also Robinson, New Quest, p.28.

to man.

The historico-critical method determining the quest for Jesus denies as well as transgresses human limits, in so far as it maintains that it provides an access to revelation by identifying history and revelation. Barth was concerned to demonstrate "the inability of historical science ... to grasp the reality of this man, Jesus, ..." ¹, since he thought it was God who revealed himself in Christ. He wanted to establish the task of historical research to serve the examination and description of the historic (= "geschichtlich") Christ of the New Testament. ² It has to be pointed out that Barth never denied the usefulness of historical research; he was only anxious to prevent it from transgressing its limits. "Barth maintained that ... historical research ... furnished no more than the means of a prelude or preamble to the one indispensable task of the Biblical interpreter, which is to 'expose the Word in the Words', to describe and define the religious content of the Biblical documents." ³

Whatever one may think of Barth, one has to bear in

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- 1) Anderson, Jesus, p.24; also Robinson, New Quest, p.45,28. Robinson mentions "an increasingly positive evaluation of history on the part of K.Barth" (ibid., p.22). As far as I can see, however, Barth remained quite firm about his confining himself to the biblical Christ, and not going back to the history behind the N.T. texts.
 - 2) Barth, KD I/2, p.71.
 - 3) Anderson, Jesus, p.22. Similar views are held quite often, e.g. by Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, pp.131ff, although I would not identify Brunner and Barth so quickly. The differences between them are fundamental, not "only important to them" (ibid., p.132).

mind the question he raised, when he pointed again to the problematic character of the nineteenth century concept of the relation between faith and history. He did so by pointing to the problematic relation of history to revelation. How can history be revelatory? That is a question we surely shall have to come back to.

3.3 R. Bultmann: The Kerygma

I shall not give a description of Bultmann's whole theological approach towards our problem, for on the one hand others have already done so,¹ and on the other hand such an attempt would need more than a short paragraph. I shall try to give a very brief survey of the main issues Bultmann

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- 1) See for example Anderson, Jesus, pp.24ff; Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, pp.52ff; and Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, pp.139ff. Richardson, however, gives a somewhat strange account of Bultmann's theology, since he uses rather emotional language when he speaks of Bultmann: e.g. "Bultmann and his apologists" (p.139); "positivist conception of the nature of history" (p.143); "Bultmann and his disciples" (p.145); and so on. One gets the impression that Bultmann is viewed as a heretical enemy of Christianity, gathering some faithful disciples around him and seeking the help of "existentialist philosophy" to destroy the truth of Christian faith. I would question, whether Richardson describes Bultmann appropriately, because it strikes me for example that Richardson charges Bultmann with "inconsistency" (p.139); cf. to that e.g. Keck, op.cit., who judges Bultmann as following: "his work is an organic whole marked by very little change in direction ..." (p.50). Richardson also confuses Bultmann with liberalism (op.cit., p.141), which the latter expressively turned away from. Further it is not quite accurate to classify Bultmann under the title "Disengagement from History" (ibid., p.139, also p.141), for Bultmann's main interest was the interest in the meaning of history, as we shall see below (cf. also Anderson, Jesus, p.24).

has contributed to the discussion of the quest.

First of all, it has to be pointed out that Bultmann was sympathetic to the so-called "dialectic theology" right from the beginning. So, he shared with Barth the radical rejection of the nineteenth century liberalism, and he also was concerned with the problem of speaking of God without depriving him of his divinity. Bultmann's early essays show his radically different attitude towards the idea of progress which was an integral part of the life-of-Jesus theology. Bultmann was certainly considerably influenced by Heidegger's fundamental ontology, especially by Heidegger's view of human existence (the later "existentialist philosophy").¹ In the late Twenties of our century Bultmann found in Heidegger's analysis a new approach to the Gospel. He developed a new concept of the relation between theology and philosophy in terms of "understanding" and "pre-understanding". Philosophy relates to theology like pre-understanding to understanding. It was a dialectic relationship that showed quite clearly that Bultmann shared Barth's view of man not being able to reach God by his own means. As far as Bultmann is concerned with the historical Jesus, the "heart of his attitude" is his "indifference to concrete historical facts or happenings in their pastness".² More precisely, Bultmann

1) Cf. Anderson, Jesus, pp.37ff.

2) Anderson, op.cit., p.25.

was only interested in the "dass" of the historical Jesus,¹ since it only mattered for "Bultmann that Jesus lived and was crucified, for this single fact (...) prevents the Gospel from being only a myth"². This mere "happenedness" of the historical Jesus appears to be a sort of mathematical point from which only formal statements can be derived. Bultmann never held the historical Jesus to be an object of faith, since - for the present believer - the kerygma has replaced the historical Jesus.³ Nevertheless, the kerygma cannot be thought of apart from the fact of the historical Jesus. Bultmann was not prepared, however, to go any step further. In his discussion with those of his pupils who had in fact made that step (e.g. E.Käsemann, G.Ebeling, E.Fuchs, H.Braun, and others), Bultmann maintains again that the historical Jesus must remain - in contrast to the kerygma - a presupposition, and can never be the object of faith.⁴

The historical Jesus does not reach later generations; that happens only with the risen Lord in the kerygma.⁵ The

1) Anderson, Jesus, p.45.

2) Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, p.50 and also Bultmann, "Verhältnis", p.9.

3) "... so hat es (sc. the kerygma) sich an die Stelle des historischen Jesus gesetzt; es vertritt ihn" (Bultmann, op.cit., p.26).

4) See Bultmann, op.cit., passim, and also Bultmann, Theology, p.1.

5) "Erreicht der An- und Zuspruch des historischen Jesus in seiner 'Unmittelbarkeit' spätere Generationen? Eben das aber ereignet sich im Kerygma, indem nicht der Historische, sondern der Erhöhte spricht ..." (Bultmann, "Verhältnis", p.17).

reason for that lies in the particular character of the historical Jesus: he is a historical phenomenon and as such doomed to become past. To prove that Jesus understood himself to be an "eschatological" phenomenon, to show that he really had a "Vollmachtsbewusstsein", is the same as demonstrating historical phenomena¹ which - "per se" - do not have a significance for faith. Jesus - as a historical phenomenon - has promised salvation but he has not made it possible to have faith in himself, while the kerygma presents us with the risen Lord who has already brought salvation. Thus, the kerygma demands faith in Christ.² To express it in terms of a formula: the historical Jesus is at best to be understood in the category "promise", whereas the kerygmatic Christ necessitates the category of "fulfillment". Only on the latter can faith be based. Our repetition of the teaching of Jesus (gen.subj.!) may present us with a valuable historical phenomenon, but it puts before us only a new possibility of self-understanding, and that must not be confused with faith.³ It is not the chief task of the kerygma to present possibilities of a new self-understanding, although it, too, does that, but it is rather its particular task to evoke faith in the salvatory events of the death and the resurrection of Christ.⁴

1) Bultmann, "Verhältnis", p.17.

2) Bultmann, op.cit., p.25.

3) Bultmann, op.cit., p.25.

4) Bultmann, op.cit., p.26.

Thanks to this distinction it becomes clear why the teaching of the historical Jesus does not belong to the theology of the New Testament. Theology is a reflection on faith, and faith only exists since the kerygma came into existence.¹ The teaching of Jesus belongs to the historical presuppositions of the kerygma.² These few examples from different times in Bultmann's work may allow the conclusion that he maintained throughout his work the concept of a strictly kerygmatic theology.³ Indeed, for him there is neither possibility nor legitimacy in any type of an "old" or even "new quest", not even if the quest should be undertaken by his own pupils.⁴ In maintaining this, Bultmann claims to be in agreement with the whole New Testament which in fact started and ended with "kerygmatic theology".

Bultmann's position with regard to the historical Jesus is part of his general concept of history and faith. We have to turn to that now.

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- 1) Bultmann, Theologie, p.1.
 - 2) Bultmann, op.cit., pp.1 and 2.
 - 3) It has to be added that Bultmann was a very consistent thinker; cf. Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, p.50.
 - 4) As far as I can see, there is no "shift in position" in Bultmann, as Robinson, New Quest, pp.19ff wants to see. Robinson tries to warrant his thesis by pointing out that Bultmann finally "comes to the conclusion that Jesus' message after all is grace" (p.21), not law as Bultmann had viewed it earlier. Bultmann's main concern, however, is not whether the teaching of Jesus is law or grace, but rather whether the Christian Gospel should be valid for all generations. It is the danger of relativity which forces Bultmann to reject the historical Jesus as the object of faith. Bultmann's discussion of Robinson's "New Quest" (see "Verhältnis", pp.22ff) is in favour of my view.

One might have expected Bultmann to be in favour of the "quest", since he himself had written a book on the "historical Jesus".¹ In fact he was not. His book, however, shows that Bultmann had developed an understanding of history which was quite different from the nineteenth century. It further showed his estimate of the significance of the historical Jesus.

To begin with, Bultmann sees a fundamental difference between historiography and science. One cannot look at history in the same way as one looks at nature,² for if one observes nature one perceives there something objective ("Vorhandenes") which is not oneself, while in history one is involved oneself. Each judgement of history is to a certain degree a judgement as well over the observer.³ History asserts a claim on the historian, and he can only conceive of that claim by entering into a dialogue with history.⁴ Here Bultmann develops - following a long tradition from Kierkegaard to Heidegger - his new understanding of history and historiography in strong contradiction to "objective historiography". Objective historiography as it was in vogue in the nineteenth century can only deal with facts; thus, it is bound to miss the real

1) Bultmann, Jesus.

2) Bultmann, op.cit., p.7.

3) Bultmann, op.cit., p.7.

4) Bultmann, op.cit., p.8.

essence of history.¹ It is inauthentic historiography, in so far as it tries to "make history understandable", i. e. to confine and define history within the possibilities of the observer. So, nothing new can be brought out of history. The observer only notices what he already knows.

The essence of history is met when the observer enters into a personal encounter with history; that is the method of authentic historiography.² Authentic historiography confronts the observer with new possibilities of self-understanding, and involves him deeply in the process of events. Bultmann applies that concept of historiography to the historical Jesus. The historian is interested in the "work" of historic persons, i.e. in what they intended.³ Jesus' work was his word. Therefore his teaching is the object (and subject at the same time) of authentic historiography.⁴ It is not appropriate, though, to fit Jesus' teaching into an association of general ideas, for the observer would not, then, be able to encounter the really new possibilities put before him by history.⁵ We

1) Bultmann, Jesus, p.9.

2) Bultmann, op.cit., p.10. In this connection the strict distinction between "historisch" (= belonging to objective historiography) and "geschichtlich" (= belonging to 'encounter'-historiography) finds its appropriate place.

3) Bultmann, op.cit., p.13.

4) Bultmann, op.cit., p.13.

5) Bultmann, op.cit., p.14.

note here that the gap between the present observer and the past history has been bridged by a new hermeneutical principle: "encounter". Bultmann confronts the understanding of existence (i.e. the self-understanding) of a present observer with the understanding of existence of a past person, whereby that understanding is accessible through the latter's words. In so far as Jesus' teaching expresses his understanding of existence, the latter encounters us in our listening to Jesus' teaching as a question; namely the question how we are going to understand ourselves.¹ The understandings of existence are the commensurate factors in history, the encounter between different self-understandings makes possible our historic understanding. Hermeneutics is here no longer a schema that can be applied to historical phenomena objectively, but rather it is conceived as a process challenging both past and present.

The new concept of historiography - and I would like to stress this explicitly - does not provide a new possibility of theology.² The results obtained by the new method of understanding are of no greater immediate theological relevance than the results of the "objective"

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- 1) Jesus' teaching is "... die Auslegung der eigenen, in / der Bewegung, in der Ungesicherheit, in der Entscheidung befindlichen Existenz". His words "... begegnen uns als Fragen, wie wir selber unsere Existenz auffassen wollen" (Bultmann, Jesus, pp.14f).
 - 2) Bultmann, op.cit., pp.10f.

method. Quite on the contrary: it is essential for the observer to take his place within history. Therefore, he has to stay away from any kind of judgement which is based upon the distinction between history and supra-history.¹ It is a necessary presupposition of the new historical understanding that the historian delivers himself to the relativity of history, otherwise no real dialogue would be possible. Therefore it is impossible that God (who is for Bultmann non-historical and eschatological) can be expressed in terms of this new historiography. And therefore again, the results of that enterprise as such cannot be relevant for faith. Only the kerygma which tells us the story of Jesus as an eschatological story, and which itself is eschatological, is able to express God and to evoke faith. For Bultmann, any "quest" - be it old or new - ends in the unnecessary attempt to prove the legitimacy of the kerygma, which can only deprive the kerygma of its true value.²

3.4 Conclusion

The attack against the life-of-Jesus movement described above was a radical one. It did not merely criticise the

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- 1) "Deshalb unterbleiben auch solche Wertungen, die auf der Unterscheidung von Geschichtlichem und Uebergeschichtlichem in der Geschichte beruhen" (Bultmann, Jesus, p.11).
 - 2) See Bultmann, "Verhältnis", p.14. This estimate of the kerygma entails - as it was often noticed (cf.e.g. Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, p.58) - necessarily a high estimate of the Church. And indeed, Bultmann holds faith in Christ to be faith in the Church at the same time (ibid., p.26), although not in the empirical Church.

fallibility of the historical method, but rather the whole approach was rejected. Kähler reminded us that we are not at all in agreement with the New Testament if we go behind the texts. Barth pointed out the problem that arises if one tries to think historical events as God's revelation. Bultmann takes seriously afresh the New Testament kerygma in which alone the risen Christ is presented to every age without being drawn into the relativity of history.

It seems to me that the question of "faith and history" in fact underlies most of the arguments about the significance of the historical Jesus.

4.0 Faith and History

It is often pointed out that the realities marked by these two terms are in an intimate relationship to each other. Both of them, however, are ambiguous. History, above all, needs urgently a precise definition, otherwise one keeps saying everything and nothing at the same time by saying "history".

4.1. Definitions

To begin with, "history" means generally two not necessarily identical things at the same time: on the one hand history is "everything that has happened", and on the other hand

it means our knowledge of what has happened.¹ These two meanings must not be isolated, for it is lacking of any significance to think of history (purely as what happened) without thinking of a mind knowing history. But it has to be pointed out that history exists prior to our thinking of it, and that it must not be confused with our knowledge of it. Although our mind changes and shapes "history" by telling and collecting it, our mind does not make history. To bring some order into our argument I think it best to mark the distinction between the two meanings of "history" by two different terms.

By "history" I mean everything that happens, and that outside our mind. History is defined here as a complete "extra nos" with regard to our mind or imagination; the nature of history in this sense is comparable to the nature of physical objects. History is the sum of all events that happen, whereby every kind of meaning must be based upon history itself and not upon our mind.² If I speak of the "meaning of history" then I mean the meaning

1) Compare for the German term "Geschichte" Gadamer, "Geschichtsphilosophie", RGG II, col. 1489: "Das deutsche Wort Geschichte ... meint sowohl die geschehene Geschichte als auch das Wissen von ihr ...".

2) I am well aware of the fact that this concept of history is too abstract. We do not know history itself, for we are always confronted with "interpretation". But for the sake of penetrating the history-faith-relationship, the term "history" had to be introduced. The confusion of history and interpretation causes considerable disorder.

which is owned by history itself, i.e. which is not indebted to the meaning we give to history by our interpretations.

By "interpretation" I mean history as it is told by human beings (historians); I have chosen this particular term, because every telling of history necessarily involves interpretation. He who tells history tells what history means for him. Even his choice of which history he intends to tell is already based on a decision involving interpretation. In contrast to "history", "interpretation" cannot be considered as "extra nos", although it is intimately related to that "extra-nos-history". With interpretation the possibility of error and illusion has to be taken into account. But nevertheless, interpretation may well be influenced by history itself.

Now, if the historian who gives his interpretation (of history) wants to explain why he interprets history precisely in this and not in a different way, then he will point to history itself, i.e. he will produce evidence; he will make known some facts. So, under "fact" we have to understand a historical event bare of any interpretation and meaning. Obviously, "fact" is an abstraction. Facts never happen really in history, because history either always has a meaning - if only one knew the just point of view - or it has no meaning at all and then it is useless to talk about it. He who interprets history presupposes

that history has a meaning, namely the meaning he grasps in his interpretation. And to justify his interpretation he will produce facts which as such are viewed meaningless and uninterpreted events in history (objective facts).¹ Facts in this sense are not quite a product of history itself, but rather they are produced by the historian looking for a foundation for his interpretation. The historian works out facts in the process of coming to his goal: a factual interpretation.

4.2. The Meaning of History

The meaning of history (which is not identical with the meaning presupposed in the historian's interpretation) is defined by the whole process of history. If one is able to overlook the whole history, one can possibly tell its meaning. That is only possible after history has come to its end. Thus, the end of history defines the significance of history (as a process "extra nos"). Since - obviously - history has not yet come to its end, the meaning of history is not knowable. That implies that the statement "history

1) Downing, Church, introduces this term "fact" as a parallel to the objects of scientists (p.138). He seems to identify "facts" with "historical events" (pp. 138, 142, 143) in contrast to the view described above.

has no meaning" is illegitimate, in so far as it is achieved by transcending the limits of our knowledge. To talk about the meaning of history always implies a meta-historical point of view. For instance the "idea of progress" that was held to be the meaning of history in the nineteenth century presupposes a steady progress in (at least human) history. Whether that idea is adequate to history or not cannot be known; simply because the coming centuries cannot be known; these could well falsify the "idea of progress".¹

Our time has ceased to think about the aim of history, but nevertheless historians still interpret history within the limits of history itself. These interpretations are not identical with the meaning of history, i.e. they are relative, for they could at any time be overtaken by the course of events. Historians deliberately admit the relativity of their interpretations.

One can escape the problem of asking for the meaning of history if one adopts an existentialist standpoint. Here, history has been replaced by the "Geschichtlichkeit" of existence. Granted that, it is the existence (man) who makes history by deciding his past and future in the present moment. The meaning of history, then, is only

1) Also Niebuhr (quoted from Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, p.247) has seen that clearly.

present in a moment of human decision. History has no meaning in and of itself. History is a secondary phenomenon, for it is founded upon the primary "Zeitlichkeit" and "Geschichtlichkeit" of existence ("Dasein").¹ There is no history without existence.

The problem of relativity is solved, too, because of the fundamentally ontological principle that existence is primary as against essence. Existence is the basis of fundamental ontology, and therefore traditionally ontological terms do not apply to existence. More yet, they are secondary to existence.² The whole existentialist view of reality cannot be discussed here; but it is necessary to make one critical remark. In this concept one can no longer legitimately speak of history as "extra nos". And that - I think - is not appropriate to reality. It is not true that man alone makes history (as follows from the existentialist point of view), but also history makes man (as corresponds to our daily experience). In fact, what existentialists view as "history" would - according to the definition given above - fall under the term "interpretation". It has to be avowed that we know history as interpreted history, but that does not entail that there is no history at all. To abandon history is to simplify reality. Thus, the problem of the "meaning of history"

1) Cf. Gadamer, "Geschichtlichkeit", RGG II, col. 1497.

2) Cf. Gadamer, op.cit., col. 1497.

remains, and with it that of relativity.

Former ages may have solved the problem of relativity by introducing God as the governor of history. History had its aim, namely, to serve the purposes of God. And that, too, was the meaning of history. We are no longer in a position to share this or a similar view. We are bound to describe and interpret history by principles we find within history. Modern historiography is secular, and as such it refuses to introduce any non-empirical principles in its system. Whether this historiography is really empirical will not be discussed here. It suffices to state that our secular historiography provides secular interpretations and considers history a complete chain of events without any gaps, least of all for divine intervention.

This secular concept of history (or: secular historiography) necessarily entails that one cannot speak historically of God. It also entails that one cannot "affirm the unique significance of Jesus for the whole human story", because uniqueness of significance can only be brought to expression by introducing God into history.¹ So, for secular historiography, God's revelation in Jesus Christ, or God's revelation in history, is "a priori" unthinkable,² because the presuppositions do not allow it.³

1) See e.g. Baelz, "A Deliberate Mistake?", p.31.

2) It does not help to introduce the term "miraculous" (see Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, pp.184ff) to provide for a possibility of historically establishing God's revelation. Historiography is bound to find a secular explanation, even for the miraculous.

3) That does not necessarily mean that God did not reveal himself in history (as defined above). Here, the problem

How, then, should we expect historiography to give testimony to God's revelation?

4.3 History and Interpretation

A. Richardson tends to avoid the whole complexity of the relationship between history and interpretation by identifying both. "History is from first to last interpretation", he states.¹ Consequently, he also maintains that historiography is entirely subjective, since the interpretation is determined by the man the historian is.² Obviously within this concept it is superfluous to speak of history in its actual sense. History is dissolved into interpretation. Consequently again, Richardson is forced to deny the existence of facts, for where there is no history as a counterpart to interpretation, there is no historiography producing evidence: it follows that there are no facts in the sense defined above.³ Facts, too, bear the character of interpretation.

of thinking God's revelation is at stake. To think God's revelation in history would require a special historiography with distinct axioms. That however would be the same as claiming that a sacred history existed besides normal history. If we want to communicate with people thinking in terms of secular historiography, we are not allowed to introduce a specially Christian historiography.

- 1) Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, pp. 190f. For critical remarks see Downing, Church, p.141 and n.18 which refers to literature criticising Richardson's over-all concept of history.
- 2) Richardson, op.cit., p.203.
- 3) For Richardson, 'facts' themselves bear the character of interpretation, since they are "nothing more than judgements of evidence which have been agreed upon by a large number of historians" (op.cit., p.193). Facts are

The question arises here, in which way different, contradictory interpretations of the same "event" are supposed to be judged. Where is the evidence by which a historian's interpretation can be judged and criticised, when there is neither history nor facts? How is one supposed to distinguish myths from interpretation of history? Indeed, Richardson seems to confuse interpretations and myths:

"Interpretations (myths) of history are not (...) empirically deduced from an objective study of 'the facts', for at every point, even at the point of deciding what are the facts, the personal judgement of the historian is involved"¹. From this point of view anyway it is not clear what the distinction between myth and interpretation should be. On the other side, Richardson is quite anxious to show that Christian interpretation of history has nothing to do with a myth. "Myth is essentially 'practical history'."² "The myth is a kind of Realized Eschatology."³ Not so with Christianity, for "in so far as it is ever possible to demonstrate an historical statement, it is certain that the Christian faith did not arise as an ideological myth"⁴.

not objective, but changeable (ibidem). For a critique see Downing, op.cit., pp.141ff, who points out that "interpretation must refer to evidence" (ibid., p.146).

- 1) Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, p.247. Also here he says that "historical interpretations (myths) are not 'read off' from the records of the past, but are chosen by persons in the light of their present experience and their determination to shape the future".
- 2) Richardson, op.cit., p.245.
- 3) Richardson, op.cit., p.245.
- 4) Richardson, op.cit., p.248.

Why that? On the one hand, the Gospel is not indebted to certain socio-economic conditions (as a myth always is), and on the other hand "... Christian faith is based upon the actual witness of history in a way in which the social myths are not"¹. Myths are unhistorical. "Belief in the social myths is a worshipping of the work of man's hands.."; "Christian faith is an historical faith, not a mythology".² Richardson suddenly wants to establish the utmost contrast between myth and interpretation, but how can there be a contrast when both are related to history in the same way (see above)? The only way to distinguish them is to distinguish how they come into existence, namely to prove that the myths are products of socio-economic conditions, whereas that is not the case with Christianity. Richardson would have to prove that historically. How can he do that when history is "from first to last interpretation"? The circle is perfect.

Richardson applies his principle of "history = interpretation" to Jesus and the Church.³ "It is generally agreed that history cannot properly be written until after some decades have elapsed ..."⁴. That means that the real history of Jesus is interpreted history of him, written some decades later. The conclusion is now easy: "... the

1) Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, p.248.

2) Richardson, op.cit., p.249.

3) Richardson, op.cit., pp.243ff.

4) Richardson, op.cit., p.235.

Jesus of history ... is the Jesus of the developed historical judgement of the Church that is found in the Four Gospels."¹ That is, however, not a historical statement but rather a dogmatic one. By denying the existence of history apart from interpretation Richardson succeeds in reducing the process of criticism, so that only different interpretations have to be argued about.² And to go on, he establishes "a priori" that the historical Jesus is the Jesus as pictured in the New Testament. The "final" interpretation was achieved when the Church fixed the canon.³ We can penetrate the true structure of Richardson's argument if we present it in simple terms: history is identical with interpretation; the interpretation given by the early Church is the right one; thus, Christianity is a historical faith.

Richardson does not seem to provide for the possibilities of a critical questioning of the interpretation given by faith. The history told by faith is either to be accepted or to be rejected - a totalitarian decision. There is no "extra nos" of faith, except the "extra nos" of the Church's faith.

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- 1) Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, p.240.
 - 2) These interpretations are relative (Richardson, op.cit., pp. 250ff). But - so does Richardson argue - everybody has to admit that there are better and worse interpretations. So, the road is clear to introduce the Christian interpretation as the best one.
 - 3) Richardson, op.cit., p.241.

Against Richardson's rather one-sided view, Downing¹ points out that the standards of historiography are not fundamentally different from those of the natural sciences, and that history cannot "dispense with the 'objectivity' which is called 'honesty' in everyday conversation ..."². With regard to Jesus and the Church, the historian must "simply rest content with a plurality of resulting hypotheses, rather than a solid result of the kind he would like."³ There is simply not enough material.

But how about the believer? Should he base his faith upon that "plurality of hypotheses"? In a general discussion of the relevance past events have, Downing reaches the conclusion that "a man's values" have no "logically necessary link" with the past.⁴ Consequently, "a recognizably 'Christian' commitment may have no necessary connection with past events (...) at all"⁵. However, Downing seems to know another faith that is interested in history. His own faith happens to be of that kind.⁶ As regards his own faith, Downing thinks it true that Jesus

1) F.G.Downing, The Church and Jesus, London 1968.

2) Cf. Downing, op.cit., p.169. He had probably better say "historiography", for "history" in the sense that what happened is always objective.

3) Downing, op.cit., pp.169f.

4) Downing, op.cit., p.174. Obviously he is going to identify "faith" and "value" (which is rather problematic); he does this so that he is able later to say that faith has no logically necessary link with the past; see indeed ibid., p.178!

5) See note 4.

6) See Downing, op.cit., pp.181f.

Christ and the facts about his life are "essential", for Jesus Christ is "the initiation of a relationship between us and 'God' ..."¹. It would be very interesting to know the exact meaning of "initiation". However, Downing does not seem to distinguish between the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ. He seems to presuppose that the historical Jesus is relevant for his faith, since the former is the "invitation as first given and as continued ..."², however uncertain the historical results are. The risk implied with such a commitment to past facts is justified by the dogmatic statement that "faith inevitably involves a risk"³. It is very questionable, though, whether the risk of faith is constituted by a choice between different attitudes and theories of historiography.

Turning to the quest for the historical Jesus Downing takes no risks in making a decision. "It is possible to abandon the quest and still remain Christian;" but for "my own sort of commitment (...) the quest is essential".⁴ In fact, Downing does not answer the question how faith is related to history, nor how faith is related to historiography, nor how the Jesus of historiography can or must have theological (and not only personal)

1) Downing, Church, pp.186f. I cannot see, however, in how far the faiths of one and the same 'Christian character' can be so different as to the relevance of history. Either history is relevant, or it is not; but not both - and!

2) Downing, op.cit., pp.186f.

3) Downing, op.cit., p.185.

4) Downing, op.cit., p.187.

relevance. These questions are no matter of personal opinion; the essence of faith is at stake here.

4.4 A Historical Faith

Under a "historical faith" in the Christian sense we understand a faith in God generated by God's acts in history. In other words, this faith is indebted to and based upon history. This faith is itself an interpretation of history, in so far as it confesses that God has entered history. It should be pointed out, that faith is not the result of events previously interpreted, but rather that it is interpretation related to the "extra nos" of history. Faith is on principle the same as the results of historiography, in so far as it is in the same way (namely: interpretatively) related to history. It is distinct from every other interpretation of history, in^{so} far as it maintains that history must be interpreted by metahistorical terms (= the transcendent God), whereas the secular interpretation bases on the axiom, that metahistorical factors must not be used in interpreting history. (How far secular historiography, too, is in fact applying metahistorical terms, will not be discussed here. The important point is that historiography claims to be secular.)

So, if one says: "'that God existed in human form'

is not a 'historical fact'"¹, one has to be quite clear about one thing: God is no "historical fact" only in the sense that he is "per definitionem" excluded from being a piece of evidence for a certain interpretation. The nature of historiography excludes God from "occurring" in history. As a matter of fact, whether God really "occurs" in history, we do not know (that is a matter of dispute between faith and historiography); we only know that he does not occur in the modern interpretation of history. That we have to accept.

Consequently, we are confronted with an almost insuperable problem: what meaning can secular historiography have for faith? What exactly is the relationship between faith (as interpretation of history) and the interpretations and facts delivered by modern historiography?[?] Either the revelation of God in Jesus really happened in history, and then we are bound to take the results of historiography seriously, or it did not happen, and then we have no "extra nos" of faith, no historical experience inducing faith, and no historical faith at all.

Christian faith is born of history,² and therefore it has to explain itself historically(as indeed the early

1) E.g. Knox, Myth and Truth, pp.62f.

2) Against Anderson, Jesus, p.102, who maintains that "Christian faith, while not unconnected with historical knowledge, is not born of historical knowledge ..." (italics mine; "historical knowledge means here the same as "history"). What is faith born of, then?

Christians did right from the beginning, compare e.g. 1Cor 15,3ff). So, it is dependent on historical research (it would mean the end of Christian faith, if research proved that there had never been a Jesus). It is dangerous to buy the freedom of faith for the price of having to accept that its account of history is mythical.¹ Faith has always maintained that its truth does not lie in the power of the interpretation (as it would be the case with myths), but rather in history itself. Faith, therefore, points to an "extra nos" which makes it possible for us to question faith for its own sake.

Bultmann has discovered a concept which does enable him to hold on to the significance of secular history for faith: the concept of "paradoxical identity" of historical events and God's revelation.² The critical stage is reached when it comes to the decision whether this paradoxical identity is produced in the believer's mind (Bultmann would probably say: in the kerygma), or whether it is - as the New Testament holds - present in history itself. Faith knows this paradoxical identity as being before itself. The present conditions of thinking, however, do not allow us to find God in history. So that the task of theology with regard to our particular problem of the significance of the historical Jesus for faith can be

1) Against Knox, Myth and Truth, p.62.

2) An outline of this fundamental concept is sketched by Robinson, "Revelation as Word and History", pp.24ff.

defined as following: theology has to think God's revelation in history in such a way that both God (as creator and as such not part of history) and history (as viewed by our present historiography as a secular chain of events in which there are no gaps for divine interventions) are taken seriously. One of the major attempts to fulfill this task is the "new quest for the historical Jesus". To that movement in recent history of theology, we have to turn now.

5.0 The New Quest¹

The "new quest" is far from being a theological movement with a homogenous character. As we shall see later the phenomenon described by that term is very many-sided and complex. Even the term itself is rather ambiguous. How is it defined? What relationship may be stated between the "new" and the "old quest"? Is the "new quest" new, because it is a younger historical phenomenon than the "old quest"? Or is the newness of the recent quest founded in a qualitatively new approach to the same subject which the "old quest" was also concerned with? I shall try to answer these questions later.

To begin with, I shall try to analyse the features of the new quest by examining the initiators of the movement. We shall focus our attention on the problem of the relationship between God's revelation and history as

1) Compare Robinson, New Quest, passim, and also Anderson, Jesus, pp.149ff as regarding the term.

I have already indicated above.¹ This focusing of attention seems justified, because the new quest was (or: is?) in fact an attempt to think God's revelation in terms of history.² Indeed, the focal point of the said problem is the historical Jesus, for the sheer fact of his existence gave to all subsequent theology the task to think about God historically. This way of thinking had already begun in the Old Testament; it was stressed afresh at the very beginning of Christian theology, and it has remained decisive ever since those days. The problem, however, has become more and more difficult because of the increasing secularization of historiography (and with it, naturally, of our view of history itself).

5.1 The Beginning of the New Quest

To investigate this theological movement I think it best to start by having a look at its historical roots. The new quest has originated in the continental Bultmannian school which has dominated the decades in the middle of our century. It is not by chance that the new interest in the historical Jesus started from this theological environment, for Bultmann's very radical position with regard to

1) See above pp.70ff, esp. p.73.

2) Cf. e.g. Robinson, New Quest, pp.85ff or Käsemann, "Problem", pp.139f.

history was bound to provoke a reaction sooner or later.¹ Thus, we legitimately confine ourselves first of all to the start of the new quest marked by E.Käsemann, G.Ebeling, and E.Fuchs.²

5.1.1 E.Käsemann: the Question of Continuity

The "new quest" was officially born when E.Käsemann addressed a meeting of "Marburg (sic!) old students" having chosen the title "Das Problem des historischen Jesus". This now famous essay opened afresh the debate about the historical Jesus. And moreover, all the fundamental questions attached to this problem are in fact present in Käsemann's programmatic essay.

Under the title "Der Sinn des Historischen in unseren Evangelien" Käsemann gives a summarized account of the significance of the historical Jesus.³ Firstly the historical Jesus (or: the history in the gospels) indicates that God's revelation binds itself to a concrete history. Doing so, God reveals his freedom, and his adherence to

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- 1) Käsemann, "Problem", p.126 expresses the same feeling by saying that "Wissenschaft bewegt sich ja in Antithesen vorwärts, und Bultmanns Radikalität fordert eine Reaktion geradezu heraus".
 - 2) Obviously, the interest in the historical Jesus is not confined to the Continent. But in so far as we speak of a "new quest", we have to bear in mind that this is only possible if there had been a real end to the old quest. That end was finally and radically generated within the Bultmannian school. So only here, presupposing that "shift away from history", can we speak of a new quest properly.
 - 3) Käsemann, "Problem", pp.138ff.

concrete history creates the possibility of our decision for or against.¹ God has chosen to approach man not in form of a mathematical or physical law which forces man to acknowledge him, but in history, which opens up possibilities of argument. One realizes here that the historical Jesus has an outstanding theological relevance.

Secondly, history is also the decisive point where the earthly corporeality as the sphere of revelation is at stake.² One has to be very careful here: Käsemann is not maintaining that the historical Jesus is identical with God's revelation. He only wants to preserve history as a sphere of revelation. To identify history and revelation would mean to return to the nineteenth century quest.³ Käsemann carefully distinguishes history and revelation without making them entirely unrelated. The earthly corporeality attached to God's revelation is of fundamental importance: it means that Christianity must be very much concerned with what goes on on earth; and

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- 1) Käsemann, "Problem", p.139: "Kurz, die Kontingenz der Offenbarung, die sich in ihrer Bindung an eine konkrete Historie bekundet, spiegelt die Freiheit des handelnden Gottes und begründet die Möglichkeit unserer Entscheidung" (italics mine).
 - 2) History cannot be given up, because "mit der Historie nicht bloss die Kontingenz der Offenbarung, sondern auch die irdische Leiblichkeit als Bereich der Offenbarung steht und fällt" (Käsemann, op.cit., p.140, italics mine).
 - 3) See above pp.25f.

that Christians are to share the sufferings of the world without trying to escape into a spiritual sphere; and that the way in which God revealed himself makes it possible to speak of God in terms of earthly corporeality (and not transcendent metaphysics only).¹

Finally, Käsemann states that the Synoptics - by holding the Gospel and history together - want to point out the "extra nos" of salvation as an "antecedent" to faith.² This "extra nos" of salvation, which belongs to the heart of Christian theology, can be expressed by maintaining the historical dimension of revelation.³ Here Käsemann reaches one of the focal points of the history-revelation relationship. There is always the possibility that the "extra nos" of faith is perverted into an "extra nos" of facts prior to our recognition of them, as the example of Luke's gospel shows.⁴ If history is identified with revelation, the necessary consequence is a merely factual "extra nos" of revelation, which is - for modern historiography - simply unsensible and unthinkable. Modern

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- 1) This crucial issue was already present in the early community fighting against an enthusiastic docetism as well as against the doctrine of historical kenosis; see Käsemann, "Problem", p.134. It is clear that with the earthly corporeality of revelation the possibility of ambiguity and skandalon is given; see *ibid.*, p.140.
 - 2) Käsemann, *op.cit.*, p.141: "Sie (the Synoptics) wollen ... das extra nos des Heiles als Vorgegebenheit des Glaubens herausstellen" (italics mine); compare also Käsemann, "Sackgassen", pp.62ff, esp. p.68 where Käsemann rejects the accusation of "Objektivierung".
 - 3) Käsemann, *op.cit.*, p.141.
 - 4) Käsemann, *op.cit.*, p.141.

historiography is bound to produce a causal explanation for everything (and - as a matter of fact - God cannot be a cause in the chain of events). The concept of a factual "extra nos" entails that God must be recognizable as a "factor" in history. If revelation is introduced as a "historical factor", it is deprived of its divine character.¹

In order to understand Käsemann's concept of "historical revelation", it is necessary to understand his concept of history. History in itself has no meaning whatsoever, if it is only transmitted and stated as a set of facts.² History only has "geschichtliche"³ meaning in so far as it addresses our present age both asking and answering; that means: history only has a meaning if it is mediated by interpreters.⁴ All history, though it becomes accessible through transmission only, becomes understandable through interpretation only.⁵ Käsemann applies this concept

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- 1) Käsemann, op.cit., p.139: "Offenbarung hört auf, Gottes Offenbarung zu sein, wenn man sie in einen Kausalzusammenhang bringt."
 - 2) Käsemann, op.cit., p.132.
 - 3) It is very likely that Käsemann takes over Bultmann's distinction of "historisch" and "geschichtlich". There are many signs, however, that "geschichtlich" has no longer its strictly existentialist sense. Käsemann uses it in the sense of "meaningful" for individuals or societies.
 - 4) Käsemann is not saying that history is "from first to last interpretation" (as Richardson does, cf. above, p.64). He only says that history has no meaning for us if it is reported factually. In my terms: history, reported in the abstraction of facts, cannot have any significance. Consequently, facts do not address the present age. But neither history nor facts are identical with interpretation (against Richardson, cf. above, pp. 64f, esp. p.64,n.3).
 - 5) Käsemann, op.cit., p.128.

of history (which is reminiscent of his teacher, R. Bultmann) to the historical Jesus and the early Church. The historical Jesus needed to be interpreted by the early Church, for he would be without any relevance or meaning, if he had been transmitted simply as a stated fact. Only within the decision of faith or unbelief can that "frozen history of Jesus" become afresh a living history.¹ That means that Jesus has to be presented as the risen Lord who is identical with the earthly Jesus. To direct our attention to the historical Jesus only is an illegitimate abstraction² and is entirely irrelevant for Christian faith. The "frozen history of Jesus" needed interpretation, and this interpretation was done by the early Church in the light of its Easter faith. That does not mean, however, that Christian faith has received its whole content from Easter; the Easter kerygma had founded the Christian proclamation, but Easter faith did not provide entirely and exclusively its content.³ The Gospel is also determined by the history of Jesus.⁴ Unfortunately - as far as I can

1) "Nur in der Entscheidung des Glaubens oder Unglaubens vermag auch jene erstarrte Geschichte der Historie Jesu erneut lebendige Geschichte zu werden" (Käsemann, "Problem", p.133).

2) Käsemann, op.cit., p.133.

3) Käsemann, op.cit., p.141.

4) It has to be noted that for the early Christians history was subordinated to eschatology; i.e. history has received its significance for us from eschatology (and not "vice versa", as Luke suggests; cf. Käsemann, op.cit., pp.135ff, esp. p.138). A very important distinction which will be considered later.

see - Käsemann fails to explain in detail how he views the relation of Easter and historical Jesus.

According to Käsemann, the "quest for the historical Jesus" is only legitimate, if it is not separated from the confession to the risen Lord. History is only meaningful, if it is interpreted. The interpretation is provided by the Easter faith. Consequently, the quest for the historical Jesus is legitimately the question of the continuity of the Gospel within the discontinuity of ages and within the variations of the kerygma.¹ Here again, Käsemann is not as clear as one would wish. He states that continuity and discontinuity are in a dialectic relationship,² it is not clear, however, how one is to define that relation. On the

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- 1) This central statement summarizes Käsemann's whole approach towards the historical Jesus; cf. "Problem", p.152: "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." Compare Robinson, New Quest, p.13; Anderson, Jesus, p.9; Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, p. 146. All three take a similar view of Käsemann's main contribution.
 - 2) Cf. Käsemann, "Sackgassen", p.43 (referring to Ebeling's attempt to define what continuity is). Decisive seems to be a "particular trend" ("Gefälle", cf. pp.43,46, and often) within that dialectic relationship: continuity is then to be noticed, when a certain "factor" retains its previous "trend" albeit the discontinuity of history. But strictly speaking, continuity rests upon the decision of the historian (Käsemann, "Sackgassen", p.46). And yet, Käsemann seems to see historical continuity in the sense that in regard to the historical Jesus he wants to state a christology in nuce (see the analysis in Käsemann, "Problem", pp.144ff "Die Eigenart der Sendung Jesu"; and the term in "Sackgassen", p.55 and often).

In reply to Bultmann, Käsemann wants to indicate by the term "christology in nuce" that he holds important

one hand, there is the view that a certain factor is constant in the process from the historical Jesus to the kerygmatic Christ, and on the other hand Käsemann maintains, that Easter both connects and separates Jesus and Christ to the same extent.¹ How can this be matched with the "trend" that constitutes continuity?

However, one might be allowed to interpret Käsemann in the sense that the quest for the historical Jesus has its legitimate place within the repetition in our minds ("Nachvollzug") of the step from history to interpretation made for the first time by the earliest Church, and requiring to be made afresh for every era of the Church.²

a material continuity, whereas Bultmann still maintains the necessity of only a formal continuity (cf. Käsemann, "Sackgassen", pp. 49,55f). Granted a material continuity the exact meaning of Easter becomes a problem: is Easter, then, only a formal factor in the process from kerygma "in nuce" to kerygma? Everything depends on what exactly Käsemann means by "in nuce"; as to that he is not clear. Or in other words: what does Käsemann precisely mean when he states that the community understood the particular Character of Jesus' mission by responding to his proclamation with the confession that he is God's Son and the Messiah (cf. "Problem", p.150: "Seine Gemeinde hätte aber gerade damit die Eigenart seiner Sendung als verstanden bezeugt, dass sie seiner Verkündigung mit ihrem Bekenntnis zum Messias und Gottessohn antwortete.")? Does it mean that the community could have understood Jesus in the same way they did after Easter already before Easter? What, then, would be the revelatory character of Easter?

- 1) "Das Ostergeschehen ist die Brücke zwischen Jesus und dem gesamten späteren Kerygma, das beides ebenso trennt wie verbindet" (Käsemann, "Sackgassen", p.46).
- 2) Cf. Käsemann, "Problem", p.129. Käsemann seems to view this step from history to interpretation as a step which can be observed quite often in history. "Sie (the early community) interpretiert, was schon für sie zur Historie geworden ist, aus ihrer eigenen Erfahrung heraus ..."

Is that a revival of the old quest?¹ To come to such a conclusion with regard to Käsemann's approach would indicate a total misunderstanding. For, firstly, Käsemann does not intend to work out a biography of Jesus, which he considers impossible.² Käsemann is, consequently, not interested in the personality of Jesus. He only wants to show that the early Church preserved some characteristic features of the historical Jesus, more precisely: of his preaching. Käsemann wants to show further how the early Church integrated these (historical) features into its kerygma.³ In this regard, Käsemann is far from renewing the old quest.

It has to be added that, secondly, Käsemann's approach is distinct from the nineteenth century life-of-Jesus movement, in so far as he absolutely refuses to identify the historical Jesus with the object of our faith (Jesus Christ). Käsemann confines himself entirely to the question of continuity. Whatever this continuity may

(ibid., p.129). I suspect that this integration in the general process of history-interpretation has caused the said unsharpness in the concept of continuity, simply because it is not appropriate to the N.T.texts.

- 1) Käsemann himself has asked this question, cf. "Problem", p.151.
- 2) Käsemann, "Problem", pp.151f.
- 3) "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 vereinigte." Cf. Käsemann, "Problem", p.152; earlier he had stated that Jesus' characteristic is his sermons (ibid., p.150).

exactly mean, the search for it was never a part of the nineteenth century approach.

One could sum up the difference of Käsemann's quest from the old one in a formula which he himself uses: the present quest is distinct from the past, in so far as the theological relevance of history became again a problem;¹ and that is new indeed, for in the old quest the theological relevance of history was far from being a problem, on the contrary, it was taken for granted "a priori". We can see here, that Käsemann's approach was not only historically new but also qualitatively new. This qualitative newness summed up in the formula above will set the standard for every other approach. It will serve as a criterion to measure the "new quest", in so far as the new quest has to legitimate itself formally by realising that the theological relevance of history is treated as a problem, even though the solutions may be quite different from Käsemann's. That criterion will mark the border between "old" and "new" quest, and it may very well be that this border is not identical with their border in history.²

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- 1) "Die 'neue Frage' verdient nur deshalb neu genannt zu werden, weil die theologische Relevanz des Historischen in einem vorher ungekannten Ausmasse zu einem akuten und entscheidenden, aber im Grunde völlig unbewältigten Problem geworden ist" (Käsemann, "Sackgassen", p.31).
 - 2) Compare e.g. Käsemann's discussion with Jeremias, whom he cites under the title "Die Fortsetzung der alten Leben-Jesu-Forschung"; see "Sackgassen", pp.32ff.

5.1.2 G.Ebeling: the Witness to Faith

"... Jesus is the criterion of Christology."¹ This statement indicates the deep interest of a dogmatician and the serious involvement of a scholar in the question of the historical Jesus. I am sure it is not by chance that Ebeling's brief outline of the significance of Jesus for theology is dedicated to R.Bultmann,² for it is the attempt of one of his pupils to move away from his teacher's position.

After having defined the "meaning of the phrase 'historical Jesus'"³, Ebeling brings a light to bear upon the basic "historical aporia" underlying the research into the historical Jesus.⁴ That aporia results from the need to make a historical person dogmatically (i.e. with regard to the God-talk) relevant.⁵ The "historical Jesus" shares with "history in general" the "note of relativity".⁶ "The historical Jesus becomes purely historical."⁷ Moreover, even the "historical apprehension" turns out to be relative.⁸

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- 1) Ebeling, "The Question of the Historical Jesus", p.289.
 - 2) Ebeling, op.cit., p.288.
 - 3) Ebeling, op.cit., pp.290ff.
 - 4) Ebeling, op.cit., p.295 (italics mine).
 - 5) "We are bereft in principle of the possibility of making the historically reconstructed Jesus himself the basis of faith." See Ebeling, op.cit., p.293.
 - 6) Ebeling, op.cit., p.293.
 - 7) Ebeling, op.cit., p.293.
 - 8) Ebeling, op.cit., p.293.

Thus, historical research within theology was led into such a great aporia. It is the main aim of Ebeling's contribution to overcome this aporia. And for him, it is quite clear that it can only be overcome by a new approach to history in general, for the present approach of historicism is the major cause of the aporia.¹ Historicism favoured a view of history which orientated itself by the "concept of fact". If one takes this view, the aporia is inevitable.² In contrast to that, Ebeling suggests "a view of history which takes its bearings on the word-event and consequently on the linguisticity of reality"³. Theology (and historiography!) has to ask "what came to expression", rather than "what happened". How shall this concept of historiography be grasped? Obviously, Ebeling takes the view that all reality (and consequently the historical reality too) is only accessible through language which mediates and communicates reality. But how should "bringing to expression" be distinguished from "interpretation"? What is the precise relation between factual history and the "word-event"?

Whatever the answer to these questions may be, Ebeling works out what has come to expression in Jesus by examining the Synoptic gospels⁴; i.e. he remains within the

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- 1) Ebeling, "The Question of the Historical Jesus", pp.293ff.
 - 2) "The historical aporia is certainly inevitable if we abide by a view of history that takes its bearings on the concept of fact." Cf.Ebeling, op.cit., p.295.
 - 3) Ebeling, op.cit., p.295.
 - 4) Ebeling, op.cit., pp.295ff; see also "Jesus and Faith", pp.201ff.

circle of interpretative sources.

His historically new approach makes it possible for Ebeling to identify the "historical Jesus" (as he is grasped by methodical investigation) with the "real Jesus" (as he actually was) as well as with the "Jesus in whom we believe".¹ In fact, Ebeling evades the polarity between Jesus and Christ by defining christology as the "interpretative handing on of what came to expression in Jesus"², and identifying Jesus with the historical Jesus. At any rate, "the historical Jesus is the Jesus of faith", since faith came to expression in him.³ I allow myself to repeat: the historical aporia noted above has been overcome by identifying the sphere of history with the sphere of dogmatics. This way out means the end of any dialogue between historians (interested in facts) and dogmaticians;⁴ this identification makes it possible for Ebeling to speak of a "historical uniqueness" of Jesus, which is in fact to be called a theological uniqueness (or: a uniqueness stated from a post-Easter point of view).⁵ The principle is the

1) Ebeling, "The Question of the Historical Jesus", p.295!

2) Ebeling, op.cit., p.295.

3) See Ebeling, op.cit., pp.296,298; also "Faith and Jesus", passim.

4) A good illustration of that is Ebeling's argument that it would still be proper to say that faith came to expression in Jesus, even if the lack of instances in the gospels were to militate against it; see Ebeling, "The Question of the Historical Jesus", p.296.

5) Since with Jesus there is no discrepancy between "person" and "work", he himself can be encountered only on the condition that he is the witness of faith. As regards this he is in a fundamental contrast to all other historical figures who do not have the unity of "person" and "work"; cf. Ebeling, op.cit., pp.297f.

following: "We can find entirely in Jesus himself ... the ground both of the fact that what came to expression in Jesus continues to come to expression and of the way in which it does so."¹

We come to similar results if we approach Ebeling's theory from a slightly different angle. What is - to take up the christological question of nearly half a century - the relationship between Jesus and Christ? Ebeling, significantly, does not ask about the continuity between Jesus and Christ, but rather about the continuity between "Jesus and faith (!) in Christ"². We note already here a slight movement away from the "extra nos" of history towards the "intra nos" of history shaped by faith. In the same context belongs Ebeling's view of Easter as the "transition from the historical Jesus to the Church's proclamation (!) of Christ"³.

The same idea again is expressed by yet another terminological refinement: Easter was the turning point where "Jesus as the witness to faith became the ground of faith ..."⁴. Ebeling is very anxious to emphasise that the post-Easter Christ is the ground of faith, and that he must not be considered the object of faith.⁵ Why is it so important not to grasp Jesus Christ as an object of faith?

The solution lies in Ebeling's concept of continuity between Jesus and faith in Christ. "The fact that Jesus and faith belong together forms the ground of continuity"⁶ It was not only after Easter that Jesus was met with

1) Ebeling, "The Question of the Historical Jesus", p.298.
2) Ebeling, op.cit., p.299. 3) Ebeling, op.cit., p.301.
4) Ebeling, op.cit., p.301(it.m) 5) Ebeling, op.cit., p.303.
6) Ebeling, op.cit., p.303.

faith for the first time, but "now for the first time it is a case of the faith awakened by Jesus and founded on him becoming proclaimable."¹ Thus, Jesus Christ cannot be the object of faith, since the historical Jesus could not have been that. Ebeling is very well aware of the fact that no historical figure can be the object of faith. So he avoids these difficulties by introducing the term "ground of faith". By doing this he opens up a possibility of expressing the continuity between Jesus and Christ: faith is the factor of continuity. Jesus, during his earthly life a witness to faith, becomes now the ground of faith, inducing men to become witnesses to faith.² Thus, man repeats what Jesus did during his earthly life.³ Such a concept of faith demands, obviously, an interpretation of the phrase ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΕΙΣ ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ which - apparently - suggests that Jesus is the object of faith. Ebeling does not want to interpret the phrase in this way. He presents a new interpretation: "To believe in Jesus therefore means: to enter into relations with God in view of him, ... to let him as the witness to faith be the ground of faith and therefore

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- 1) Ebeling, "The Question of the Historical Jesus", p.301 (italics mine).
 - 2) Ebeling can even go so far as to say that "the appearance of Jesus and the coming to faith of the man who is granted the appearance, or his becoming a witness to faith (!), are one and the same thing" (op.cit., p.301).
 - 3) This is very reminiscent of the structures of the nineteenth century quest, see above p.31.

to ... participate in what faith is promised participation in, namely, the omnipotence of God."¹ Both Jesus and the risen Lord point away from themselves to God who is the object of faith. To believe in Jesus is not to let him be the way,² but rather to participate in his way. Therefore, there is no difference between faith in Jesus and faith in Christ, since the historical Jesus mediates the same kind of participation as the risen Lord!³ Therefore again, christology is what came to expression in Jesus. So, nothing really new happened in the crucifixion and on Easter to Jesus nor to his disciples. New was only that the faith of the disciples became proclaimable by the resurrection. But faith itself, the constant factor in that process, remained the same on principle, only that the witness to it had become its ground.

It is striking how great a part faith plays in Ebeling's concept. One has the impression, sometimes, that it is not God who saves man, but his faith. "Faith is ... the thing that came with Jesus Christ, the content of

1) See Ebeling, "The Question of the Historical Jesus", p.302; compare Jüngel, Paulus und Jesus, p.275, who points out that participation must be understood in the sense of "analogia fidei", because faith as participation has its ground in the "geschichtlichen" character of the Word of God.

2) Compare John 14,5.

3) "To believe in Jesus and to believe in him as the Risen Lord are one and the same thing" (Ebeling, op.cit., p.302, italics mine).

revelation, the gift of salvation itself ...".¹ Many Christians, however, confessed Jesus Christ as "our Lord and Saviour".

However, Ebeling manages to provide a theologically legitimate place for the "historical Jesus" by his new interpretation of "historical": "The quest of the historical Jesus is the quest of his linguistic event which is the ground of the event of faith: $\lambda\epsilon\gamma\alpha \ \eta \ \pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma \ \epsilon\varsigma \ \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \ \eta \ \delta\epsilon \ \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\eta \ \delta\iota\alpha \ \rho\acute{\eta}\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma \ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$ ".² By introducing the concept of the "linguisticity of history" Ebeling wants to "... facilitate the movement from Jesus as word to the kerygma as word ...".³ Thus, the tension between history and revelation (or as Ebeling would have put it: between word and faith) is dissolved.

At this point we have to ask how new Ebeling's quest of the historical Jesus is. What precisely is the difference from the nineteenth century quest? To begin with, one thing is fairly obvious: Ebeling works with a concept of history totally different from that of the nineteenth century as far as the christological question is concerned, although he is not willing to abandon entirely the old theory of history.⁴ A new concept of history - does that make the

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- 1) See Ebeling, "The Question of the Historical Jesus" , p.303, and also The Nature of Faith, p.56.
 - 2) Ebeling, "The Question of the Historical Jesus", p.304.
 - 3) Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, p.66.
 - 4) The "concept of fact" cannot be "done without altogether. But we must be clear as to the limits within which it is justified"; Ebeling, op.cit., p.295. To the whole problem cf. Ebeling, "The Significance of the Critical Historical Method", pp.17ff.

newness of the new quest? With regard to the structures of thinking it seems to be more appropriate to consider Ebeling as belonging formally to the old quest. He shares with the old quest his identification of Jesus (as the one who is important for faith) with the historical Jesus. Moreover, he shares with the old quest the view that the (historical) Jesus did evoke the same faith as the risen Christ.

Ebeling, too, undertakes to prove the historical uniqueness of the man Jesus. Since uniqueness in history (and that in the linguisticity of history, too) cannot be conceived of as fundamental, Jesus is relatively unique (i.e. he is the most unique person in history). Ebeling, furthermore, shares with the old quest a certain tendency to view Jesus as an example (the witness to faith becomes the ground of faith in order to call man to be a witness of faith);¹ one has to note, however, that Jesus is not an example in the legalistic sense. So there is certainly a considerable affinity towards the formal structures of the old quest, but I would not be prepared to draw the parallels as closely as Keck does.² Nor is it appropriate to apply the slogan "neoliberalism" to Ebeling's theological position.³ But

1) See above p.88.

2) See A Future for the Historical Jesus, where he tries to equate the liberal concept of "religion" to Ebeling's idea of "faith" (p.65).

3) It is especially amazing when J.M.Robinson does so (quoted from Perrin, Rediscovering, p.229).

nevertheless there is a strong tendency towards a revival of the old quest, mainly due to the nineteenth century concept of faith (Schleiermacher), that has entered the theological reflexions of Ebeling.

Finally we apply to Ebeling's position the criterion of qualitative newness, as we have gained it from the analysis of Käsemann's approach. Apparently Ebeling seems to share Käsemann's interest in the question of continuity.¹ Ebeling states that he also asks this question.² In asking that question, however, he has already answered it, for he gives the "ground of continuity"³ which is faith. He has introduced his new concept of history in order to answer the question of continuity by identification of the historical Jesus with the Christ of faith. So, the question for continuity is actually the quest for identity, and that means that the question of continuity has been changed into an inauthentic question. Authentically asking for continuity is asking for continuity between two different things. In so far as the new quest asks for continuity, it is fully aware of the fundamental difference between the historical Jesus and the risen Christ. It acknowledges the tension between those two beings and yet asks for continuity. That means, however, that the new quest cannot answer the question of

1) See above p. 80.

2) Ebeling, "The Question of the Historical Jesus", pp. 300ff, 303.

3) Ebeling, op.cit., p. 303.

continuity by showing the identity of Jesus and Christ, for the starting point of that very question was the insight of a fundamental difference between Jesus and Christ. The new quest is bound to uphold the tension between the two, unless it renounces its own roots of existence.

With regard to this criterion of newness it is questionable whether Ebeling's quest for the historical Jesus was not a step back from the basic insights of kerygmatic theology.¹ Was the kerygmatic theology in vain?

5.1.3 E.Fuchs: Call for a Decision

Ernst Fuchs put the quest for the historical Jesus in a dogmatic and historical context, when he started with the statement that the question of the historical Jesus is the form of the christological problem imposed upon us.² A historical context, because the Church, through every age, was accompanied by the christological problem and it had always to solve it afresh. In this sense the christological problem belongs also to our situation in history. And a dogmatic context, because the Christian Church, at every age, entered the realm of dogmatics when it tried to answer

1) See above pp.36ff, esp. pp. 39,41.

2) Fuchs, Glaube und Erfahrung, p.1. Since the middle of the fifties Fuchs concentrated on the problem of the historical Jesus. We have to select some typical essays without being able to cover all of Fuchs' contribution to the problem. We concentrate on Fuchs, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus"; also "Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus.Ein Nachwort"; compare also "Jesus Christus in Person", and Jesus, Wort und Tat.

the christological problem. With Jesus Christ, the basic dogmatic task was put before us, namely the task of thinking of Jesus as being "vere homo" as well as "vere deus". That is the christological problem. And our encounter with that problem today takes place in terms of the historical Jesus. But the crucial point has changed. While, for most ages of the Church, it was difficult to think the "vere homo", our age - I think - is confronted with the difficulty of thinking the "vere deus" without an abolition of the "vere homo" or a glorification of it.

Fuchs made his first contribution shortly after Käsemann had opened the debate afresh. He begins - so to speak - with the "vere deus", namely with faith in Jesus as spoken of by Paul.¹ Fuchs considers that the actual starting point for the whole problem. By doing so, Fuchs corresponds to the New Testament approach towards Jesus, which is dogmatically and historically spoken an approach first to the risen Christ.² Only the risen Christ could be accepted as Lord, faith in this Lord is the consequence of a new beginning.³ That is the entrance, as it were, to the question of the historical Jesus.

1) Fuchs, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus", pp.211ff "I. Der Glaube an Jesus" and later "II. Der historische Jesus" (pp.218ff).

2) Jesus became Lord only after (or: by) resurrection; see Fuchs, op.cit., p.212.

3) "Der Glaube ist nicht Kontrapunkt zum Zweifel, sondern die Folge eines neuen Anfangs" (Fuchs, op.cit., p.212).

Methodically Fuchs enters the question by replacing the reference frame of the Synoptic gospels (= for Fuchs the essential sources) by the frame gained from Paul's theology.¹ He wants to see how the "historical Jesus" would fit into Paul's frame; this is the way in which Fuchs asks the question of continuity. Should it turn out that the historical Jesus fits into the frame, then the question of continuity can be answered positively.

And indeed, Fuchs gives many instances in which frame and historical Jesus fit together. While for Paul faith in the Lordship of Christ saves, in so far as it brings freedom from fearing the wrath of God,² the historical Jesus claims the grace of God towards the sinner who is prepared to repent.³ Consequently Paul - claiming the freedom from fear - repeats Jesus' claim for a gracious God.

A second analogy between Paul and Jesus can be found in the proclamation of faith. While Paul preached in the name of the Lord Jesus that the time for faith in his Lordship has come,⁴ Jesus himself made the time of the Kingdom

1) Fuchs, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus", p.218.

2) Fuchs, op.cit., p.216; a not unproblematic existential interpretation of Paul's idea of salvation.

3) "Gott will aber trotzdem gnädig sein, falls sich ein sündiger Mensch zu demselben Gott flüchtet, den er sonst aus Furcht vor dem Gericht fliehen müsste." Fuchs, op.cit., p.219, see also pp.223f: Paul is seen as parallel.

4) Fuchs, op.cit., p.217.

of God the main feature of his preaching.¹ That Jesus did so was the consequence of his decision in view of the death of the Baptist, whose meaning had to be made clear. Jesus decided to give that death the meaning of an announcement that the time of the "basileia" had arrived. This decision is followed by the decision which the hearers of Jesus are to make, in which the latter decision is understood as an echo of the former.² Here lies yet another analogy between Jesus and Paul: to believe in Jesus means to repeat Jesus' decision.³ We see here, that the term "decision" stands in an analogous place to Ebeling's term "faith". To a certain extent, both terms mean the same. It seems that continuity between Jesus and Paul (not: and Christ!) is granted by the identity of both decisions.

However, Fuchs' contribution to the problem of the historical Jesus contains yet another observation: Jesus acts, as if he were in the place of God.⁴ His conduct contained that daring claim and his conduct was explained by the parables.⁵ Fuchs is no longer interested in whether Jesus called himself Messiah or not, for his conduct actually tells us more than the titles do.⁶ Jesus' words and

1) "Jesus konnte ... versuchen, sich die Zeit der Gottesherrschaft zu eigen zu machen" (Fuchs, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus", p.222).

2) Fuchs, op.cit., pp.221f and p.227.

3) Fuchs, op.cit., p.227.

4) "Jesus wagt es, Gottes Willen so geltend zu machen, als stünde er selber an Gottes Stelle" (Fuchs, op.cit., p.219).

5) Fuchs, op.cit., pp.218f.

6) Fuchs, op.cit., p.220

deeds are likely to have been recorded more accurately than the titles.¹ So, Fuchs reaches the conclusion that Jesus' conduct is the frame for his teaching.² That again means that Jesus' conduct might well be taken instead of the frame provided by the Synoptic gospels or the one extracted from Paul. Thus, in fact, Fuchs considers Jesus' conduct to equal the christological dimension given to the "life of Jesus" by the kerygmatic post-Easter texts.³ Consequently the christological confessions of the New Testament writers did not add anything new to Jesus which had not already been present in the historical Jesus. Here we note a reservation: it is one thing, to say that Jesus claimed to act in the place of God, and an entirely different thing, to say that Jesus was in the place of God. Fuchs - as far as I can see - does not reflect upon this difference, although it forms the crucial difference between the historical Jesus and the risen Christ.

Did Fuchs, like Ebeling, solve the christological problem by identification?⁴ It may seem so superficially,

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- 1) Fuchs, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus", p.220.
 - 2) For Fuchs a very central statement: "Das bedeutet aber doch, dass Jesu Verhalten selber der eigentliche Rahmen seiner Verkündigung war!" Fuchs, op.cit., p.220.
 - 3) In a later essay, Fuchs has modified this concept, for he now states that his phrase (see n.2, this page) is a hermeneutical one; see Glaube und Erfahrung, p.19: "Mein Satz, Jesu Verhalten sei der 'Rahmen' seiner Verkündigung gewesen (ebda.), ist ein hermeneutischer Satz. Was Jesus sagte, ist gerade der Kern seines Verhaltens." Here Fuchs seems to stress again the word-character of Jesus' conduct. A slightly different interpretation is given by Jüngel, Paulus und Jesus, p.139. He considers the phrase a theological one; i.e. Jesus' conduct is grasped as a "commentary" on his parables. Jüngel rejects both a sociological and historizing understanding of the phrase.
 - 4) That is suggested by Keck, A Future for the Historical

and there is certainly a tendency towards that position. But it has to be pointed out that Fuchs tries to maintain the fundamental difference between Jesus and Christ. For, to begin with, Fuchs makes a difference between the post-Easter community, which is marked by faith, and the eschatological community gathering around the historical Jesus. The latter must not yet be considered under the profile of faith in Jesus.¹ It is not appropriate to the historical Jesus that man believes in him, whereas that is the only possible response to the kerygmatic Christ. With regard to this distinction, the decision made by the believer is not quite a repetition of Jesus' decision, although to believe in Jesus means to repeat Jesus' decision.²

Furthermore, the early Christian proclamation differs from the teaching of Jesus, in so far as the former already knows that Jesus is Lord and tries to fit the experience of faith into its knowledge of the (historical)

Jesus, who does not see any difference between Fuchs and Ebeling; cf. p.65. Generally speaking about the new quest, Perrin, Rediscovering, p.231 states "a weakness", namely "that it (sc.the new quest) simply assumes the identity of historical Jesus and kerygmatic Christ, ...".

- 1) Fuchs, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus", p.233: "Diese Gemeinde darf noch nicht unter dem Profil des Glaubens an Jesus gesehen werden." I take this sentence to mean that the relation of the community to the historical Jesus was not yet marked by faith, for faith in Jesus was not possible before Easter.
- 2) Fuchs, op.cit., p.227, admits that the repetition of Jesus' decision is something new, in so far as it is strictly connected with an attitude towards Jesus.

Jesus.¹ One may describe this difference in terms of implicit (i.e. applying to the historical Jesus) and explicit (i.e. applying to the early Church) christology,² although these terms suggest that the difference was only a matter of awareness of christology (that would fit very well into Robinson's concept), whereas Fuchs seems to presuppose a difference which must be expressed in terms of "claim" (historical Jesus) and "fulfillment" (early Church).

But still, Fuchs wants to preserve the "Entscheidungscharakter" (i.e. the characteristic element of decision) of faith. Therefore he feels that resurrection does not deprive (or free!) faith of its "Entscheidungscharakter", and moreover, faith becomes now a parallel to Jesus' own decision.³ That, however, is to be distinguished from the relationship of Jesus to the believer according to the nineteenth century quest. While then the believer imitated the good example of Jesus, now the believer is induced to assimilate to the historical Jesus precisely because he knows of a fundamental difference between him and Jesus. The Lordship of Jesus completed by the resurrection makes it possible to assimilate to Jesus, in contrast to the nineteenth century quest where the motivation to imitation

1) Fuchs, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus", p.228:
"Die urchristliche Verkündigung unterscheidet sich von Jesu Verkündigung dadurch, dass sie um dieses Schon (sc. of his Lordship) bei Jesus weiss und die Erfahrungen des Glaubens in ihr Wissen von Jesus einzuordnen versuchte."

2) Robinson, New Quest, p.16.

3) Fuchs, op.cit., p.227.

lay in the fact that Jesus' personality was only different from us in degree. According to Fuchs, the impact of Jesus on the believer is not legalistic, but evangelical.

We may draw the conclusion, that Fuchs shares with Käsemann his raising of the question of continuity, whereby he does not attempt to obliterate the difference (or: the discontinuity) within this continuity. Although Fuchs shares with Ebeling a certain affinity towards the structures of the old quest, he did not go quite as far as Ebeling. He totally restricts the term faith to apply to the risen Christ. Considered carefully, Fuchs is - as it were - more on the side of the new quest.¹

5.2 Two Other Approaches

After having considered the beginning of the debate of the historical Jesus within the Bultmannian school, we shall have to turn now to the effect made upon other scholars outside the explicitly Bultmannian school. I take as examples J.M. Robinson² and N. Perrin³, both of whom understand

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- 1) That has to be said against Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, pp.62ff, who offhandedly identifies Fuchs' and Ebeling's position, and counts both to the old quest equally. Interestingly one can see Fuchs and Ebeling quite often summarized under the same item, e.g. Perrin, Rediscovering, pp.227ff. Perhaps this is due to the interest in the "new hermeneutics" they both have in common.
 - 2) A New Quest of the Historical Jesus, London 1959, 1961.
 - 3) Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus, London 1967.

themselves as in a certain continuity with the new quest.¹ These two examples, as we shall see later, mark a certain development among the "new questers" which is essential in the resolution of the basic problem of the relationship between history and revelation. It cannot be the purpose of this thesis to outline a complete history of the new quest, for our problem is to examine hermeneutical and theological presuppositions. That can as well be done by analysing examples.

5.2.1 J.M.Robinson: Selfhood and Commitment

"The present work is intended as a programmatic essay..."; it "has to do with a quite different kind of quest based upon new premises, procedures and objectives ..."².

Robinson emphasizes from the beginning the newness of the new quest, whose "full significance" is realized only when one observes its close connection to the "post-Bultmannian" phase of recent German theology.³ Robinson's point of departure is the fact that a new quest has already started. And he intends to sketch its features.

1) For Robinson, see the title of his book (n.2,p.100), for Perrin compare the Preface of his book, op.cit. (n.3, p.100), p.12.

2) Robinson, New Quest, pp.9f.

3) Robinson, op.cit., p.10; "post-Bultmannian" seems to suggest that a constitutive factor of the new quest is the revision of the Bultmannian emphasis on the impossibility and illegitimacy of the quest, see ibid., p.12.

To begin with, we shall examine briefly Robinson's arguments against the old quest, for his position can be inferred from the way he rejects the original quest and gives an account of its obsolescence.

The original quest became impossible when New Testament scholars discovered the nature of the sources which are available to reconstruct the historical Jesus.¹ The "basic reorientation" was: "History survived only as kerygma."² Thus, the fundamental nineteenth century presupposition that the gospels were historical documents was proved wrong. That again implies that the nineteenth century positivistic (historistic) approach is no longer possible.

Moreover, in the light of the discovery of the kerygma the original quest appears even illegitimate,³ in so far as the original quest attempted to provide a solid basis of faith by detached historical research. This endeavour, however, is inappropriate to the Christian faith, since faith "cannot by its very nature be built upon 'the present evil aeon' with all that it provides of worldly security ..." ⁴. The attempt to provide such security by historical means reveals as regards the original quest that

1) Robinson, New Quest, pp.35ff.

2) Robinson, op.cit., p.37.

3) Robinson, op.cit., pp.39,43.

4) Robinson, New Quest, p.44.

it attempted to "avoid the risk of faith"¹, and therefore that it was illegitimate. The "kerygma calls for an existential commitment"². The risk of faith expresses itself in the commitment which man is provoked to by the kerygma. Herein Robinson sees a formal analogy to modern existentialist thought: "inauthentic existence is a life built upon conformity"³. Faith which by its very nature involves commitment and stands in contrast to the security found in this world is formally analogous to authentic existence. The same analogy can be seen between the kerygma and the "contemporary view of historiography as concerned with underlying meaning"⁴. Just as modern historiography is the necessary counterpart to authentic existence, so is the kerygma the appropriate counterpart to faith. It is already obvious which way Robinson will choose to go: the formal analogy between historiography and kerygma makes a new quest possible.

And indeed, the new historiography as a "radically different understanding of history and of human existence" constitutes the possibility of the new quest.⁵ Robinson reaches this stage after having rejected any positivistic

1) Robinson, New Quest, p.44.

2) "For faith involves the rejection of worldly security as righteousness by works;" (Robinson, op.cit., p.44).

3) Ibid., p.46; and that is exactly what the original quest did with regard to faith.

4) Robinson, op.cit., p.43 and passim.

5) Robinson, op.cit., pp.66 and 66ff. Robinson explicitly states that nothing else can make the new quest possible.

approach as belonging to the old quest.¹ What is this new view of history and the self? "History is the act of intention, the commitment, the meaning for the participants, behind the external occurrence."² History becomes more or less an existential. Its counterpart on the side of existence is a modern view of the "selfhood": "... selfhood is constituted by commitment to a context ..."³. So, history and selfhood correspond to each other: selfhood reveals itself in history, and history is the context of self-actualization. If one applies this view to Jesus, one concludes the Jesus reveals his own selfhood in his sayings and deeds, a selfhood which is "per definitionem" the object of the new historical method.⁴ Thus, Jesus' selfhood is accessible to historical research.⁵ Therefore, the new quest is possible. The search for selfhood has replaced the nineteenth century search for Jesus' personality. Both are in fact distinct, in as much as personality presupposes a "development" (e.g. the religious development which one must be able to trace over a sufficiently long space of

1) This applies to Dodd's "historical section of the kerygma" (Robinson, New Quest, pp.48ff) and Stauffer's "new sources" (ibid., pp.59ff) as well as any "new view of the Gospels" (ibid., pp.64ff).

2) Robinson, op.cit., p.67.

3) Robinson, op.cit., p.68; see also ibid., p.46: "... authentic existence is selfhood constituted by commitment ...".

4) Robinson, op.cit., p.69.

5) Robinson, op.cit., pp.70-72.

time), whereas selfhood is as a whole present in each historical act.¹

But what has really been gained by that new historiography? Was it not the main problem of the old quest that a historical personality was made the object of faith? As regards this problem, does the new historiography bring us a step further? "To be sure, ... the modern view of history" does not involve "necessarily a dimension of transcendence."² But "the historian must open himself to encounter with humans who understand their existence as lived out of transcendence."³ What is the difference between this encounter and the impact of Jesus' personality upon the believer? What can be said about the truth of transcendence by encountering selves who believe in transcendence?

At this point, we note an underlying structure in Robinson's way of thinking: the possibility of the new quest is due to the new view of history. So the possibility is provided by philosophical means, while the actual question about Jesus is to follow. This structure of thinking resembles that of "natural theology" which philosophically guaranteed the existence of God, and then started to talk of

1) Even that the selfhood is really manifest in an act, has been criticised often, cf. e.g. Ogden's and Harvey's objections, quoted from Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, p.217. See Robinson, New Quest, p.95.

2) Robinson, op.cit., p.68.

3) Robinson, op.cit., p.69.

his essence. Although that is a merely formal parallel, it might well be that Robinson's new quest turns out to be inappropriate both to the secularity of history and to the sanctity of God. The possibility of the quest can only be created by the facticity of Jesus' meaning for faith. There is no need, then, to give him meaning, be it by that or another particular view of history.

The same structure of thinking governs Robinson's consideration of the "legitimacy of a new Quest"¹: "If a new quest of the historical Jesus is to become a significant aspect of theological scholarship"², its theological relevance must be made clear. It "... must have meaning in terms of man's quest for meaningful existence."³ Theology is "committed to a kerygma which locates its saving event in a historical person to whom we have a second avenue of access provided by the rise of historiography since the Enlightenment. Apart from this concrete situation, there is no theological necessity for a quest of the historical Jesus, ..."⁴. Jesus can also be encountered in the kerygma. However, an authentically theological necessity of the new quest is not likely to lie in our present situation. Either the historical Jesus has "per se" a significance for faith or he has none. A theological significance depends on the

1) Robinson, New Quest, pp. 73ff (italics mine).

2) Robinson, op.cit., p. 75.

3) Robinson, op.cit., p.75.

4) Robinson, op.cit., p. 85 (italics mine).

basic relation of Jesus to faith, and not on the present condition of our mind. Robinson's necessity, then, is at most a hermeneutical one.

But still Robinson maintains a theological "permissiveness of a new Quest" by pointing out that "Jesus confronts us with existential decision",¹ so that we cannot escape into the security of work-righteousness. In this the historical Jesus is paralleled by the kerygma.² "God encounters man with a free and gracious opportunity of eschatological existence This is what Jesus' earthly life had meant to his followers, and Easter only confirmed this significance."³ The same direction is indicated by the term "second avenue", suggesting that historiography and kerygma are two avenues to the same phenomenon equally authentic. Although Robinson points out that the "historical Jesus cannot be isolated from the Christ of faith"⁴, he actually does that very thing: by identifying Jesus and the kerygma he makes both independent of each other, and that amounts to an isolation. Both Jesus and the kerygma achieve the same thing, but that does not necessarily imply that they must be related to each other.

1) Robinson, New Quest, pp.76.77 respectively.

2) Robinson, op.cit., p.77.

3) Robinson, op.cit., p.78 (italics mine); see also ibid., pp.77.91: The evangelists are "stating - that the kerygma is talking ... about the historical existence presupposed in the message of Jesus of Nazareth". See also ibid., p.92: The decision about the kerygma is the same as about Jesus!

4) Robinson, op.cit., p.78.

Modern historiography is paralleled with the kerygma (as means of transmission): it "mediates an existential encounter with Jesus, an encounter also mediated by the kerygma, ..." ¹. The kerygma proclaims the "existential meaningfulness of a historical person". ² That historiography concerned with the historical Jesus can do the same as the kerygma presupposes that the meaningfulness was already present in the existence of the historical Jesus. So the gospels could have been written before Easter! This again means that Easter as an act of God in the life of Jesus which was now ended did not reveal anything new about that existence. Why, then, did the disciples not believe in the saving character of the cross before Easter? ³

The presupposition for the theological meaningfulness of the historical Jesus is that his existence had the same revelatory character as the kerygma. So the relationship between history and revelation contains no tension, if only one applies the correct historiography. The theological problem of history and revelation has been solved by presupposing the doctrine of incarnation as a historical fact. That the historical Jesus was the incarnated God is

1) Robinson, New Quest, p.90.

2) Robinson, op.cit., p.87.

3) An overall critique of this new view of history can be found in Anderson, Jesus, pp.169ff, esp.pp.180f. Anderson insists on the problem of "historical certainty" (ibid., p.181), which was not brought any nearer to a satisfactory solution. Anderson sees the newness of the quest only in this new historiography, which enables him, naturally, to criticize the quest as being old.

made a historical statement in order to equate both the encounter with the historical Jesus and the encounter with the kerygma. Jesus' self-understanding equals the self-understanding underlying the Church's kerygma,¹ thanks to the doctrine of incarnation. Historically speaking, however, this doctrine is a central part of the kerygma (it appears both explicitly, e.g. Phil 2,6ff, and implicitly, e.g. in the θεῶς - σαρξ concept of the pre-Markan tradition), and it should therefore not be historicized as Robinson does. For his concept of history and kerygma as parallel, to do so is naturally quite legitimate.

After having paralleled ^ed history and kerygma as described above, Robinson reflects upon the purpose of the new quest: "Hence the purpose of the new quest of the historical Jesus would be to test (sic!) the validity of the kerygma's identification of its understanding of existence with Jesus' existence."² So, the historical Jesus is unambiguously prior, he is - once again - the one and only criterion of the kerygmatic assertions of theology. The kerygma is - by this kind of historical method - narrowed down to a pure repetition of Jesus' selfhood and self-understanding. The kerygma does not know anything new about Jesus - or at least it turns out that it does not ...

1) Robinson, New Quest, pp.122f. Another objection to this parallelism is quoted by Perrin, Rediscovering, pp.230f (Bultmann, Fuller); the kerygma becomes unnecessary.
2) Robinson, op.cit., p.94.

after being criticised by the method mentioned.¹

We must ask here again, how new this quest is. The question of continuity which we consider an outstanding criterion of newness, is predominant in Robinson's whole book. It is solved, however, by the postulate of identity. Thus, the question of continuity is reduced "ad absurdum".² In fact, Robinson tries to rule out any essential difference between Jesus and Christ,³ in order to prove that Jesus and the kerygma are not "basically incommensurate".⁴ On the contrary, they are actually identical.⁵ This was a feature already of the nineteenth century quest. The problem of history and revelation was put away by both Robinson and the old quest similarly.

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- 1) Robinson sees in fact a difference between the historical Jesus and the kerygma, in so far as "historiography cannot and should not prove a kerygma which proclaims Jesus as eschatological calling for existential commitment" (New Quest, p.94). But how then can the historical Jesus who is a non-eschatological event unless he is interpreted by the kerygma, bring us to the same decision as the kerygma?
 - 2) Robinson explicitly disagrees with Käsemann (see op.cit., pp.105f) and misunderstands him at the same time. Käsemann, by pointing out the important difference between Jesus and the kerygma, is not concerned with the problem of "contemporaneity", as Robinson maintains (ibid., p.105). Therefore Robinson's stress upon the possibility of both the kerygma and the historical Jesus being able to become contemporaneous does not meet the actual problem, which is not a hermeneutical one, but a theological one.
 - 3) See Robinson, op.cit., pp.104-111.
 - 4) Robinson, op.cit., p.111. To be commensurate, however, is not the same as to be identical. This is the very point where the history-revelation problem needs to be attacked.
 - 5) See especially Robinson's discussion with Käsemann (New Quest, pp.105f); Bornkamm (ibid., pp.106f); Fuchs (ibid., pp.113ff); Bultmann (ibid., pp.116ff). In each case Robinson draws the same conclusion: the difference pointed out by these authors is not actually there.

One might say, though, that the newness of Robinson's approach lies in his new historiography. But this may as well not be the case. At least it can be easily disputed. The newness of the new quest cannot be due to a new method of historiography, for it was not the inadequacy of the historical method which caused the end of the quest. Nor can we really maintain, that it is possible that we do not know some facts about Jesus.¹ The failure of the nineteenth century quest was grounded in its inadequacy with regard to the theological problem of the historical Jesus. It was precisely the identification of the historical reality with revelation (there accompanied with a characteristic stress upon discontinuity between Jesus and the kerygma)², which revealed the impossibility and illegitimacy of that quest. So, historiography is not the crucial problem, although as regards hermeneutics this new understanding of history as proposed by Robinson was very necessary. It is not appropriate, however, to reduce the problem of the historical Jesus to a hermeneutical one, for it is predominantly a theological one. As for Robinson, the problem he tackled is shown by his very last sentence: " ... the selfhood of Jesus is equally available to us - apparently both via the kerygma and via historical research - as a possible understanding of our existence."³

1) Cf. Käsemann, "Problem", p.152.

2) Ebeling, "The Question of the Historical Jesus", pp.209ff.

3) Robinson, New Quest, p.125 (italics mine).

5.2.2 N.Perrin: Faith - Knowledge

Perrin - a former pupil of Jeremias'¹, but who would no longer count himself a disciple - gives, as one might have expected, a quite different account of what he considers to be the new quest. He is much more indebted to conventional historiography,² and his book shows that he can express the meaning of the historical Jesus without any existentialist interpretation. Unlike most of the recent books dealing with the historical Jesus, Perrin describes his methods³ as well as his hermeneutical and theological presuppositions regarding the problem of history and faith.⁴

To begin with, Perrin is very much concerned with "the question of the relationship between Geschichte and Historie: granted that faith's concern is with the "geschichtliche" Christ, what is then the relationship between this figure and the historische Jesus?"⁵ Accordingly, his concern with the question of continuity is the starting point for any solution.⁶ So formally Perrin's contribution belongs distinctly to the new quest.

Perrin tackles the problem of continuity by sorting

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- 1) Perrin, Rediscovering, p.20.
 - 2) In fact he criticizes this very point in Robinson's concept; see Perrin, op.cit., pp.232f. He states with approval that Robinson himself took the "essential step" away from the encounter-historiography (ibid., p.232); see also his reflexion on the criteria, ibid., pp.38ff.
 - 3) Perrin, op.cit., pp.15ff.
 - 4) Perrin, op.cit., pp.207ff.
 - 5) Perrin, op.cit., p.218.
 - 6) Perrin's approach is very similar to Käsemann's whom he quotes several times with approval; e.g., op.cit., pp.226f.

out very carefully three different kinds of knowledge, each of which corresponds to a different "method of research" ("Erkenntnismethode"). He wants to "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. In order to answer that question he asks whether and how the "three different kinds of knowledge" are consistent with one another.² It has to be pointed out that Perrin uses the term "consistency" not in the sense of "congruity", but rather in that of "comparability", for he is anxious to make a difference between the three kinds of knowledge.³ Thus, his question of continuity remains an authentic question.

The first of the three kinds of knowledge mentioned by Perrin is the "essentially descriptive historical knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth"⁴. It is the "post-Enlightenment historical knowledge"⁵, "a series of more or less interesting facts from the past" and as such "'hard' knowledge"⁶.

The second kind of knowledge, "historic knowledge"⁷, "is essentially a selection from the collection of 'hard' historical knowledge"⁸. The significance of this knowledge

1) Perrin, Rediscovering, p.234 (italics mine).

2) Perrin, op.cit., p.234 and passim.

3) "... we find ourselves 'feeling' that the three kinds of knowledge we have described do exist, are different, and should be kept separate" (Perrin, op.cit., p.240, it.mine).

4) Perrin, op.cit., p.234.

5) Perrin, op.cit., p.235.

6) Perrin, op.cit., p.235: "it exists independently of any specific interest in it ...".

7) Perrin, op.cit., p.236.

8) Perrin, op.cit., p.235.

consists in that it is immediately significant for today, whereby a hermeneutical principle, e.g. the "understanding of existence", "establishes a point of contact between the figure from the past and the man in the present"¹. The significance of this kind of knowledge is based upon the principle of analogy, mediated by a hermeneutical continuum (e.g. existence) which bridges the gap between past and present. This "historic knowledge" can for example equal Robinson's historical knowledge gained by encounter and commitment. Perrin's thesis is preferable, in so far as he really distinguishes between factual and historic knowledge, so that history need not be dissolved into the historicity of man. History may well have an existential significance, but it is more than that (history is an "extra nos" reality).

"The third kind of knowledge becomes significant to us at the level of religious faith, belief or commitment."² It is "particular", it has "a value beyond that to be ascribed to any other historical knowledge"³. It is a knowledge which "assumes a significance beyond the historic"; an essentially "non-historical reality" is involved here.⁴

The question is now, how exactly these three kinds of knowledge are related to one another, for Perrin solves

1) Perrin, Rediscovering, p.235.

2) Perrin, op.cit., p.235.

3) Perrin, op.cit., p.235.

4) Perrin, op.cit., p.237; it is of course disputable whether one is allowed to call such a knowledge real "knowledge".

the problem of the historical Jesus by answering the question of their relationship; "historic knowledge" is, as I mentioned above, a part of historical knowledge.¹ It is that part of historical knowledge which is meaningful for today. To be precise, if our time "finds itself touched or moved"² by historical knowledge, historic knowledge is born. The meaning of such an event, however, does not lie in the event itself; on the contrary, the event receives its meaning from us, if it happens to touch our present time. That implies that the constitutive factor is in fact what our own age possesses of power to build up significance. History provides the examples which push us to realize the meaningfulness that is actually our own. The meaning history can have is then defined by the meaningfulness of the hermeneutical principle we apply (e.g. existence).³ Our present conditions determine as well which part of historical knowledge is going to be historic, for those conditions are mainly responsible for the principle of selection. Thus, the selection of historic knowledge is bound to be subjective: history cannot teach us anything new, anything that makes us transcend our own possibilities of understanding.⁴ This knowledge, however,

1) "Historical knowledge can ... become 'historic knowledge' ..." (Perrin, Rediscovering, p.236).

2) Perrin, op.cit., p.236.

3) There is a similar connection between Bultmann's "pre-understanding" and "understanding".

4) The term "subjective" marks here the "intra nos" character of this knowledge. The way it comes into existence resembles the Platonic anamnesis.

is vulnerable to "historical factuality"¹. According to Perrin there seems to be no historic knowledge which is not "accompanied" by historical knowledge. This is questionable, in so far as it does not become clear what significance the historicity of an event has for its being historic. Could it not just as well be a myth that becomes the object of historic knowledge?²

Faith-knowledge is related to historic knowledge, in so far as it is an expression of significance. The former differs from the latter in the way (how) it expresses the significance: the idea of God is a necessary part of its significance. Faith transcends the relativity of all history (and together with that: of all historic knowledge too) and defines the significance of an event in absolute (i.e. religious) terms.

Yet, the most crucial question is how exactly faith-knowledge is related to historical knowledge, for this relationship contains the problem of the theological significance of the historical Jesus. Faith-knowledge describes "events" that are not "history in the post-Enlightenment sense of the word; nor is it (sc. faith-knowledge) dependent upon the manner or mode of the death of Jesus, only on the fact that it happened."³ There is no

1) Perrin, Rediscovering, p.237.

2) He maintains that historic knowledge is necessarily a selection from historical knowledge; op.cit., p.240.

3) Perrin, op.cit., p.237; this is exactly Bultmann's position. And indeed, Perrin states that "we find ourselves in what we regard as the centre, with Bultmann, ..." (ibid., p.240).

necessary connection between faith-knowledge and historical knowledge; the latter is "significant to faith in that it can contribute to the formation of the faith-image (sc. of Jesus Christ)"¹. Perrin is becoming more and more unclear. How can he say that historical knowledge is accidental to faith on the one hand, and on the other hand that its "thatness" is always presupposed in faith-knowledge?

And, the difficulties increase even further: Perrin establishes another connection between the first and the third kind of knowledge: "historical knowledge of Jesus validates the Christian kerygma; it does not validate it as kerygma, but it validates it as Christian"². Perrin presupposes here that the validity of the kerygma as kerygma is independent of its content, namely Christian content. Is it not more probable that the kerygma is also validated by what it tells us materially? Thus, validating the kerygma as Christian is to a large extent the same as validating the kerygma as kerygma. Perrin further seems to presuppose that the "christianity" of the kerygma is constituted by the historical Jesus. That would mean, however, that the kerygma in its content is nothing more than a story of the historical Jesus. Perrin - so it seems to me - confuses a formal with a material relationship. The relationship he outlines is bound to be a material one, but in fact

1) Perrin, Rediscovering, p.244 (italics mine); "... it can help to provide the content ...".

2) Perrin, op.cit., p.244 (italics mine).

Perrin's thesis presupposes that the relation is - at this stage - totally formal.

There is another question coming up now, namely, what criterion we are to apply to discern wrong faith from right faith. It is the question of the norm of faith, first brought up again in this context by Käsemann. Perrin gives an interesting answer: "what gives this faith-image validity is the fact that it grows out of religious experience and is capable of mediating religious experience, ..." ¹. Here, the circular character of faith-knowledge is quite obvious: it stems from the Church's proclamation, ² it is independent of history, and its criterion of truth is present experience, more precisely, the present experience of faith. There is no sign of an "extra nos" of faith. Faith is its own "extra nos".

At this point it is suddenly no longer clear why Perrin wrote a whole book on the historical Jesus, ³ if this has so little relevance to the faith of modern man. With regard to that irrelevance, Perrin endeavours to define yet another side to the significance of historical knowledge. He comes to the "third aspect of our ... position: the fact that historical knowledge of Jesus can be directly relevant to faith, apart from aiding in the formation of the faith-image" ⁴. This direct relevance is

1) Perrin, Rediscovering, p.244.

2) Perrin, op.cit., p.243.

3) He has been concerned with the first kind of knowledge "all through this book" (op.cit., p.234).

4) Perrin, op.cit., p.246 (italics mine).

based upon an equality of situations implied by the gospel narratives: the situation of the early Christians before God equals the situation of the disciples faced with Jesus' teaching of the Kingdom of God.¹ Our situation before God, however, is the same (on principle) as that of the early Church. Therefore, "historical knowledge of the teaching of Jesus becomes directly applicable to the believer in any age"². Perrin is implying that the equation of those situations, which is indeed presupposed by the gospel narratives, is a historical one. Perrin implies that the disciples were (historically speaking) in the same situation before Jesus' teaching as we are before God. It is questionable whether Perrin's implication is correct. It is probable that the claim to equate both situations is itself a kerygmatic claim; i.e. that the kerygmatic interpretation of Jesus made the equation possible. If the equation is a kerygmatic claim, then only faith-knowledge (in Perrin's terminology) is involved here. And the latter is "per definitionem" applicable to every age. So the presuppositions of this last function of historical knowledge are somewhat confused, moreover, they are contradictory to those mentioned earlier.

Perrin has introduced into our discussion a properly methodical distinction of the different kinds of knowledge

1) Perrin, Rediscovering, p.247.

2) Perrin, op.cit., p.247.

involved. This is bound to be very helpful in solving the history-revelation problem. His own solution, however, is somewhat inconsistent; sometimes he seems to repeat Bultmann's position, sometimes he seems to go beyond it, though without producing a logically comprehensible account of the precise relationship between the three kinds of knowledge, especially between the first and the third.

5.3 In how far is the New Quest New?

The newness of the new quest can be disputed and has often been disputed.¹ The main issue is, to find a criterion of newness (and consequently a criterion of obsolescence) by which the matter may be determined. Many scholars are agreed that the new quest is best understood in terms of "continuity".² And indeed, this term was introduced by Käsemann to define the newness of the quest.³ Many have misunderstood the term (even "new questers" do so!), in so far as they took it to describe a unity or even identity, whereas Käsemann himself emphasized the discontinuity.⁴ The search for continuity, for him, could never mean discarding discontinuity; they are inseparable.

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- 1) Nobody can really deny the existence of a "new" interest in the historical Jesus; but - especially from the Bultmannian school of theology - there was always a tendency to deny newness; see e.g. Bultmann, "Verhältnis", passim; or Braaten, "Revelation, History and Faith in Martin Kähler", p.38.
 - 2) Cf. e.g. Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, p.20. Similar Anderson, Jesus, p.103.
 - 3) See above, p.80.
 - 4) Käsemann, "Problem", p.152; cf. above, p.80, n.1,2.

Our brief account of some examples from the new quest shows at least one thing clearly: the "new questers" are not at all so homogenous in outlook as one might conclude from reading references to them.¹ Regarding the question of newness which we have to deal now with, we can distinguish essentially three different approaches.

Firstly there is the already mentioned qualitative newness pointed out by Käsemann. The new quest is distinguished from the old one by a qualitatively (theologically) different approach. Instead of trying to rule out the slightest possible influence of the kerygma, the new quest has to treat both Jesus and the kerygma with the same interest. This definition of newness does not imply the newness in a historical sense.

Secondly there is the historical newness of the new quest, which can be seen by looking at Perrin's or Jeremias' work. Here the newness of the quest is given by the mere fact that - after an interruption of half a century - the interest in the historical Jesus has come to life afresh. That historical newness does not necessarily imply a qualitative newness, as one can see in the work of Jeremias;² on the other side, however, it does not exclude qualitative newness, as the example of Perrin shows.³

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- 1) E.g. Anderson, Jesus, p.103 uses the term "new seekers" rather uncritically.
 - 2) He is considered to continue the old quest by Käsemann, "Sackgassen", pp.32ff, with which I agree.
 - 3) Perrin is very interested in establishing the qualitative newness, see above, p. 112.

Finally there is the methodological newness of the quest shown by Fuchs, Ebeling, and Robinson. In the case of Robinson, the methodological newness is achieved through a new method of historiography which was initiated by Dilthey and Collingwood¹, and which has flourished within existentialist philosophy. Since it is possible to encounter the meaning of history, it is possible also to encounter the meaning of the historical Jesus by a suitable historical method.

In the case of Ebeling and Fuchs the methodological newness is achieved by a new epistemological approach to reality:² since reality on the whole - and together with that historical reality- is linguistical, the new approach to the historical Jesus lies in the new question, "What came to expression?", which replaces the older question, "What has happened?". It has to be pointed out again that this kind of newness might well turn out not to be there at all.³ It is dangerous to base the newness upon new secular methods, for such a quest could suffer the same destiny as the original one which was also based on a new secular method.

I will try now to define that criterion of newness by means of which the work of the "new seekers" can be

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- 1) See Robinson, New Quest, pp. 67 and 71.
 - 2) In this respect I identify Ebeling and Fuchs, although there are many differences elsewhere.
 - 3) See my reservations above, pp. 90-93, 97-100, 108-111.

judged. To begin with, one decisive factor regarding the problem of newness is to realize the legitimacy of the protest made by the "kerygmatic theology".¹ Every new quest has to take account of the basic insights of the "kerygmatic theology" and has to integrate them into the new system positively. To leave aside those insights would mean to turn back the wheel of history, which is inappropriate in this case, for that particular history has been realized as a necessary consequence of the history dominated by the old quest. The step from the life-of-Jesus movement to the kerygmatic theology was not accidental.

The basic insight of the kerygmatic theology was that history in itself cannot be meaningful as far as theology is concerned: history in itself cannot have any immediately theological significance. Theologians suddenly realized that the alleged history in the gospels was kerygmaticized history. For the gospels, obviously, history in itself had no theological meaning, unless it was interpreted from a kerygmatic point of view. This insight has been taken over by the kerygmatic theology. From here, one has to conclude, that the historical Jesus, too, cannot have a meaning of his own for faith. Faith is interested in Jesus Christ, i.e. in kerygmaticized history. Therefore, the historical Jesus as such cannot be made an object of faith,

1) This term means the phenomenon described above, pp. 36-57.

either by positivistic historiography or by any other method of historiography. If we take that seriously, we realize that it is idle to make attempts to give history a theological meaning by methodological twists. If history has a meaning for the historian, it does not at all follow that history has in the same way a meaning for the theologian, since the latter has the difficult task of speaking of meta-historical realities in connection with historical events.

One consequence of the point just made is that the new quest can legitimately ask about Jesus only in terms of, and in the dimension of, the quest for continuity. It is, of course, possible as a mere historian to ask about the historical Jesus. But this is entirely irrelevant for theology, unless the historian takes the next step of asking the theological question. Mere history is not meaningful for theology, for history presented by modern historiography is bound to be entirely secular: God cannot be experienced in history, since present historiography has no possibility of locating God in the historian's field.

On the other side, theology cannot be allowed to escape into the vague field of mere interpretation whose relation to the factual history is quite unclear or even not important. Theology has to maintain a close relation to the history of historians, if it wants to remain Christian theology.

Theology - in order to avoid these two extreme positions - has to find a way of thinking that enables it to consider both aspects of history, namely factual history and interpretation, as factors in their own right without confusing them or separating them from each other.

Applied to the problem of the historical Jesus, we have to ask about the historical Jesus in the immediate context of the picture of Jesus Christ presented by the early Christian kerygma. This is not just a general comparison of history and interpretation, but rather it is a comparison of a very special history with a very special interpretation, given by a group of people concerned with that history. It is not just a question of whether any history can have any meaning, but rather whether this history can have this meaning. Thus, our problem cannot be solved merely by a new way of looking at history, e.g. by finding a historiographical method that includes the meaningfulness of history, since the basic problem is not whether history can have meaning or not. The point is to decide whether history can have this particular meaning or not. We have already seen that a modern historian is not in the position to express that special meaning of history. It is not a historical conclusion to say: "Jesus is Christ".

The quest of the historical Jesus, then, is mainly concerned with the relationship between Jesus and Christ. And since it is not possible to identify Jesus with Christ nor to separate them and take one of them as the centre of theology, the quest of the historical Jesus has the task of thinking of both of them as different but in a close

relationship. The term continuity - I think - is quite appropriate to this task. By asking for continuity authentically, theology tries to face up to the tension between Jesus and Christ. The question of continuity must not be answered by showing a one to one parallelism between Jesus and Christ. Real continuity is supposed to be a continuity between two different phenomena, otherwise it is confused with identity or parallelism.

The term "continuity" also may include a period of history that has passed between the two phenomena whose continuity is being examined. At least it is worth bearing in mind, that between Jesus and Christ, history might have happened, a history which both separated them and maintained a unity between them.

On the whole, the concept of continuity allows us to take seriously the legitimate objections of "kerygmatic theology" without having to abandon the historical side in favour of the kerygmatic side. The question of continuity, as defined above, is the criterion of the newness of the new quest.

Accordingly, we are now able to enunciate a criterion of obsolescence: a quest for the historical Jesus is old, when - in any way - the historical Jesus becomes either object of faith or initiator of faith, which is inappropriate both historically (the gospels are kerygmaticized history) and theologically (as an identification of history and revelation).

Both of these criteria are the result of the course of history theology has taken from the old quest to the present. They are legitimate, in so far as we ascribe legitimacy to that historical development.

5.4 The Task

The quest for the historical Jesus is - as E.Fuchs has once put it - the present form of the christological problem. In our search for the significance of the historical Jesus the problem of thinking about God in relation to history is concealed. This is a problem which has become recently the subject of numerous suggestions and attempts to solve it.

The new quest deserves to be called new, if it considers the said problem of history and God as its own problem. This is the theological context of the quest, and inevitably it affects the quest very much. The quest is at any rate a theological enterprise; any merely historical approach (i.e. for instance to prove historically the reliability of the Synoptics) is irrelevant, because it tries to solve the problem apart from its proper context.

The task is defined. I shall give a brief sketch of some suggestions as to how to fulfill that task. Most of the attempts to solve the problem of history and revelation feature a solution achieved by identification.

There is, firstly, the identification of history

with revelation within general history. This theory maintains a special history with special laws in a special nexus of cause and effect moving in parallel with general history. This "Heilsgeschichte" is the self-revelation of God or the salvation of mankind. "Heilsgeschichte" is divine in nature and is, thus, able to express God. There is no tension between "Heilsgeschichte" and revelation. There is not much tension either between "Heilsgeschichte" and profane history, for they are almost unrelated and the latter is totally irrelevant for theology.

Secondly a particular type of solution derived from the concept just mentioned is the identification of history and revelation within a particular series of events that took place from about 0 to 30 A.D. . This identification is based upon the doctrine of incarnation, taken as a historical category, according to which God limits himself in order to reveal his essence within the life and death of Jesus Christ. This type entails that historical research into the life of Jesus must lead to an encounter with God. God is especially encountered in the uniqueness of the life of Jesus. The concept of "Heilsgeschichte" is modified in so far as "sacred history" is not in general parallel to profane history, but rather that the former is confined in time and space to a particular series of events.

Thirdly, there is the possibility of identifying history and revelation within a single understanding mind.

The paradoxical identity (Bultmann) between a relative, historical event and God's final word of love to man becomes again and again an event within the existence which is met by the kerygmatic call for decision. Moreover, the essential decision (i.e. of faith) is to accept that paradoxical identity as true. The problem here is that this identity could (but may as well not) be produced by any creative mind, so that - theoretically - any historical event can be chosen to be an eschatological event (for only its happenedness is essential).

F^urthly there is the possibility of identifying history and revelation by embracing both within the same higher category. For example, to invest both history and revelation with linguistical character gives one scope for overcoming the tension between both realities. This suggestion implies at the bottom that our language (which expresses both historical and "divine" reality) contains as such the possibilities of speaking about God. The problem, then, arises whether language itself contains the revelation of God, which would be a modified form of natural theology, or whether language can be made by God himself to communicate God's revelation. And then the problem previously avoided returns but in terms of history and language, or of language and revelation.

This brief outline of the various suggestions based upon identification shows that it is a worthwhile task to

try to come to a different view of the problem. The task may be enunciated as following: how can history and God be thought together, so that both God and history retain their authenticity ("Eigentlichkeit"); i.e. how can history and revelation be thought together, so that both are neither separated nor identified?[?] The solution to this question must at the same time be a solution to the theological significance of the quest of the historical Jesus. In order to come to a solution, the most promising approach seems to be to follow up the concept of "continuity". Before we can turn to that, we shall sketch two different approaches to our problem.

6.0 Two Different Approaches

The two following approaches are different both from the new quest and from the approach of kerygmatic theology. They serve as examples, in order that we can widen our horizons regarding the number of possibilities of solving our problem. That these two approaches are different from both (mainly continental) movements, does not mean "a priori" that they belong to the old quest.

6.1 C.H.Dodd: Crisis in History

Dodd works with the basic assumption that God, in some events of ancient time, "was at work among man, and it is

from his action in history rather than from abstract arguments that we can learn what God is like ..."¹. It is significant that Dodd puts his position in contrast to a search for God by "abstract arguments". It shows his stress upon the "empirical" side of Christian theology,² against every attempt to keep Christianity away from (historical) experience. Together with the abstract arguments of philosophers Dodd also rejects on principle the kerygmatic approach to Jesus.

For Dodd, Jesus Christ is at one and the same time the historical manifestation of God's self-revelation³ and the salvation of man.⁴ God acted in history, and therefore historical research is a theological enterprise beyond any doubt. Thus, Dodd is anxious to point out that the gospels are not merely "religious documents"; they are also "historical documents" and their authors had an "interest in the facts".⁵ Christianity is a historical religion.

This approach towards history, however, generates many problems. There is, for instance, the "canonical"

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- 1) So in his most recent work on this subject, The Founder of Christianity, p.13.
 - 2) He also emphasizes the event-character of Christian origins (e.g. Founder, pp.13,14,15); the Church "insisted upon the crude actuality of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus sub Pontio Pilato ..." (History, p.19).
 - 3) Dodd, Founder, p.13.
 - 4) Dodd, History, pp.19,23.
 - 5) Dodd, Founder, p.27; see also ibid., pp.17ff, esp.p.20 where he shows that the gospels contain real historical material; cf. e.g. Robinson, New Quest, p.49, who objects to Dodd in describing him as "positivistic".

question as to the grounds on which Christianity confines itself to a particular section of history.¹ The answer given by Dodd is twofold. On the one hand he rejects the concept of pure fact in favour of a view of history which holds "an historical 'event' ... (to be) an occurrence plus the interest and meaning which the occurrence possessed for the persons involved in it, and by which the record is determined"². He stresses the position that "before we can speak of history, ... there must be events which possess an interest and meaning ..."³. It has to be noticed, here, that the "meaning" is not something which is given to history by historians or other human minds, it rather be-
longs to the historical events themselves.⁴ Since this is so, the viewer becomes involved with the meaning of history for him. He therefore cannot have a "detached" standpoint; moreover, "a series of events is most truly apprehended in some measure from within the series ..."⁵. The historian has "to familiarize" himself with his period,⁶ otherwise he does not understand it properly. He may often fail to grasp the significance, but he must never shirk the task

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- 1) Dodd, History, states: "Obviously it does not mean that any striking episode in history ... may be indifferently regarded as the self-revealing act of God ..." (p.23).
 - 2) Dodd, History, p.27.
 - 3) Dodd, History, p.26.
 - 4) Occurrences "possess" a meaning (Dodd, History, pp.27,26), and the record of the former is determined by the latter; see also Dodd, Founder, p.170.
 - 5) Dodd, History, p.28.
 - 6) Dodd, History, p.28; he rejects the objection that history is - in this case - a totally subjective thing (pp.28f).

of searching for it. Dodd goes on to show that one event may have more significance than another; this entails that one event must be the most significant. A "historical religion", therefore, "attaches itself not to the whole temporal series indifferently, nor yet to any casual event, but to a particular series of events in which a unique intensity of significance resides".¹ That is Dodd's answer to the problem of the relativity of history. The most significant event in the whole of history is the Jesus-event, therefore the whole history recorded in the scriptures reveals its ultimate meaning in the light of that unique event.² Christianity sees in that event the end of history, therefore it confines God's revelation to a particular series of events.

Is that consistent with a historical approach? Where is the criterion by which we decide that the Christ-event is the most significant, or even "unique and final"³ event? Are the historians who do not accept that unique intensity of significance wrong or are they blinded? How can we maintain there is more than a difference in degree between the Christ-event and the rest of history? All these questions indicate the theological and historical difficulty

1) Dodd, History, p.29 (italics mine).

2) The purpose of God in the Old Testament "is never conceived to be completely revealed in the history of Israel ..." (Dodd, op.cit., p.33), but "in the coming of Jesus Christ ... the prophecies have been fulfilled ..." (ibid., p.35).

3) Sic! Dodd, History, p.35.

of Dodd's position.

On the other hand, Dodd offers another solution to the problem of relativity. "There are particular moments in the lives of men and in ^{the} history of mankind when what is permanently true (if largely unrecognized) becomes manifestly and effectively true. Such a moment in history is reflected in the Gospels."¹ The structure of thinking underlying this statement is very reminiscent of the Apologists of the second century, who succeeded in thinking through the uniqueness of Christianity by their concept of *λόγος στεγματικός*. And indeed, Dodd makes the same assumption: the gospels reflect a manifestation of eternal truth. Is it possible to know that truth apart from the revelatory Christ-event? This Dodd would have to concede, for it is not credible that what is permanently true cannot be known apart from a particular manifestation of it.² Dodd has difficulty in giving compelling reasons why Jesus Christ belongs inevitably to the saving contents of Christian faith, for Jesus seems to be merely a bringer of eternal truths, which - if once learnt - must be valid in themselves. Dodd's concept is reminiscent, on the other hand, of the rationalistic historiography which was only interested in history, in so far as history provided examples of

1) Dodd, Founder, p.57 (italics mine).

2) Dodd seems to presuppose that the eternal truth could theoretically be known apart from its manifestation; see his remark in brackets quoted above: "if largely unrecognized" (italics mine); cf. this page, n.1.

eternal truths (of reason, this time).¹ I am sure that Dodd would not want to be placed in such company, but nevertheless there is a slight tendency towards the rationalistic approach to history. History is not really the only ground for our knowledge of God, and moreover, God's essence is thought of as an "ousia" in the sense of Greek philosophy, rather than as an event or a series of events in history. God's revelation does not belong to his essence, since his essence is the same without revelation. Revelation is only the manifestation of what has always been true.

Whatever we may think of that, Dodd is at any rate willing to give the historical events recorded in the New Testament a unique significance: they are eschatological events.² They are eschatological in the exact sense of the word: there God has fulfilled history, history has come to its end, Doomsday has happened in the cross and resurrection of Jesus.³ Christianity has a "realized eschatology"⁴. This concept of realized eschatology⁵ entails a certain view of both history in general and the Church: What is the

1) Cf. Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, pp.101f.

2) Cf. Dodd, History, pp.35f and Founder, p.116, where Dodd states that "the earthly career of Jesus ... has a significance reaching out into man's eternal destiny".

3) Dodd, History, p.170.

4) Dodd, History, p.171.

5) See Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, p.205, n.67 and also ibid., p.220. Compare Braaten, History and Hermeneutics, pp.163-165.

relevance of subsequent history, if the end of history has already happened two thousand years ago? What is the meaning of history, if the talk of a coming end is merely a symbolic expression of the universality of God's purpose¹? Dodd says of the general significance of history: it is the "process of redemption and revelation" culminating "in the death and resurrection of Christ".² This history, however, is not just identical with secular history; Dodd does not accept the idea of a steady progress towards the Kingdom of God as the goal of history.³ The redemptive history is "sacred history" "which comes to life when the Church experiences the coming of Christ in the Sacrament, and proclaims it to the world in its preaching"⁴. Here, the relevance of the Church is obvious: it brings the empirical (secular) history into sacred history by bringing the "present situation under the divine judgement ..."⁵. Dodd has indeed given up the idea of progress that was once so closely connected with realized eschatology. For Dodd, every moment in history can become the last one again, if it is put under the proclamation of the Gospel.⁶ The "eschaton" is taken into the "now", and when this happens, the redemptive crisis and new creation of "sacred history"

1) Dodd, History, p.171. 2) Dodd, History, p.171.
3) Dodd, History, pp.180f. 4) Dodd, History, p.172.
5) Dodd, History, pp.172f.
6) See for instance Dodd, History, p.181.

become the crisis of our present situation (i.e. that history becomes our history), and the acceptance of it by God at the same time. The Church plays an essential part in the redemptive process. Who else would mediate the "sacred history" if not the Church?

On the whole, Dodd thinks history and revelation together in a series of events reaching from the beginning of the Old Testament until Jesus Christ, whereby Jesus is the focal point revealing the final meaning of the whole series. After that "fullness of time" the remainder of history has no longer any revelatory significance; the fullness of time, however, is repeated in the proclamation of the Gospel.¹ Both "an historical and a supra-historical aspect of the Gospel story"² has to be borne in mind. As far as I can see, Dodd does not explicitly define the relationship between those two aspects; it would seem to me, however, that he is inclined to search for the supra-historical meaning in the historical facts.³ A paragraph in The Founder of Christianity also points in this

1) See Dodd, History, p.181 and passim.

2) Dodd, op.cit., p.36; compare also Founder, p.116. It is consistent that Dodd is much interested in finding a "historical section of the kerygma", see Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, p.109; also Robinson, New Quest, pp.48ff (critical remarks), reflected by Keck, op.cit., p.142, n.36!

3) See e.g. Dodd, History, p.37: "... the denial of the importance of historical facts would carry with it a denial of what is of the essence of the Gospel"; and compare also his general concept of history possessing meaning, ibid., pp.25ff; cf. Dodd, Founder, p.28.

direction: if the disciples and discipleship are a direct model for the Church, if the essence of the Church is described with "Nachfolgeworten",¹ then it is presupposed that the historical facts of the life and death of Jesus are the most relevant: they are obviously a criterion for every form of the post-Easter faith and for the whole existence of the Church. This structure of thinking presupposes that, in fact, the relationship between Jesus and his disciples equals the relation of the post-Easter community to their Lord and Saviour. That again means that the fullness of God's revelation is already present in the historical Jesus.

So, we can see that Dodd remains more directly in continuity with the old quest than most of his continental contemporaries. His emphasis upon the historical factuality of God's revelation, however, is a very important voice reminding Christian theology of the need to stick to the reality of this world. His emphasis is also a warning against any extreme philosophical or kerygmatic approach towards Christian origins. But still, I think, his identification of revelation with history is perhaps too facile a solution of the problem in discussion.

6.2 J.Knox: Christ in Becoming

To grasp J.Knox's position, we shall confine ourselves

1) Dodd does so in Founder, pp.90ff esp. pp.95f.

to one of his more recent books,¹ which gives - according to Knox's own point of view - a kind of a summary of the problem of "how faith in Christ can be essentially related to historical fact and yet be as sure as faith must be .."². This book attempts to express coherently and intelligibly what lay at the basis of the author's former christological works.³

John Knox starts with a basic assumption concerning the nature of the gospels: "they bring us Jesus as the early community thought of him"⁴. His point of departure, then, is clearly marked by the form-critical approach towards the gospels. Knox shares in the general uncertainty about what can be known of the historical Jesus. He goes on to say that historical phenomena "per se" cannot be the object of faith, because "faith must know its object in a way we cannot know a historical fact"⁵. So, faith cannot want the gospels to be anything else than witnesses of and to faith. One might expect that Knox's theology is kerygmatic⁶ in the Bultmannian sense of the word, but this

1) Knox, The Church and the Reality of Christ, London 1963.

2) Knox, Church, p.10.

3) Knox, op.cit., p. 10.

4) Knox, op.cit., p.15.

5) Knox, op.cit., pp.15f. This is the well-known argument for the "eschatological risk of faith" which cannot equal a historical risk (cf. ibid., p.17). It has to be noted that Knox rejects a faith based on history not because history is relative, but because historical facts cannot be established with certainty (!).

6) Anderson, Jesus, p.107 holds that it "may be justly described as kerygmatic".

would not be an accurate description. Surprisingly, Knox rejects both Bultmann's and Tillich's positions, both of whom reduce Christianity to an event or appearance of meaning (i.e. "kerygma" and "picture" respectively) in history but which has only a formal relationship to factual history ("happenedness").¹ Against that position Knox insists that the witnesses of the early Church were "bound to say both things; that what they have seen they saw done and what they have heard they heard said"². Knox insists on the "extra nos" character, as it were, of the events at the beginning of Christianity in the sense of a factual counterpart to "kerygma" or "picture". But still, this concept does not allow that the counterpart is constituted by historical events, since these are worthless for faith.³ What is the way out of this not inconsiderable dilemma?

"The solution of this problem ... lies ... in our recognizing, and accepting fully and without reservations of any kind, the radical significance of the early Church."⁴ The Jesus Event and the "coming into existence of the Church" are one and the same thing.⁵ This concept is made possible

1) Knox, Church, pp.18-21.

2) Knox, op.cit., p.21. He does not want to "relegate Jesus to the background of the Christ Event" (ibid., p.21).

3) See above p.139.

4) Knox, op.cit., p.22; compare Anderson, Jesus, p.107; Downing, Church, p.11.

5) The Jesus Event is neither "antedating" nor "in any sense or degree prior" (sic!) to the Church; ibid., p.22.

by a particular theory of what a historical event is: to an event belongs the preparation in the past, as well as the actual happening and its reception in the present and the consequences.¹ In epistemological terms one might say: a known fact includes our preunderstanding as well as the meaning we give it. If one applies that to our particular problem, it means: to know about the Church is the same as to know about Jesus. An absolutely key-position is ascribed to the Church. The Church is the "only ground for affirming the Event"², in fact, it is the Event. Therefore it is no use to go behind the texts of the Church in search for historical facts, because there is nothing prior to the Church. And yet, the Church is the guarantee that we may refer to an actual event (and not only to an appearance of meaning).³ The Jesus event becomes dependent on the Church: that Jesus is remembered by the Church gives him his relevance for today, since all the facts which are not remembered are past facts (in contrast to this view common sense would argue rightly that facts are normally remembered because they are relevant).⁴ On the one hand that may be

1) E.g. the Church began to emerge when Israel learnt about Jahweh; it never ends till the last day (Knox, Church, p.23); the Jesus event is the focus of the whole Church (ibid., p.24) according to this new concept. Regarding this view of events compare also Pittenger, "Some Implications", p.4 and p.7.

2) Knox, op.cit., p.30.

3) One might perhaps go so far as to say that the Church is the guarantee of the historical reality of Jesus, cf. Anderson, Jesus, p.108. Barbour, Traditio-Historical Criticism, p.44 calls that a "plausible but disastrously dangerous doctrine" to which I agree.

4) Knox, op.cit., p.35 compare also p. 47.

true, in so far as a historical event has no relevance if it is forgotten;¹ but on the other hand it is rather amazing to say that the whole significance of the Jesus event consists of its remembrance by the Church, and still to reject Bultmann's kerygmatic approach.

However, the remembering activity of the Church is constitutive of its being,² and is fundamental for its existence.³ The quality of that memory is extraordinary: "the remembered Jesus ... is not the historical Jesus", "the Church (is not) dependent at any vital point upon such researching for the verification of its memory".⁴ The remembrance of the Church is unique. There is, seemingly, a certain dialectic relationship between Jesus and the Church (which are, "nota bene", for Knox the same thing!). This relationship is defined by "remembrance": "the Church remembers Jesus", and in doing so it avoids delivering Jesus into the hands of historians as well as transmuting him into an empty "kerygma".⁵

Epistemologically looked at, to "remember" appears to be a unique form of "to know". What is this uniqueness? To begin with, "the significance of communal memory lies .. in ... the felt meaning of an event in the past ..."⁶.

1) See e.g. Barbour, Traditio-Historical Criticism, p.44.

2) Knox, Church, p.35. 3) Knox, op.cit., p.36.

4) Knox, op.cit., p.36. 5) Knox, op.cit., p.37!

6) Knox, op.cit., p.43 (italics mine).

That is its "objective historical value"¹. The memory, especially the group-memory,² is accurate in conceiving the meaning of past events. This meaning is obtained neither by a process of deduction nor of induction, but it is "felt". It is, obviously, not more than formally related to the events it refers to. The memory of the Church "has to do with the moral stature of Jesus" which was greater than the "Gospels alone would force us to conclude"³ (it does not seem to occur to Knox that the evangelists might have had their own good reasons for not insisting on the moral stature of Jesus). The memory of the Church, then, is something apart from its books, rather elusive to describe; perhaps an impression made by Jesus that was handed down "from generation to generation within the body of an organic human community"⁴. Who does transmit that memory? Who will be the successors of those disciples who were the starting point of the Church's memory of Jesus' loving grandeur?⁵

Suddenly the historical Jesus comes into the whole thing, namely as initiator of the Church's memory. And yet the knowledge of resurrection "implies the remembrance of Jesus"⁶. One cannot help saying that Knox, by introducing so vaguely the concept of "remembrance", confuses things

1) Knox, Church, p.42.

2) Knox, op.cit., pp.38ff.

3) Knox, op.cit., p.54.

4) Knox, op.cit., p.55.

5) Knox, op.cit., p.56: the Church "remembered" this love "as already manifested in Jesus".

6) Knox, op.cit., p.48.

more than they have been before. One suspects that the introduced idea of "remembrance" was to deceive Knox himself over the fact that there is no real counterpart to the Church in his concept. "Remembrance" should give the impression, that there is really - to a certain extent - a criterion for the Church. At any rate, this concept does not solve in any way the christological problem as it has to be faced by our age. It simply replaces it by the ecclesiological problem.¹

Consequently, we have to turn now to the significance of the Church. The overall impression is an exceedingly high evaluation of the Church by Knox. And indeed, "the Church is God's deed, wonderful beyond our understanding!"² The Church is "the locus of God's presence and saving action"³, "the embodiment of God's saving action within the temporal order"⁴. This estimate of the Church is reminiscent of Ebeling's estimate of faith. If there it is the faith that saves and fulfills God's will, here the Church is our Saviour, despite Knox's protestations to the contrary. His assertion, "the Church does not save us; God saves us"⁵, is a merely theoretical distinction, as one can see immediately if one has a look at Knox's soteriology.

1) Cf. Downing, Church, p.11, and Anderson, Jesus, p.109.
2) Knox, Church, p.74. 3) Knox, op.cit., p.74.
4) Knox, op.cit., p.86. 5) Knox, op.cit., p.124.

Significantly, Knox defines salvation as reconciliation.¹ That definition enables him to understand salvation in terms of ecclesiology: reconciliation means to "share in a new existence", to belong to "a new community".² This new community, of course, is the Church. It is the Church alone that is the only locus of God's atoning act;³ in fact, the Church presents salvation by accepting estranged people into the new community.

The point now is reached when we can no longer delay the question: "What is the Church?" Is it "a solid historical reality, and its beginning an indisputable historical fact"⁴? Or is it "a wonderful deed, beyond our understanding"⁵? Where is the Church? What exactly is the Church's remembrance? Of course, Knox does not want to identify the Church in that way,⁶ but still he is convinced that "we cannot think of it too highly"⁷. Where is the medium, where is the authority, which is to preserve and to transmit that memory, if the latter - as I take it -⁸ is not

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- 1) Knox, Church, p.103: "Salvation, then, is by definition reconciliation, atonement."
 - 2) Knox, op.cit., pp.104f.
 - 3) Knox, op.cit., pp.107f.
 - 4) Knox, op.cit., p.31.
 - 5) Knox, op.cit., p.74.
 - 6) Knox, op.cit., p.130.
 - 7) Knox, op.cit., p.149.
 - 8) Or what other sense can it have when he says that the Church always "remembers both more and less that the Gospels contain" (Knox, op.cit., p.51)? Where, on the other hand, is the medium which keeps and hands down the "impression of the moral greatness of Jesus which cannot have been simply derived from these books (sc. the gospels)"; ibid., p.55? Cf. p.54, esp. n.3, where Knox feels "a sound instinct at work" when one "insists on the reality and importance of an extrascriptural (sic!) source of knowledge of the Church's own intimate past"; cf. ibid., p.101.

identical with the Bible? There must be an "extrascriptural" stream of knowledge and tradition. But, if one is unable to identify even the "Church", how is one able to identify this special knowledge? The whole concept of memory - viewed from this angle - becomes once more a vague and imprecise idea with which it is impossible to work rationally. To contradict so fundamental a reformation axiom as "sola scriptura" must entail the most weighty consequences.

Sometimes one has the impression that the memory of the Church refers to the earthly Jesus only.¹ Why, then, is the Church's memory not comprehensible by historical methods? Answer: the Church's memory is far richer than the factuality of history, it is the "felt meaning" of Jesus that is remembered by the Church. Is there at least some sort of connection between memory and historiography? Answer: memory essentially refers to regions not covered by the historian.² What then is the place of historical methods within theology with regard to christological problems? No answer.³

Furthermore there is the problem of the criterion by which the Church itself should be judged. Is there anything superior to the Church so that it could serve as a

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- 1) Knox seems to establish a difference between "to know" which refers to Christ's presence in the Church and "to remember" which refers to the Church's relationship with the earthly Jesus; see Knox, Church, pp.97.64f.
 - 2) Knox, op.cit., pp.55f.
 - 3) Cf. Downing, Church, p.11.

canonical measure to examine the appropriateness of the Church? Knox tries to define such an authority,¹ although it is easy to guess that he will have great difficulties in solving this problem. There is, indeed, an authority exceeding the authority of the Church. Knox points to "God's spirit" or "the Word" or "God's presence" upon which the Church is dependent.² This activity of God is, however, again rather vague and not to be localized. A particular aspect of that word is the "act of God in history which took place in connection with the career of Jesus, his death and Resurrection"³. Knox seems willing to give that event a normative function.⁴ But yet Knox declines to say which of them (event or Church) is more important;⁵ after all both are one and the same thing. How can he really speak of a supreme authority apart from the Church, if he puts such a stress on the identity of God's action in Jesus and the beginning of the Church (its coming into existence)? The history of Jesus and the "extra nos" of faith is submerged in the history of the Church.⁶ How can

1) Knox, Church, pp.121ff.

2) Knox, op.cit., p.121: all these expressions have an identical meaning.

3) Knox, op.cit., p.123.

4) See Knox, op.cit., p.124: this event is the "moment of the Church's beginning" and as such "clearly distinguishable from later moments" and "possessing unique meaning and authority for the Church".

5) Knox, op.cit., pp.125f.

6) This is very clearly seen by Anderson, Jesus, p.109.

it be a counterpart at the same time? Knox seems really to expect a rather uncritical submission to the Church's picture of Christ,¹ and that to a picture which is not even definable, since it is some sort of extrarational picture originating in an indescribable contact between Jesus and his disciples.

Knox's contribution to the problem of christology bears as its main trait an unbelievable identification of all entities involved. To begin with, the Church is identified with the whole Christ event, the Christ of faith is identified with the earthly Jesus,² the Church's picture ("memory") of Jesus is identified with Jesus as he really was. God's revelation and history, again, are identified, whereby history receives an entirely new meaning, namely the meaning of remembrance within the Church.³

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- 1) See Hanson, "Enterprise", pp.66ff.
 - 2) Compare also Anderson, Jesus, p.109. I do not see the exact difference between "to remember" and "to know", unless "to know" should be defined as "knowledge resulting from present experience". That however leads on to the further problem of describing present experience in contrast with the memory of the past; cf. above p.146.
 - 3) Barbour, Traditio-Historical Criticism, notes that Knox, "inspite of his protestations to the contrary, does really 'relegate Jesus to the background of the Christ-event' ..." (p.46; Knox writes "Christ Event", op.cit., p.21); this points to the fundamental weakness of Knox's approach. It is also for this reason that he has to rule out the historical Jesus as being totally irrelevant for faith, since the historical Jesus is a picture not necessarily drawn from within the Church.

Knox wishes only one thing to be totally distinguished: the historical Jesus. He has nothing to do with the Jesus remembered in the Church, he is entirely irrelevant for our faith. In order to get rid of the problem of history and faith, Knox defines the historical Jesus so narrowly that the latter cannot mean anything.¹ His contribution is marked by the attempt to throw away the achievements of the past 200 years of New Testament scholarship in order to erect a church-positivism without serious problems. Knox tries to veil this by introducing a vague concept of memory which may deceive the reader - as it deceived himself - , so that he is tempted to take this seemingly comfortable and reasonable way out of the whole problem of finding a basis for Christian faith. The Church is the answer to all questions; that may be welcome, but it takes away all the tension which has been the very essence and the moving spirit of Christian theology for the last 2000 years.

7.0 The Theological Significance of the New Quest

We can return now to the task defined above²: we shall attempt to hold together history and God without either

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- 1) He also has solved the "vexatious problem of the 'authenticity' of the words of Jesus by getting rid of it" (Anderson, Jesus, p.110).
 - 2) See above pp.127-130.

impairing the secularity of history or the sanctity of God.¹ This enterprise - the present form of the christological problem - must concentrate upon the question of the theological significance of the historical Jesus; in other words: the significance of historical work for theology is at stake.² Obviously to think about God in purely historical terms is - thanks to the secularity of history - impossible. What other solutions are available?

There is the basic insight that to think about God in connection with history involves interpretation. Obviously, God and history are brought together in an observer's mind, more precisely, in a believing observer's mind. History is declared to reveal God; and that is true, in declaring his love for our world we conform to that God who is not the world. Taking some historical events and interpreting them as divine events we bring God to expression without suppressing the secular character of history.³

Now, everything depends on what this process of declaring really is. Are we putting before our contemporaries a kind of interpreted history with which they can only either entirely agree or entirely disagree? Are we calling

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- 1) These two phrases indicate the fundamental difference between the world and God - a consequence of God's revealing himself as God.
 - 2) It has to be noted that both questions of significance are really identical, since we have defined that the Jesus who is accessible to and worked out by the present historical method is the historical Jesus. As soon as one would take it to mean the "earthly Jesus, as he really was", one would have solved the main question involved "a priori".
 - 3) The best example I know of that phenomenon is Bultmann's concept of paradoxical identity.

them to so abrupt a decision that they have no chance to think it over?¹ That would be the case, if our interpretation of history were a deliberate interpretation without regard to the facts; i.e. an interpretation which cannot enter into any kind of historical discussion. This attitude, to present present interpretations that have no material connection with the factual history, is the exact opposite of proving God historically, for the former would demand of men an unqualified allegiance.

A Christian kerygma calling people to such unqualified allegiance would, however, be strongly contradicting the nature of the God revealed in it. At any rate, the kerygma in its structure has to correspond to the God who made himself known as love. And love is not likely to impose unqualified allegiance; love is patient in argument and persistent in begging.²

Our kerygma, then, must correspond to the God it announces, in so far as it does not compel allegiance. It must provoke people to think, and give them time and reasons for their decisions. How can this be achieved? It can be achieved, if bringing God to expression in an historical

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- 1) In fact, the Bultmannian concept of kerygma resembles this "take it or leave it"-structure. It is normally justified by the argument that it is not within the possibilities of man to come to God.
 - 2) That Jesus told parables which give people time to think is a perfect illustration of God's loving, and as such begging, approach to man.

event can, to a certain degree, produce arguments for that particular interpretation. These arguments are again historical and as such incapable of demonstrating God conclusively. But still, the particular interpretation of a historical event can be supported by historical reasons.

If we apply that consideration to our problem, it means: to think about God in connection with history must have a certain basis in history, i.e. to think about Christ together with the historical Jesus must be something that one can argue about. It seems to me that an authentic concept of continuity allows us to advance one or two steps further, since it maintains a certain connection between world and God without demanding a total identification. Our next task will be to define that very concept of continuity, so that we shall be able to work with it.

7.1 A Methodological Principle

As we proceed to define the concept of continuity, we must firstly be clear about the fact that our concept of continuity will be a method of working with the biblical texts. As a method it presupposes already before its application a certain outcome of the investigation.¹ That

1) There is, as far as I can see, no objective, neutral method of understanding texts. As a parallel we can refer to the generally acknowledged relation between experiment, observer, and results in science.

means however, that we have to choose the method very carefully. The method itself must conform to the object to which it is applied. The method of understanding the relationship between Jesus and Christ must confine itself to one single presupposition, namely that it must correspond to that relationship as it is recorded in those texts which seek to announce that very relationship.¹ By confining itself to that one presupposition our method has a chance of being free from any other presupposition derived from a general human epistemological theory.² In doing so it becomes an ancillary tool that gives way to the actual object

To put it very briefly: no non-biblical method (i.e. a method which is not derived from and related to the event of Jesus Christ) is very likely to bring the solution of the problem as to how the continuity between Jesus and Christ can be defined. All non-biblical methods are "a priori" on the side of worldly existence, and are as such incapable of bringing God to expression: "finitum non capax infiniti".³ From this point of view we can say that we do not expect new methods of historiography to bring a real solution (against Robinson and Fuchs(?)/Ebeling), unless they abandon their claim to be generally

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- 1) This methodological principle is applied by me in analogy to K.Barth's "dogmatic method" (See KD I/2, pp. 954ff). He feels it necessary to avoid systems (ibid., p.963) for the reason that systems would involve so many alien presuppositions that the object would remain silent.
 - 2) This, too, understands itself in analogy to Barth's "way of dogmatics": it is a way without any other kind of presupposition because of the one presupposition, i.e. to let God speak; cf. KD I/2, p.969.
 - 3) See Pannenberg, "Christologie", RGG I, col.1774f.

(also by secular historians) acknowledged methods. As long as they want to be that they are bound to conform to the secular methods of understanding in such a way that Jesus Christ is concealed from them.

It has to be noted that our methodological procedure already implies a certain solution of the christological problem in question. The method (of deriving methods from the event of Jesus Christ) already implies a certain relation between God and history, in so far as God is understood to have acted in history in such a way that people who wanted to tell of his acts were forced to transcend their own worldly limits. It is presupposed here, that God - acting in history - conquered the human language in order to bring himself to expression.¹ Only because we presuppose that can we justify our methodological procedure. We must admit that we are in a circle here.²

In order to understand the concept of continuity we ask the New Testament writers themselves, what they think the relationship between the historical Jesus and

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- 1) An illustration of the phenomenon intended could be that God's identification with the Crucified forced human language to bring God and passion into a relationship that was unthinkable before.
 - 2) This is the circle inherent in every axiom, in so far as an axiom cannot be derived from reality. The point is, however, that axioms are defined in order to be worked with. And this is the process in which they can be shown to be workable or unworkable. The same applies to methodological principles.

Christ is. We shall take some examples: here the gospels obviously provide us with the clearest example of a bias towards the historical Jesus, and Paul provides us with an example of a bias towards the kerygmatic Christ.

7.1.1 Paul

It is not possible for me to raise now the whole question of Paul and Jesus,¹ which would be far too complicated to deal with in a few pages. It, as far as I can see, is far from having been satisfactorily answered. But still, there are some basic facts that are acknowledged, and that are sufficient for our purpose.

To begin with, it seems to be quite obvious and generally acknowledged that the historical connection between Paul and Jesus was a very loose one, if one takes the historical Jesus in the sense of the figure given by the gospel stories.² It is astonishing that we learn from Paul almost nothing about the life of Jesus, except some very basic facts.³ Moreover, the authentic teaching of Jesus seems to have been quite irrelevant for Paul,⁴

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- 1) On the history of the question cf. Jüngel, Paulus und Jesus, pp.5ff.
 - 2) That very fact produced the vast amount of literature dealing with the question of Paul and Jesus in the last two centuries; cf. Jüngel, op.cit., pp.5ff who holds the question a historiographical and historical (!) "aporia".
 - 3) Reported e.g. by Schoeps, Paul, pp.5ff; cf. Schmithals, "Paulus und der 'historische' Jesus", pp.37f.
 - 4) See Schmithals, op.cit., p.39.

apart from a few logia he quotes. This is irritating. One might be tempted to say that the earthly Jesus, for Paul, was entirely irrelevant, and that Paul was only interested in the mythical figure of Christ. And yet almost every modern scholar points out that the earthly Jesus was of the utmost importance for Paul.¹ Paul certainly was speaking about a particular historical person. How far this historical figure is decisive as a historical figure is very much debated. The answers range from a merely formal significance of the historical Jesus (e.g. Bultmann's "dass" of his existence)² to the claim that Paul, being in Jerusalem, had learnt the words of Jesus by heart.³ One fact we have to face: Paul tells us almost nothing about the historical Jesus in the way that the gospel stories do. Many attempts have been made to explain this. There are at least two of them which seem to me to involve difficulties. There is, on the one hand, the assumption that Paul did not want to speak about the historical Jesus. In this regard one refers normally to 2Cor 5,16, where the $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha \beta\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\lambda\alpha$ is a "crux interpretum".⁴ Whatever this phrase may mean it is not

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- 1) See Schmithals, "Paulus und der 'historische' Jesus", p.42; Jüngel, Paulus und Jesus, p.9; Schoeps, Paul, p. 56; Dellling, Der Tod Jesu, p.93; Bonsirven, Theology of the New Testament, pp.202f; Amiot, The Key Concepts of St.Paul (he has somewhat strange ideas of what Pauline literature is), p.93.
 - 2) Repeated again by Schmithals, op.cit., p.38 who obviously wants to remain with the "dass". To me it is rather illogical to say that the death on the cross belongs to that "dass" of Jesus' existence. That death, after all, is not "prima facie" an everyday experience of death.
 - 3) Cf. Gerhardsson, Memory and Manuscript, pp.297ff.
 - 4) Cf. Schmithals, op.cit., p.41.

conclusive to relate it to the earthly Jesus, since Paul would not have denied at all the identity of the earthly Jesus and the risen Christ.

There is, on the other hand, a certain temptation to look for allusions to dominical words in the letters of Paul. But however many allusions one believes that one has found, that does not solve the problem. One only runs into more difficulties, because one is forced to explain why Paul did not quote dominical words exactly or identify them as such. That he did not seems inconsistent with his habit (cf. e.g. 1Cor 11,23).

The problem of Paul's relationship to the historical Jesus (taken in the way the gospels depict him) has yet to be solved. But something at least can now be said: Paul was, at any rate, fundamentally interested in the fact, that his κύριος was a historical person. This is shown conclusively by the central position of Jesus' death in Pauline theology.¹ Paul's stress on the cross, his "theologia crucis" binds his whole theology closely together with the earthly Jesus. The "historical Jesus" is, so to speak, reduced to the fact of his dying on the cross. Another question is how far the earthly Jesus is a merely formal presupposition of Paul's theology, or how far he plays "materialiter" an essential part. But let us first return to our primary question of the relationship between Jesus and Christ in Pauline theology. Our considerations above lead us to the following

1) That was Jüngel's argument already against Wrede, cf. Paulus und Jesus, p.9.

modification: the question of the relationship between the cross and the resurrection becomes in the case of Paul the question of the relationship between God and history. This modification is justified in so far as the cross of Jesus represents the "historical factor"¹ in the Christian confession, whereas "resurrection" marks the action of God after the disastrous death of Jesus.² So it seems promising enough to have a careful look at this relationship in Paul, in order to help to formulate and find a concept of continuity.

In our modified question of the relationship mentioned we can now define a further question which will have a bearing upon the significance of the historical in Paul's theology. The question is: to what extent is the cross as cross significant? Has it a merely formal meaning (the "thatness" of the cross) or does it determine materially the whole "Jesus Christ", and is it then the only thing that matters? These are the two extremes that are involved here.

The first hint that the cross is not confined to a formal meaning is in fact that Paul (and the Deuteropaulines as well) begins to speak more and more of the cross instead of only Jesus' death.³ That indicates very

1) Cf. Gal 3,13; Rom 1,3, commented on by Delling, Der Tod Jesu, p.93.

2) Cf. Wilckens, "ὁ Χριστός", ThW VII, pp.521,22ff. Wilckens states that God alone resurrected the weak, crucified Christ. That was what Paul had to say to the Corinthians (1Cor 1f), and Paul did so in the name of the cross. We already begin to realize how complex a relationship there is between the cross and the resurrection.

3) Käsemann, "The Saving Significance", p.36.

clearly that it did matter for Paul how Jesus had died. Käsemann mentions the insertion of "even death on a cross" in Phil 2,6ff as signifying Jesus' "unusual degree of suffering and humiliation", whereas in Gal 2,19.21;3,13 Paul stresses that the death of Jesus is "unclean and outside the divine covenant".¹ Jesus' death on the cross was a death in the state of godlessness (in the sense of being abandoned by God). Paul, by proclaiming a theology of the cross, establishes "our incapacity to achieve salvation for ourselves".² Paul's emphasis on the "for us" as well as on the "prae" of our salvation is a direct consequence of his "theologia crucis". The cross alone shows the "extra nos" of salvation. It shows that in its quality as a death for the sinful and godless (i.e. no terms upon which salvation is to be had are laid down), but also in its quality as a historical event, an "extra nos" which can be pointed to as "prae nos" in history. And the concrete happening of that historical event produced the categories by which we may understand, how we are saved "extra nos" and "prae nos" (i.e. the category of God's infinite love for the sinner). Not only that Jesus dies, but also how he died is of the utmost importance kerygmatically. That concrete historical event has consequences in our understanding of ourselves: 2Cor 13,4.³

Have we now arrived at a merely historical theology?

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- 1) Käsemann, "The Saving Significance", p.36. He draws an interesting parallel to the gospel stories about Jesus and the tax collectors and sinners. Is it possible that the cross is in some way a summary of and criterion for the life of Jesus?
 - 2) Käsemann, op.cit., p.39.
 - 3) See Wilckens, "σφίρα", p.521,22ff.

Are we now using Paul in order to prove right all the attempts which identify Jesus and Christ so that a reference to historical events is theologically sufficient? Indeed, we would do so, if we isolated Paul's teaching of the cross. What has to be said concerning man's salvation cannot be said sufficiently by considering the cross only. After all, we have yet to explain why Paul's "theologia crucis" is a "theologia crucis". Jesus' death on the cross is as ambiguous as every historical event,¹ and the most convincing historical explanation of the cross is to see in it the complete disaster of a man having claimed to be the Messiah.² What makes the history of the cross a theology of the cross? If we take the point of view of a hearer of Paul's proclamation, we have to answer: our faith in the cross comes from the proclamation of the cross.³ This, however, does not necessarily mean that the cross is only significant when it is proclaimed to me.⁴ It is not the proclamation that makes the significance of the cross. The proclamation declares that significance. The proclamation comes, according to Paul, διὰ ῥήματος Χριστοῦ⁵, through the "word of Christ". The "word of Christ" is that word which originates the whole process of proclamation.⁶ It is likely that this word is

1) Käsemann, "The Saving Significance", p.50.

2) Delling, Der Tod Jesu, p.94.

3) Rom 10,17: ἔξω ἢ πίστεως ἐξ ἄκοῆς.....

4) Delling, op.cit., p.94.

5) Rom 10,17.

6) Cf. Michel, Röm, p.231.

to be understood as the word of the *κύριος*, the risen Christ, who sends the apostles to proclaim his Lordship.¹ So the cause of the cross's being theologically significant is the resurrection of Jesus. The *λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ* (1Cor 1,18) would never have been a *λόγος* if Jesus had not been resurrected.² And indeed, for Paul the cross and the resurrection are in an intimate connection.³ What nature is this connection?

We have already seen that the cross as one part of that unity is essential for the contents of the *λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ*. It determines and makes clear how God has saved mankind, namely by accepting man without any conditions. The cross remains the essential "signature of the one who is risen"⁴. But the cross is irrelevant without the resurrection. The contribution of resurrection to that unity is to make the cross understandable as a saving deed of God. It has to be noted here that resurrection does not add just a meaning to the cross, which one could discover apart from resurrection by considering the cross only. Considering the cross alone one would at best give the cross the meaning of the heroic death of a man who had endured the wickedness of society without hitting back. This meaning of the cross would invite (or even force) us

1) See e.g. Bultmann, Theology I, p.306.

2) See also Schneider, "*σταυρώσεως*", ThW VII, pp.575f, especially n.30 quoting W.Tr.Hahn: "Der Logos vom Kreuz ist ohne Auferstehungsbotschaft undenkbar."

3) See Wilckens, "*ἰσχύς*", p.521,22ff; Käsemann, "The Saving Significance", p.42; Whiteley, The Theology of St.Paul, p.151; Delling, Der Tod Jesu, p.92.

4) Käsemann, op.cit., p.56.

to imitation, it would help us to help ourselves. The meaning of the cross, however, which Paul proclaims, was learnt in the light of resurrection. The resurrection designated the cross as God's solidarity with man, it showed the cross to be the sign of God's infinite love. To put it in one sentence: the cross shows the "extra nos" of our salvation, whereas the resurrection shows the "extra nos" of our salvation (cf. Rom 4, 25!).

It is the original achievement of Paul that he thought through the relationship of cross and resurrection in such a way that they remain dialectical partners held together in tension. This has to be maintained against every attempt to minimize the significance of the cross by pointing to the resurrection as its annulling.¹ The resurrection is not merely Jesus' return to life, but it is rather the living of the crucified. Paul does justice to that aspect by proclaiming the crucified Jesus (1Cor 1, 23). This message is a *θράνησθλον* and a *μωρία*, in so far as it announces God's triumph in humiliation, in so far as it announces God's presence in a state of his obvious absence, in so far as it announces God's power coming from an obvious disaster.² The "scandalon" is, too, to proclaim God by means of historical events,³ and moreover to

1) So Käsemann, "The Saving Significance", pp. 46f, attacking a "theology of the resurrection".

2) Cf. Barrett, 1Cor, pp. 49.52.

3) Cf. Lietzmann, Korr, p. 9: the opposite to Christian proclamation is "philosophical preaching".

announce God by means of the shocking death of Jesus.¹ However scandalous this proclamation may be, Paul has to maintain it for God's sake. He is forced - obviously by God's acting in history - to think about the relationship between God and history in the same way as he thought about the resurrection of the crucified. He had to confine himself to the preaching of the crucified in order that the "kerygma" might remain the "kerygma" of Jesus Christ, and might be prevented from becoming a rich, but as such theologically poor, metaphysical myth.

What does this brief sketch of Paul's "theologia crucis" contribute to our basic problem? I think we may draw several conclusions; to begin with, the relationship between the cross and the resurrection shows the continuity between Jesus and Christ to be indeed a continuity between two factors different in kind. The crucified and the risen Jesus as such are far from being identical, they are rather brought together by Paul (or any other early Christian preacher), who tries to tell the story of Jesus Christ appropriately. The history that had taken place in Jerusalem and the appearances to many Christians obviously were of such a nature that the bringing together of the cross and the resurrection is the consequence of a historical process. The historical character of the resurrection has yet to be defined.

Further we have seen that the historical side of

1) Delling, Der Tod Jesu, p.93.

the Christian confession provides the categories in which God comes to expression. That is not to say, however, that historical events are sufficient in themselves to express God, so that the eschatological side (the resurrection) is merely a vindication or confirmation of the historical side. The resurrection has more than a purely formal significance. It throws a certain light on the events and gives them a particular, new meaning (which historical events as such cannot have, and which could not be found by historical methods of encounter or similar ones).

Finally we have seen that the resurrection-side in our confessions is the basis for the historical events' being proclaimed, in so far as it reveals the "extra nos" of history as the "pro nobis" of salvation. "Salvation always means resurrection from the dead",¹ and it is demonstrated in the resurrection of Christ that only God can save man and that God indeed did save man. In the light of the resurrection the death of Jesus receives a new significance without ceasing to be that death, and it receives its significance from the God who raises from the dead. This puts the cross on the side of a life defined afresh by the process from cross to Easter.

That has to be proclaimed. But we must bear in mind that this proclamation is not the basis of the unity between Jesus and Christ; but rather God's self-identification with the crucified is the basis of the proclamation.

1) Käsemann, "The Saving Significance", p.41.

Having noted these fundamental contributions to our concept of continuity, the remaining task will be to draw methodological consequences for understanding God historically. But before we do that, we shall turn to the other example of relationship between Jesus and Christ, the Synoptic gospels, with their stress, this time, on the "historical" side.

7.1.2 The Synoptic Gospels

Until the turn of the last century, New Testament scholars generally had confidence in the historical reliability of the gospels.¹ Although that confidence had been more and more modified, it was still held on principle that the primary sources (Mark and Q) were historically reliable. The development preceding (and making possible) the rise of the form-critical approach shook this confidence.² The form-critical approach is based on the insight that the gospels are religious, not historical, documents. This applies without exception to all sources. The Christian community is considered the author and traditor of the material now collected in the gospels.³ Bultmann, Dibelius, and Schmidt shared the conviction that the gospels were books for the community and as such distinguished from historical sources. This form-critical approach has two main implications which

1) Cf. Lehmann, Synoptische Quellenanalyse, pp.163-166.

2) See e.g. Dodd, Founder, pp.25ff; Lehmann, op.cit., p.4; Schweizer, Mk, p.4.

3) Lehmann, op.cit., p.4.

have made a great impact upon our subject.

Given the fact that the gospels (and the stories within the gospels) are religious documents,¹ there is a strong tendency towards explaining these documents as mere fulfillments of the needs of the early community. The form-critical approach showed clearly enough that the Christian documents had a very close relation to the needs of their traditors. It was recognized that the Christian texts were in many ways the answer to the Christians' needs. If that is true, it was continued, the biblical stories could as well have been invented by those who needed them;² it has to be noted that this last assumption is not a compelling consequence of the form-critical approach. Moreover, it rests on a quite different presupposition. All that form-criticism can say is that the gospels are religious documents and that their stories had a "Sitz im Leben" and were shaped by the community which was using them. Form-criticism can work out that the needs of the early community were met by the stories about Jesus. The assumption mentioned above, however, rests upon the presupposition that the stories meeting one's needs must have been invented by the person whose needs are met.³ That is an unscientific presupposition which should not be mixed up with the basis of form-criticism.

1) Bultmann, Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition, pp.2f.

2) This danger which the form-critical approach involves is seen very clearly by Dodd, Founder, p.27: "But some of the new criticism went so far as to say that the Gospels are giving us nothing but the ideas of early Christians."

3) The same presupposition in a different field is pointed out by Dodd, op.cit., p.27. He disputes the presupposition that considering the gospels as religious documents entails necessarily denying their historical importance.

Form-criticism and the discovery of the religious character of the gospels have brought New Testament scholarship a big step further towards an appropriate understanding of the nature of the Christian way of telling history. They entailed the insight that history cannot be told for its own sake nor can it as such be the revelation of God. The modern analysis of the gospels has shown that history had to undergo a process of interpretation before it entered the Christian Bible. It was a great benefit for theology that the positivistic approach towards history and the sources turned out to be wrong. But to draw the conclusion that the Christian texts have no real relation to the factual history they interpret would be to pervert that benefit into a new blindness. It is important to see that the nature of Christian texts is a dialectical relationship between history and interpretation.¹ Here, too, it has to be seen that interpretation is not fully explicable as an exposition of the history of the earthly Jesus. This interpretation adds something new to the career of Jesus. But more of that later.

At present I should like to emphasize the historical character of the biblical texts. I think it best to do so by having a look at the theological achievement of the first gospel writer: Mark. His theological contribution to Christianity is immense: he has

1) Dodd, Founder, p.28.

created the literary form of the "gospel".¹ This achievement can be properly appreciated when one remembers the historical development within the early community. Some of the uncanonical gospels show quite clearly that the tendency generally was to forget more and more the earthly concreteness of Jesus and to adore an entirely mythical Christ-figure.² In this situation in which such a "kerygmatic" theology threatened, Mark wrote his gospel in order to maintain the historicity of the "kerygma". His interest was anti-gnostic. For him it was essential that Christian preaching and teaching did not lose their close contact with the facts of the earthly career of Jesus. That is, however, not the whole of Mark's theological achievement.

The point is that he did not create a "Geschichtstheologie" in a positivistic sense. He did not consider the biographical details of the life of Jesus in and of themselves to be of theological interest.³ He rather created a new form of story, the gospel, which was destined to tell the history of Jesus Christ, the man from Nazareth and the son of God at one and the same time.⁴ Here for the first time history and God were brought together in a comprehensive way; that correlation brought into being the literary form of the gospel. Mark proclaims that, in the life of Jesus, God himself entered our world.⁵ But

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- 1) Schweizer, Mk, p.11; cf. also Schweizer, "Die theologische Leistung des Markus", pp.21ff.
 - 2) Schweizer, "Die theologische Leistung des Markus", p.22.
 - 3) Schweizer, Mk, p.4.
 - 4) Schweizer, "Die theologische Leistung des Markus", p.23, see also Bornkamm, "Evangelien", RGG III, col. 760.
 - 5) Schweizer, "Die theologische Leistung des Markus", p.26.

still, it must be seen that Mark did not write a biography, he did not confine himself to historical facts, but rather he was forced to tell Jesus' story in terms of divine and human blended together.

On principle this particular way of telling a story was not invented by Mark. It was already existent earlier, as the Pauline idea of the Gospel shows.¹ Mark shared a feature common to early Christianity which consisted of holding together history and its significance, the latter expressed theologically.² It is very important to be aware of that fact, for it has often been argued that Christian faith does not essentially need historicity in the sense of the gospels. In contrast to that it has to be noted that Mark's enterprise results only ~~from~~ the wish to emphasize the historicity, and that it is new in the sense that here the story of Jesus' earthly career is expressly made the focal point.³ Mark's enterprise, however, is not new in the sense that he talked of God by talking of historical events. What he did was to continue this by working out something fundamentally essential to Christian faith since its beginning.

Mark's enterprise is significant in the light of the fact that the term "gospel" was essentially defined by his written "gospel". The definition was appropriate,

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- 1) Paul's idea of the Gospel means as a rule that the death and the resurrection of Christ have a significance for faith, see Schweizer, Mk, p.14.
 - 2) A good example for this is the pre-Markan passion history (see Bornkamm, "Evangelien", col. 752), which shows instructively the close correlation of history and faith.
 - 3) See Bornkamm, op.cit., col.749.

in so far as it was not basically different from the earlier concept of "Gospel". And yet, Mark's gospel shows clearly the uniqueness of the form "gospel"; a uniqueness which rests on the uniqueness of the Christian "kerygma".¹ The Christian "kerygma" is unique precisely in the sense that it brings history and God together, and the way in which they are brought together is reflected in the four gospels.

It is generally held nowadays that the gospels are a unique piece of literature. This fact might be explained by pointing to the uniqueness of the Christian "kerygma". But this is not a sufficient explanation. It merely shifts the problems into another area. Why, one has to ask, did that unique form have to be created? One could refer to the genius of an early Christian community which had invented such a particular type of story. Is this an appropriate explanation?

Could one not just as well say that the creation of such a form was indebted to the historical relation that God himself has to the world? Is it not more appropriate to say that the early Christians were forced to tell the story of Jesus in terms of the risen Christ? It has to be admitted that we find ourselves - to a certain degree - in a circular argument: the history of God with the world which has been invoked to explain the kerygma is only conceivable within that very kerygma. Yet this circle might be theologically necessary.

1) See Bornkamm, "Evangelien", RGG III, col. 750: "Das Genus der E. (vangeliën) ist eine original christliche Schöpfung (K.L.Schmidt, Bultmann). Ihre Einzigartigkeit beruht auf der Einmaligkeit des christlichen Kerygmas."

What is the history that God had with the world? This history is told in the New Testament in terms of Jesus, especially in terms of his resurrection. Was it not the resurrection of the earthly Jesus that caused the new form of story to be invented? The history God had with the world can be summed up in the fundamental content of the Gospel: the death of Jesus was followed by his resurrection at God's hand. This was the historical process forcing the missionaries and preachers to invent a new form of telling history.

And indeed, the gospels are essentially shaped by the reality of the risen Christ. They proclaim that Jesus was who he is.¹ Jesus was their living Lord; that is the reason why they continued to change the traditions about him.² The gospels proclaim the resurrected earthly Jesus, and they know that resurrection was not merely a final event in Jesus' career, e.g. reversing the cruelty of his death, but rather that the resurrection had a qualitative impact on the whole of Jesus' life, showing that life in an entirely new light.³ So, the gospel writers had to paint the earthly Jesus in the colours of the risen Christ. In doing that they were exposed to the danger of forgetting the humanity of that God, viz. the danger of docetism.

This danger was increased when the doctrine of incarnation began to develop. To conceive of Jesus as

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- 1) This very short and - I think - most appropriate characterization is given by Jüngel, Paulus und Jesus, p.84.
 - 2) Schweizer, Mk, p.7.
 - 3) Compare Dodd, Founder, p.29.

incarnated God might imply the exclusion of his special career from ordinary history in order to grant a sphere for God's action in history.¹ For if the doctrine of incarnation is once separated from the historical process which led to its development, it is in danger of being h^cistoricized, i.e. incarnation might be taken as describing a certain history and no longer interpreting that history in the light of a new, particular historical process. It has to be borne in mind, however, that "incarnation" is not a historical category, but that it is rather an expression drafted in order to correspond to the historical process of the raising of the earthly Jesus. The doctrine of incarnation, understood historically, as it was at least in the second century A.D., is the first attempt to identify God and a segment of history. According to its origin incarnation must not be understood in the sense of the Greek essence-philosophy. In carnation is not describing the nature of Jesus. Incarnation properly understood results from and interprets the historical process starting with the earthly career of Jesus and ending with God's raising him from the dead. Incarnation is an event, not a circumstance.

If incarnation were to describe the nature of Jesus' earthly career, this career would as such be theologically significant. To find its meaning would be to explore the most remote depths of that career. That

1) A remark by Dodd, Founder, p.30 might be understood in that sense, for he points to the "unique career" of Jesus, where "heaven and earth, God and man, were brought together as nowhere else".

particular history of Jesus would equal "Heilsgeschichte", only reduced to a limited area in space and time.

According to the biblical witnesses, however, the significance of the earthly career of Jesus became only clear after the resurrection. That is the reason why no gospels were written before Easter. The significance of Jesus' career does not lie in its history itself but is based upon a unique act of God. The gospels correspond to this fact by creating their new form of telling the story of Jesus as the one who was who he is. By associating together the earthly Jesus and the risen Christ the gospels associate together secular history and the holy God.

Pursuing our problem of the historical Jesus we have to ask what connection there is between historical facts and the resurrection of Christ¹ in the gospels. Answering that question will provide a few more hints for the concept of continuity.

We can only pick out examples: e.g. the Markan account of Jesus calling his disciples (Mk 1,16-20 and the "Nachfolgegeschichten" in general). There is no serious doubt that Jesus called disciples to follow him, and yet the way Mark tells the story in 1,16ff is not historical. He wants the story to be relevant for the readers (or hearers) of his gospel.¹ The "Nachfolgegeschichten" are told in the light of the resurrection. They are models for the present understanding of the Church of what means to be a Christian.²

1) Schweizer, Mk, p.25.

2) Mk 1,17 shows that very clearly, see Schweizer, op.cit., p.25.

We can see here the partnership of the two elements, namely the "historical Jesus" and the "risen Christ". What is the particular significance of each? On the one hand the historical element is used by Mark to explain what a life based upon the nearness of the Kingdom could be like.¹ The historical element serves the concreteness of a theological statement.

It is true that the story told by Mark is reduced to the most important traits ("Holzschnittmanier"). The scene is indeed an ideal one. But that does not mean that it is not historical. On the contrary, the historical element becomes the more significant the more "unimportant" details are eliminated. That only shifts the emphasis onto the remaining details.

But still, the reduction to the most important traits is a development made necessary only by the presence of the risen Lord. Because he was raised, he is the Lord of the community. Because he is the Lord of the community, it has to think about "Nachfolge" after the cross. It is most significant that the Christians chose to express the discipleship of Christ in terms of the discipleship of Jesus. In order to do so, they had to change the story remembered about the earthly Jesus and to work it over afresh. The less detailed the story is, the greater number of people could find themselves included in it.² And precisely this was necessary, since it was now possible

1) Schweizer, Mk, p.25.

2) See Schweizer, op.cit., p.25: "So hat die Gemeinde das, was zu Jesu Zeit geschah, so erzählt, dass sie sich selbst und ihre Situation darin erkennen konnte."

to follow Christ, and not only Jesus. The reduction mentioned above is already a sign that in the story a non-historical (eschatological) element has been at work.

To the same eschatological order belongs the metaphor in Mk 1,17, which is only possible after the risen Lord had appeared to his disciples and had sent them out into the world to call people into the discipleship of Christ.¹ The resurrection of that Jesus who had called men to follow him has introduced a new aspect to the old story: discipleship and mission have become one and the same.

It is amazing how sparing the story is with regard to the disciples' decision. Why does it not tell what kind of thoughts the men from Galilee had before they decided to follow Jesus? The story in its present form is no longer interested in the reasoning of the disciples. It is rather interested in showing the powerfulness of Jesus' call,² which created "Nachfolge", just as the risen Lord had created the mission of the early community. The removal of perhaps very interesting historical details has been caused by the new situation created by the resurrection of Jesus. The story which had been remembered appeared in a new light and it became suddenly clear which traits were significant and which were not. The new light of the

1) And indeed, this metaphor is "traditionsgeschichtlich" a later addition, cf. Schweizer, Mk, p.25.

2) Compared to the creative word of God himself, cf. Schweizer, op.cit., p.25.

resurrection is not only a vindication of the factual history, but - as we have shown above - it causes rather a considerable transformation of the historical episode. Moreover, the resurrection is also the criterion of selection of forming a story consisting of the essential traits.¹

But still, it is very important that the historical Jesus in fact called people to follow him. It is important that he did not examine them first or ask them to confess their faith, or something similar. It is important that the historical Jesus accepted people without regard to their backgrounds. These historical facts made it possible for the later community to understand what the grace of God means in concrete terms;² that is the indispensable contribution of the historical element in this story which transcends history.

A similar correlation of history and God can be found for example in the story of Jesus' baptism by John.³ It is highly probable that John did baptize Jesus.⁴ But it is doubtful how far the details (e.g. the voice from heaven) are historical too. At any rate, according to Mark there could have been a sort of a "Berufungserlebnis" of Jesus.⁵ This however is not significant as such. The point of the

1) The same tendency is reflected by the fact that Jesus' call was almost always responded to positively (apart from Mk 10,17ff), which is rather improbable, though understandable if the risen Christ was criterion of selection.

2) Schweizer, Mk, p.26.

3) See Mk 1,9-11.

4) See the arguments in Schweizer, op.cit., pp.18f.

5) Schweizer, Mk, p.19.

story is that God himself spoke and made it clear who was baptized here. That knowledge, though, presupposes again the resurrection of Christ, which really made it clear who Jesus was. So this story, also, though historical, is told in the light of the resurrection. And it, again, shows the dialectical correlation of history and God.

The historical element (Jesus being baptized by John) is important in so far as it shows Jesus' solidarity with man, for he underwent the same procedure as anybody else and did not opt for special treatment.¹ The eschatological element in the story reveals that solidarity to be God's solidarity with man. Moreover, the voice from heaven shows that the early community considered God to have acted finally in Jesus and expressed it by telling the story of his baptism.² So this solidarity with man becomes significant in an unique way. But still, it is necessary to maintain the historical side, for it shows what precisely has become uniquely meaningful.

These two examples show (and they could be extended at will) the same dialectic underlying the gospels as we have found in Paul's association together of cross and resurrection. Although both approaches differ considerably from each other, their essential structure is the same. Both approaches bring together historical facts and the resurrection in such a way that each side keeps its own unmistakable contribution, a contribution fundamental to

1) This particular trait is more obvious in Mt 3,13ff.

2) Schweizer, Mk, p.20.

the understanding of the whole event Jesus Christ. The fact of this similarity between Mark and Paul is in no way accidental.

In our search for an explanation we might very well find it in the fact that both approaches correspond to a historical process that forced them to choose that particular structure. In other words: it might very well be true that the resurrection of Jesus was indeed God's final act, putting the whole story of Jesus in a new light, causing the remembrance to become proclamation, forcing people to invent a new form of literature in order to express the correlation of secular history with the holy God.

Naturally it could be argued that this new light upon the life of Jesus was the work of the early community. Either that community deliberately changed the stories about Jesus (and got further away from the truth at the same time), or it expressed the meaning already present in the life of the earthly Jesus. I am not prepared to accept either of those suggestions, for it seems to me that the texts show clearly enough that it was the resurrection as a new act of God that put Jesus' life in a new light and added a certain interpretation to the facts which could not have been extracted from them alone.

If this concept is accepted, it follows necessarily that the resurrection must be considered as a historical problem. Here we run into serious difficulties, for the problem we avoided by taking incarnation as a process now returns as strongly as ever: how can a historical event as such be God's act? This problem will be considered now.

7.1.3 The Resurrection as a Historical Problem

The question whether the resurrection is a historical problem may sound a merely academic question. And yet here the very nature of Christian faith is at stake.¹ If there is no possibility of arguing historically, we are again confronted with the totalitarian command either to believe in the resurrection or to die. Again, we have no time left to decide. Is that the nature of love?

If the resurrection is in no way "a historical event", the whole hope for an "extra nos" is again dashed to the ground. For we have decided above that Jesus as a historical figure can be significant for faith only when he is seen in the light of the resurrection. So if faith itself (or even imagination) made the resurrection, we are again thrown back on faith generated by faith. So one would wish to hold on to the resurrection as a historical event.

But here the difficulties arise. W.Marxsen has good grounds for doubting that the category "event" is appropriate to the resurrection.² It cannot be "observed and demonstrated like any other event in space and time"³. One cannot escape that difficulty by claiming that no historical event is - once become history - observable and

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- 1) The resurrection is not just one article among many others of the Christian confessions, it is rather the basis of every other confession; cf. Ebeling, The Nature of Faith, p.61.
 - 2) W.Marxsen, Die Auferstehung Jesu als historisches und als theologisches Problem, 1964.
 - 3) So G.Bornkamm, quoted by Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, p.210.

demonstrable.¹ The resurrection is an absolutely unique happening, probably the only happening to which the term uniqueness really applies. It seems to be against all known physical laws and to defy all common sense. It simply does not correspond to our experience. That is the most important source of doubt about the resurrection.

And we have to bear in mind that here we have reached the point where we have to maintain God's acting in the world, if we want to speak of God at all. In our concept of continuity this is the point where eschatological light is thrown upon secular history. So, to say "God raised Jesus from the dead" equals a historical event is to run into a perfect "aporia". But we cannot take the easy way out and define the resurrection as an eschatological event² and as such basically distinct from every other event, having nothing in common with any of them. The textual evidence simply shows that this eschatological event has a distinctly historical side.³ There is no question that Paul for instance held the resurrection to be a historical fact,⁴ although it never possessed an isolated meaning for him.

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- 1) Richardson's solution (History Sacred and Profane, p.210) is somewhat too quick and superficial. It is of no use to deny the fundamental difference between the resurrection and every other historically ascertainable event.
 - 2) See Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, p.233.
 - 3) Cf. Ebeling, The Nature of Faith, p.65 who states that the "message of the Resurrection directs us ... to a sharply circumscribed place in history".
 - 4) See e.g. Fuchs, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus", p.226.

Furthermore there is the sudden change of mind among the disappointed disciples that indicates very strongly some real happening described by the term "resurrection". The resurrection of Jesus was the beginning of the Church's faith in him.¹ The faith of the Church cannot be explained "as the mere effect of reflection on the memory" of the earthly Jesus.² The reasonable historian simply must admit that something very decisive has happened between Jesus' death on the cross and the Church's powerful mission.³ The historian as such, however, is not able to produce evidence for the resurrection of Jesus (his axiomatic assumptions forbid that), but he nevertheless can produce plausible arguments concerning the early Christian claim about the presence of their Lord.⁴ So far the resurrection is really a historical problem. The historical arguments are unable to demonstrate the resurrection, but still they are arguments which play a certain part in one's coming to believe in the resurrection. To believe is to recognize what really happened beyond the signs accessible to the historian.⁵

As a "historical event" or an "event extra nos" the resurrection must have some contents. It is dangerous, as

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- 1) So Dodd, Founder, p.163 excludes the possibility that it is a "belief that grew in the Church" (it.mine).
 - 2) Knox, Church, p.66.
 - 3) Moule, The Phenomenon of the New Testament, pp.1ff shows clearly enough that the other explanations simply cannot stand as an account of the beginning of "the sect of the Nazarenes"; see especially pp.6-10.19f.
 - 4) See Neill, "On the Resurrection", p.217.
 - 5) In this sense one might say that the resurrection is only accessible to faith. That does not imply, however, that the resurrection is no concern of the historian. Faith cannot be its own condition.

we have already seen, to attribute to it only formal significance.¹ If the resurrection is a mere vindication, the historical Jesus is of the utmost theological significance, since it was he who was vindicated. Then we are again thrown back to the position where we must fear any change introduced into the stories about Jesus by the early community, because we will not then know the Jesus who has been vindicated and the risen Christ is again identified with the historical Jesus.²

It is true that Easter did not supplant the experience of the earthly history of Jesus as being a καίςός³; on the other hand it is not quite appropriate to say that Easter merely confirmed that καίςός-experience. It has to be seen that the experience of Easter affected the disciples in a new way. Historically speaking one has at least to admit that discipleship now received a new meaning and included mission.⁴ The development still visible in the texts of the New Testament indicates further that Easter caused the community to understand Jesus in terms of fulfilment of the Old Testament.⁵ One has to see further that it really means a change of understanding if Jesus is transformed by Easter from a "once" to a "once for all".⁶ One might even say that only this

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- 1) It is often stated that the resurrection was the vindication and confirmation of what Jesus did and said; cf. Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, p.234.
 - 2) It is rather significant that Ebeling, The Nature of Faith, p.61 takes this position: Faith in the resurrected one is faith in Jesus himself.
 - 3) So Käsemann, "Problem", p.139.
 - 4) Cf. Anderson, Jesus, pp.239f, and Ebeling, op.cit., p.59 who mentions that "the mission to preach and baptize came ... from the Resurrected One".
 - 5) So Anderson, op.cit., pp.238f.
 - 6) See Käsemann, op.cit., p.139.

eschatological event of the resurrection made it possible to understand Jesus eschatologically. Easter revealed the life of Jesus as being a *κρίσις*, and as such it did not confirm only an experience which had taken place already before Easter. The resurrection is a "moment of discontinuity" and of continuity at the same time.¹ A moment of discontinuity, in so far as the change of understanding just mentioned was evoked; a moment of continuity, in so far as Jesus was resurrected, i.e. the crucified one became an eschatological event.² Important is not what exactly happened at Easter (here our language is bound to fail, the Church facing the resurrection becomes in a way speechless)³, but rather that the changes evoked are due to an event "extra nos", described by the witnesses as resurrection. It is the unique dialectic of continuity and discontinuity attached to the resurrection, that caused the particular character of the Christian literature examined above.

If the resurrection is a historical problem - and there are many reasons indeed to take that view - , that particular character of literature has not been just invented by man, but is indebted to an "extra nos" of history put into a new light by God. The concept of continuity, consequently, is then legitimately derived from those texts, for it results from a factual correlation of God and history to which it tries to correspond. Admittedly

1) Cf. Ebeling, The Nature of Faith, pp. 58ff.

2) Ebeling, op.cit., p. 71, and Fuchs, "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus", p. 226.

3) We might come near to the actual event by saying that God put death to death, a statement that transcends the limits of our experience and language.

that is still a circle, but a circle surrounded by historical and arguable points of entry.

7.2 Methodological (Hermeneutical) Consequences

We have tried to discover the association of Jesus and Christ in New Testament texts with the aim of gaining some light in order to define a concept of continuity which would be appropriate to the problem of the historical Jesus. The investigation of the New Testament texts has in fact brought results that allow us to see the model of continuity in the structure of those texts. Our concept of continuity is not to be understood as merely one result among others, an interesting detail, but it is rather meant to be a method of understanding, by which we are able to get to know other details. Corresponding to the structural presence of that continuity in biblical texts about Jesus, the concept derived from them must shape our understanding^d the New Testament. This new method of understanding features the tension between secular history and the holy God; it maintains the dialectic of continuity and discontinuity between them.

This method of understanding entails a certain method of exegesis: namely an exegesis aiming to distinguish in every text the historical from the eschatological element and to work out the particular contribution of each towards the whole of the text. The tools of this exegesis are secular and differ in no way from the tools of an ordinary historian. In fact that exegesis tries, then, to reverse a process that has already been completed

in order to allow it to happen again.

For what we have in the biblical texts telling the story of Jesus Christ is the relation of history and eschatology. This relation is the product of a process of understanding the history of Jesus in the light of his resurrection. A text, historical and eschatological at the same time, indicates that that process of understanding has reached its goal, i.e. that understanding has become authentic and as such identical with faith. Our method of understanding, helped by a corresponding exegesis, endeavours to relive, or think again, the process of combining the eschatological and the historical. The process of understanding, already completed in the biblical texts, is to be repeated methodically, in order to give our understanding a chance to become faith.

We shall give now somewhat more concrete an outline of what we mean by that method of understanding.

7.2.1 The Concept of Continuity as an Exegetical and Hermeneutical Method

To begin with we have to emphasize the dialectical character of continuity. Continuity means a dialectical unity of two fundamentally different factors (i.e. of the historical Jesus and the risen Christ). The dialectic character of that unity corresponds to the event-character of the same unity. The unity of Jesus and Christ in our texts is not due to the earthly Jesus being both God and man, but it arises out of the event of the resurrection,

the event of God's identifying himself with the crucified one. That event-character (which is strongly opposed to any attempt to think in terms of "nature") of the unity between God and man (and as such between God and history) necessitates the dialectical method of understanding given with the concept of continuity. To this extent the Chalcedonian "vere deus, vere homo" need not necessarily be understood as a ^Smytery of two natures existing together; it could just as well be an event (or a process of events) that forced such an expression.

The question is, now, what nature the two different factors have in that relation of continuity. The very contribution each element has to make is a matter to be worked out afresh with each particular text in question. But nevertheless there are some main traits belonging basically to the nature of history or eschatology. These we shall sum up now.

To begin with, history is "per definitionem" totally secular. It is secular in the sense that what is the object of the historian belongs entirely to the sphere of the world (however supernatural or miraculous it may sound). So it is by definition impossible to bring God to expression merely historically. However peculiar events may be it does not follow on historical grounds that God is acting in it (interestingly one always tends to detect ^{them} God's hand in peculiar events only). "Finitum non capax infiniti."

It is further secular in the sense that history shares in the relativity and transience of all created

things. It is not possible to make any exception from this relativity, i.e. it is not possible to show historically the unique significance of Jesus' history.

But despite the secularity of history, despite the definite discontinuity between God and history, there is also an element of continuity, in so far as the risen Christ was the crucified Jesus. God's act in "history" (i.e. his raising Jesus from the dead) has left traces in history which enable us to argue about the Christian assertion that God has become transparent in the life and death of the man Jesus. There are signs in history that can indicate that Jesus became the risen Christ. But still, the biblical identity of Jesus and Christ is not a historical one in the sense of Jesus as a man being God at the same time. The biblical identity is the result of an interpretation, namely of the interpretation of Jesus' life in the new light of his resurrection.

This interpretation is marked by a mutual dialectic of history and eschatology. This "togetherness" must at all costs be sustained; identification (= history equals eschatology) is as wrong as separation (= history is the concern of the world, eschatology is the concern of faith). The biblical texts illustrate quite well the "togetherness".

The significance of the historical side is that it makes possible the concrete-ness of the eschatological side. While the resurrection has led to a kerygma sometimes very mythical and foreign to our ways of thinking, the earthly career of Jesus reminds us of the concrete-ness of salvation. Moreover, the historical side initiates the

possibility to express God in immanent (worldly) terms. In this sense God's identifying himself with Jesus has opened a new possibility of language. Further, the historical side enables us to understand the nature of salvation. For we can express the theological contents of salvation in terms of Jesus dining with tax collectors and sinners and calling people to be his followers without insisting on the fulfilment of any conditions. Thus the historical side cannot be reduced to a merely formal meaning (i.e. the "dass"), but it rather co-determines with the eschatological side the contents of the Gospel (as for example the cross in Paul's proclamation).

On the other hand one must not misjudge the independent significance of the eschatological side. The Gospel cannot be reduced to the historical side alone without ceasing to be Gospel. That would mean attributing to the eschatological side either a merely formal significance (e.g. the rendering valid of that history) or no significance at all (e.g. the "atheistic christology"). In contrast to these erroneous opinions it has to be seen that only the eschatological side makes the history of Jesus understandable as salvation. Its contribution is to induce us to think of God as really God in immanent terms. It is not for nothing, I think, that mission and proclamation are - historically speaking - a consequence of the resurrection and not of the earthly career of Jesus. Before Easter there was nothing to be proclaimed. God's action put Jesus' life and death in a new light so that it took on a significance for everybody. That is what necessitates

proclamation. The eschatological side then is the reason why we must not forget the history of Jesus.

Moreover, the resurrection reveals something of its own about the character of God: he is the one who raises up new life from death. Life out of death, that is the character of divine salvation, revealed at Easter, illustrated by Jesus' unshakable confidence in the future of love.

The historical side does not consist of a biographical narration of the life of Jesus. The gospels have no such interest in the life of Jesus. But still it is that life from which the significant events have been selected. These stories taken from Jesus' life have been altered and reduced to bring out the most important traits. But still they are stories of his life. The criterion of selection was again the resurrection, as we can see in the history of the transmission of the stories. The eschatological element after Jesus' death is the reason why his life is not of biographical interest. Jesus' biography was at any rate the biography of a man, perhaps of a very extraordinary man; but only by the light thrown upon it after its end did it become the "biography of God", whereby the biography of the man was co-determined by Easter, as well as the "biography of God" was co-determined by the disastrous life of the crucified one. To understand this relationship rightly means to understand the very basis of Christian theology.

This is the place where "Sachkritik" is legitimately introduced. The interpretation of a text can no longer be limited to the existential one, or a social or an

ecclesiastical one, for all these interpretations introduce presuppositions and preunderstandings alien (and therefore misleading) to the biblical texts. These kinds of interpretation are very important in the sphere of hermeneutics, where they have a legitimate place in the process of mediation between theology and world. To make one of them the principle of a theological interpretation of a biblical text is to confuse hermeneutics with theology. This is inappropriate, for hermeneutics has the task of translating a given (theological) idea or story. The process of theological interpretation has to repeat the process of the identification of the historical with the eschatological side. And thinking through again this process will provide the appropriate categories for modern man to understand God. Of course, there is the necessary task of "Sachkritik", since it is theologically forbidden that we assume the infallibility of the biblical writers (and that would equal their deification). The crucial question is, however, what yardstick should be the criterion and principle of "Sachkritik". On what grounds do we criticise the texts.

Several yardsticks have been tried already. In Bultmannian theology where the term "Sachkritik" became of paramount importance, the criterion of "Sachkritik" was the "existence". Since existential interpretation is not conceivable without the critical elimination of "mythical objectivations", it is obvious that existence as a

principle of interpretation became the criterion of "Sachkritik". If one applies this criterion to its final limit, it implies that it is not possible to express legitimately what is not already included within the possibilities of "existence". This leads to the critical elimination of everything that transcends the possibilities of existence. So the yardstick has become an almost holy authority.

Other yardsticks, too, have been tried. One has only to remind oneself of the dubious part "modern man" plays in theological interpretation. Or one might think of "society" as having recently become a severe yardstick to criticise the biblical texts. In most cases, moreover, there is a rather unreflective understanding of the modern world which lies as a principle of interpretation behind the exegetical attempts to make biblical texts speak.

Which of the yardsticks we have mentioned above we particularly prefer, in principle the process of "Sachkritik" remains the same. There is always a criterion drawn from the world and man's knowledge which becomes the criterion of theological texts. If one looks at this procedure abstractly, it seems to be quite absurd: how should and how could a world be the criterion for bringing God to expression in the appropriate way? We should be quite clear about the fact that all the criteria we have referred to are of great importance in the hermeneutical process. But for the sake of clarity we must consider them as partners in conversation with a theological counterpart. They do not just deliver a monologue.

But still the need for "Sachkritik" is unquestionable. In consequence of the method of understanding outlined just now, there is - I think - a new possibility of "Sachkritik" opening up. The "sachkritische" process lies in carrying out again the interpretative process of bringing together God and history. By trying to re-understand why and how Jesus' life was to be re-interpreted in the light of the resurrection, the process of criticising the early Christian witnesses (who have at first made this interpretation) is set in motion. To put it in a short formula: "Sachkritik" applies to all texts the critical question, whether they correspond to the continuity of the God who raises from the dead with the Jesus who dines with tax collectors as well as with pharisees and never asks them about their past.

Of course, this method of "Sachkritik" is circular. But it seems to me that it is much more appropriate to the biblical texts to apply a criterion from within the texts than to apply any of the criteria mentioned above which are all alien to the text. It is, for instance, very obvious that the idea of a final judgement where God repays each man according to his record must be criticised in the light of the continuity between Jesus who trusted in the future of love and God who made the cross his everlasting sign of overcoming the hatred of man. Seen from this viewpoint, it seems more probable that if we are to be judged by God, the criterion will be love and not balancing of

reward and punishment. As to the details of "Sachkritik" it has to be noted that the "sachkritische" process is tied up with a detailed examination of the text in question. The point I would like to make is only that the method of "Sachkritik" should be the thinking through again of that continuity, the repetition of the original process of understanding, in order to discover possible mistakes.

7.2.2 The Criteria Problem

Our concept of continuity which is marked by the assumption of an independent historical side within the unity of the kerygma, implies a clear historical interest in the biblical texts. The career of Jesus, being a key to the understanding of the Gospel, is a historical problem and must therefore be investigated by historical methods. That seems to be quite clear, but in fact it is a controversial enterprise to attempt a reconstruction of the historical Jesus. Apart from the dogmatic position which holds that enterprise irrelevant, there is quite a strong historical position which holds that enterprise impossible.

The actual development of theology in our century from its beginning together with the formcritical approach, created the situation responsible for the fact that there is a criteria problem in New Testament exegesis. The formcritical approach succeeded in applying the presupposition that the gospels are - as well as the other texts of the New Testament - books of the Church and for the Church. The intention of the gospels was shown to be that of bringing people to faith in the risen Christ, not of telling the history of Jesus. The history which was told there was

recognized not to be history in the modern sense of the word, but rather a historicized kerygma. The once firmly established confidence in the "a priori" reliability of the oldest sources was thus totally broken down.

When the interest in the historical Jesus came to life again, the scholars concerned with the quest for Jesus found themselves in the awkward situation of having to develop a new method of perceiving the historical Jesus through the kerygmatic Christ of the sources. They found themselves presented with the burden of proof in establishing historicity. The critics of authenticity namely, thought themselves to be justified from the outset by the new insight into the nature of the sources. It was at this moment that the need for criteria became of utmost importance.

Quite a lot of criteria have been developed. D.G.A. Calvert lists not less than eleven different criteria.¹ Interestingly he divides them into a group of "negative" ones ("which are used simply to rule out the genuineness of a saying") and "positive" ones (which are used to show genuineness).² It is characteristic of Calvert's list that all negative criteria have their counterparts among the positive ones. The reason for that - so it seems to me - is that there are not in fact two different groups. Whether a criterion is negative or positive depends entirely on the kind of work done by it. So Calvert's distinction must have been made on other grounds.

1) Calvert, "An Examination of the Criteria for Distinguishing the Authentic Words of Jesus", NTS 18(1972) PP.209ff.211.

2) Calvert, op.cit., p.211.

The real reason for that distinction can be seen in the course of his essay. Calvert examines the negative criteria and reaches the conclusion that "we do not find much help in deciding precisely what is inauthentic"¹. "This method ... should be abandoned and only positive criteria should be employed."² But since the negative criteria are only counterparts of the positive, the rejection of the former would entail an equal rejection of the latter. Calvert however does not want to reject the positive ones, despite his rejection of the negative ones. Here his reason for the distinction becomes obvious: it is his wish to establish that the burden of proof must be borne by those scholars who uphold the authenticity of a particular saying. This assumption however is one of principle and should not be disguised as a discussion about the validity of two groups of criteria.

The eleven different criteria can be reduced to four main ones:

1. "criterion of dissimilarity": that material is authentic which is distinguishable from both contemporary Judaism and the early Church.³
2. criterion of consistency: that material is authentic which can be shown to be consistent with material al-

1) Calvert, "An Examination of the Criteria ...", p.213.

2) Calvert, op.cit., p.218.

3) This criterion was already used by Bultmann (Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition) and pointed out again by Käsemann ("Problem", p.144): "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"; the term is from Perrin, Rediscovering, p.39 and often.

ready proved authentic.¹

3. "criterion of multiple attestation": that material is authentic which is attested by different, independent sources.²
4. criterion of Aramaism: that material is authentic which shows Aramaic traits.³

I shall now try to give a short summary of the critique that has been applied to these criteria and an outline of their presuppositions in order to define their validity.

The criterion of Aramaism is only valid on the following presuppositions: Jesus did speak Aramaic (this has been questioned, but it is still very likely); speaking Aramaic is a sufficient reason to distinguish Jesus from the Church (this is not the case); Aramaic traits were caused by translation into Greek (this is not necessarily the case)⁴. The validity, then, of this criterion is very weak.

The criterion of multiple attestation is quite valid theoretically; it is also used successfully in ("secular") historiography. It is, however, only applicable when one assumes that the different sources bear the same testimony because they go back to Jesus, an assumption which is by no means certain.⁵ Even granted that assumption

1) Cf. Perrin, Rediscovering, pp.43-45 calling it the "criterion of coherence".

2) Perrin, op.cit., pp.45-47.

3) Calvert, "An Examination of the Criteria ...", p.216.

4) Calvert, op.cit., p.216: possible influence from Jewish Greek.

5) Compare the "reservations" by Perrin, op.cit., p.46.

the scope for the application of this criterion is very small (mainly Q- and Mk-traditions).

The criterion of consistency rests upon the assumption that the life of Jesus was in fact consistent. That has been doubted by Downing¹ who points out that we do not know whether a man's life is consistent. It may be true that this is so for a particular man's life. But we have to bear in mind that we have in the gospels not simply the life of Jesus (which is probably as consistent or as inconsistent as any man's life) but rather a certain selection of incidents from that life. This selection was made from a certain point of view (e.g. passion-history as a selection-principle). This, then, might be considered as itself the factor producing consistency, at least to a fair degree. Thus against Downing I would say that the assumption of consistency is fairly justified.

But there are other objections. In most cases it is not clear which one of two pericopae or sayings being compared is the basis of the consistency test, since either of them could possibly be dominical. The consistency test depends entirely on the ability to find assuredly dominical material by other criteria.

Further this criterion cannot be used as a corrective, for any results obtained by other criteria "are liable to be magnified by the use of this ... criterion"². We have to bear in mind, too, that there is

1) Church, p.117.

2) Hooker, "Christology and Methodology", p.483; cf. also Barbour, Traditio-Historical Criticism, p.26, who presents a similar overall critique of this criterion.

a great danger of subjectivity in applying this criterion. It is difficult to apply this criterion even to documents from the present age; how much more difficult must it be to do so with documents belonging to a totally different age and culture.¹

Finally we come to the criterion of dissimilarity. There are quite a lot of formal criteria which are derived from this criterion.² These formal criteria might help in some cases to establish more arguments for or against a disputed passage, but their validity depends entirely on the validity of the criterion of dissimilarity, and moreover their application follows the same rules and contains the same problems as the latter. But still there might be some help from them. Jeremias has detected two linguistic characteristics of Jesus' teaching:³ he showed that the use of "abba" and "amen" as it occurs in the New Testament is characteristic of the historical Jesus. To the same category of criteria belongs the mention of further peculiarities of the gospels, such as the parables⁴, the special way of using rhythm and the paraphrasis of the divine name,⁵ further the *ἐγὼ εἰς λέγω ὑμῖν*,⁶ and other

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- 1) Hooker, "Christology and Methodology", p.483.
 - 2) The arguments given by Jeremias for instance show that very clearly. The only exception, perhaps, is Robinson's "existential dialectic" (referred to by Lehmann, Synoptische Quellenanalyse, p.193). This formal criterion seems to be based on the consistency of form and contents in Jesus' teaching, whereby the contents, again, are mainly defined by the criterion of dissimilarity.
 - 3) Jeremias, The Prayers of Jesus, pp.108ff.
 - 4) Cf. Jeremias, op.cit., p.115 and Lehmann, op.cit., pp.186ff.
 - 5) Jeremias, op.cit., p.115.
 - 6) Lehmann, op.cit., pp.191-193.

stylistic features.¹ All these criteria are detected and described by application of the criterion of dissimilarity.

So we are in fact left with the criterion of dissimilarity which is the most important and most often used of the criteria known until now.² But still, this criterion rests upon rather doubtful assumptions.

Firstly it presupposes a sufficient knowledge of the background of Jesus, although many scholars think that our knowledge is insufficient.³ It can well be imagined that we shall know a lot more about Palestine in fifty years (a new discovery analogous to that of Qumran for instance cannot be excluded). So, often when we attest dissimilarity, it is purely lack of knowledge which leads us to such an assessment. We are in danger of basing positive statements on the argument from silence.⁴

Secondly this criterion presupposes that Jesus was entirely different from his Jewish background. But Jesus certainly was a Jew, and it is most probable that he did agree with some opinions of his fellow-countrymen.⁵ By application of this criterion, of course, it can be shown that Jesus was different. That is a formidable example of

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- 1) Lehmann, Synoptische Quellenanalyse, pp.193-195.
 - 2) Käsemann (cf. above p.195,n.3) seems to consider it the only reasonable, successful criterion.
 - 3) Cf.e.g. Downing, Church, pp.114f; Lehmann, op.cit., p.184; Hooker, "Christology and Methodology", p.482; Calvert, "An Examination of the Criteria ...", p.214.
 - 4) Cf. Downing, op.cit., p.96 in a different context.
 - 5) Lehmann, op.cit., p.183 points to the importance of Bultmann's integrating the teaching of Jesus into the Jewish background.

a "petitio principii".

Thirdly this criterion rules out every possibility of Jesus' agreeing with the early Church. It presupposes, in other words, that the needs of the early Church (which are held to be the motivation for writing the gospels) cannot by any means be met by dominical material,¹ for any piece of tradition which can be shown to be related to the needs of the community is "per se" excluded from being authentic. This assumption has grave consequences, because it establishes a total discontinuity between Jesus and the Church. But, after all, it is time to realize the historical fact that the Jesus-event produced the Church and not "vice versa".

Fourthly this criterion requires an adequate knowledge of the early Church. But again this is, to a certain extent, a "petitio principii". The material ruled out by this very criterion is one of the main sources for our knowledge of the early Church; so the source is being co-determined by results which would presuppose that source to be very well defined.²

Fifthly we have to note here again the danger of subjectivity which is involved with the decision of what is "dissimilar" or not.³

Sixthly this criterion presents us with a rather difficult philosophical problem: its very application postulates uniqueness for Jesus. Moreover, uniqueness is

1) Behind this presupposition lies the common assumption that something meeting the needs of man lies under grave suspicion of having been invented. This assumption is dogmatic.

2) Hanson, "Enterprise", pp.38f notes this circularity.

3) Cf. Hooker, "Christology and Methodology", pp.482f.

made the criterion of Jesus' life. The problem is, though, that the uniquely unique cannot be communicated by words, it "is ineffable"¹, for the incommensurable in a strict sense cannot be compared and, therefore, cannot be told by words.

Finally this criterion has a distinct tendency to suggest an identification of "unique" with "characteristic". The very basis for applying it is that what made Jesus distinct (unique) from his contemporaries was, at the same time, characteristic of him.² That however is unlikely, or at least uncertain.

These seven points lead me to the conclusion that the criterion of dissimilarity is not adequate to prove authenticity.³ But the criteria mentioned just now are not the only ones involved in a historical decision. The historian has another set of criteria in mind when he makes his decisions. This set could be expressed in the term "common knowledge of what is possible".⁴ The "law of nature" together with a general perception of the "climate of opinion"⁵ provides a considerable factor in historian's decisions. Let us take an example: the resurrection would -

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- 1) See Downing, Church, pp.94f in a slightly different context.
 - 2) Cf. Hooker, "Christology and Methodology", p.481.
 - 3) Barbour, Traditio-Historical Criticism, pp.25f denies that it can be said "to produce an adequate historical core", although it has some usefulness.
 - 4) Part of that is the "law of nature"; see Downing, op.cit., pp.95f.
 - 5) The term is taken from Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, pp.201f.

according to the criterion of dissimilarity - be the example of a historical event, because it is most probably the only "uniquely unique"¹ event in the life of Jesus. But it is about that very event that most doubts are uttered. These doubts are backed by the common assumption that such an event is actually impossible and therefore it has not happened. The decision of the historian is considerably influenced by the contemporary (and often very fast changing) "world-view". This brings in another factor of relativity.

This short consideration of the criteria presents us with the result, that there are no criteria which are able and adequate to establish a proof for authenticity; what does this entail? Should we conclude that there was no historical Jesus, or that he is not important for us? The reason for the failure of the criteria seems indeed to lie in the overall attitude of the historian towards the texts in question. The attitude namely, that the burden of proof is with the scholar upholding authenticity.² This attitude is the cause of the embarrassment in which historical exegesis finds itself. So the important discussion of the criteria problem should take place in terms of these overall attitudes. Käsemann supports his own attitude by pointing out that it is a consequence of the

1) As regards the term cf. Downing (see p.201,n.1).

2) E.g. Käsemann, "Problem", p.142: "Nicht das Recht der Kritik, sondern ihre Grenze ist heute zu beweisen."

form-critical insight that our texts contain kerygmaticized history.¹ This argument shows that our problem is not merely methodological, but that it depends on the general theory of what the nature of the texts in question is. This general theory decides which criteria should be employed, as well as which of them are adequate. Does it really follow that one has to take such a sceptical view after the form-critical approach? Is it possible to demand of criteria that they should establish authenticity, if one admits at the same time that it is impossible to exclude inauthentic material by the criteria known to us?

It is just as possible to take a more positive attitude towards the texts, especially if one is aware of the fact that "religious" and "historical" do not exclude each other "a priori". Such an attitude might well be justified, if one bears in mind the various inadequacies of the criteria. Moreover, if one supposes that the possibility of authenticity can be established instead of demanding its necessity,² then one has much better conditions in which to work. The use of the criteria can provide a reasonable probability in the question of authenticity.³

Probability is then quite enough, when one takes the historical side - as it is the case in our concept of

1) Käsemann, "Problem", p.142.

2) This, by the way, is only necessary if one takes the historical Jesus as object of faith.

3) Hooker, "Christology and Methodology", pp.485f rightly makes a "chief plea" for "less dogmatism in our conclusions" and for more a positive application of the criteria.

continuity - as only one part of the whole kerygma. The need for proofs with regard to authenticity comes from a rather peculiar understanding of truth as being identical with historical originality. It is not clear what reason there is to seek such extreme certainty, if we keep in mind that it is a matter of "Sachkritik", not of historical-critical methods, to decide about the truth of a text. This decision cannot be obtained by historical criteria, but it is rather a result of rethinking the dialectical "togetherness" of history and God.

7.3 Dogmatic Consequences

Our concept of continuity as described above entails considerable changes in the field of dogmatics. It prevents from making any casual statement about Christ in the categories of "nature" or "essence". It teaches us to uphold the "event-character" of the basis of our faith and, consequently, the dialectical structures of dogmatic definitions. We are now in the position to sum up more precisely what we mean by "historical faith", since our concept of continuity is a model for understanding the relation of faith to history.

7.3.1 History and Faith

To begin with, I have to reject two suggested definitions of that relationship. On the one hand, Christian faith is not a historical faith in the sense of being founded on historical events only. That means for example that faith cannot be based upon a historical personality

and its impact on the present hearer. To inaugurate faith is not a matter of historiography only. On the other hand, I am forced to reject the concept according to which faith has only a formal relation to the events of which it maintains that they have revealed the ground of faith, God. While the former concept is due to an illegitimate identification of God and history, the latter mirrors an unreasonable separation and isolation of faith from the "extra nos" of history.

Faith is related dialectically to history, in so far as faith is an interpretation of history which identifies God with, as well as isolates him, from history. Historical faith is not only a matter of acknowledging historical facts as its ground, but also a matter of asserting an eschatological side to the history it tells. To put it very briefly: historical faith is the interpretation of Jesus' history in the light of his resurrection. This implies that the significance of the particular history told by faith does not lie in the historical events alone. Therefore faith is not in the position to present an exclusively factual interpretation, for a factual interpretation is based on events alone and backed by facts alone. Faith, however, cannot claim to present a factual interpretation without ceasing to be honest, for faith, although related closely to history, presents an interpretation based upon history as well as upon God. As far as interpretation is concerned, faith introduces a meta-historical factor in order to correspond to the "real"

significance of history. This is impossible for historiography. Just as one cannot find God by searching the utmost depths of one's mind or soul, so one cannot find God by submerging oneself in the depths of history. The theological significance of the historical events of the life of Jesus is not to be confused with their historical meaningfulness. Faith adds the eschatological light of the resurrection to the meaning of history, and so gains a different theological significance. But still, faith emphasizes, too, the factual character of its interpretation. It claims that in a certain way there is an event which legitimates faith's interpretation. To put it in a formula: faith is a certain interpretation of history induced by history itself. That is why the historian can still find traces of the resurrection in history.

Although faith shapes the interpretation of history considerably in the direction of eschatology, it is so much indebted to history that, to a certain extent, history can provide a norm for faith. Faith cannot make history, and still it needs history to express God. So history is a vital presupposition for the interpretation given by faith. The theological significance of history cannot be expressed factually for the bond which ties meaning up with significance is God's identification of himself with the crucified one. This identification is not a matter of history alone; it cannot be proved or ascertained like other historical events, but it can be believed in terms of the biblical concept of continuity,

whereby historiography presents the traces of the continuity in history and, at the same time, gives us room for arguments and time to think.

7.3.2 The Relativity of History

At the very heart of Christianity we encounter a strong confession of God as creator of all things. This entails a difference of kind (not only of degree) between the world and God, a difference which might be described as the difference between command and obedience (according to Gen 1 God created through commands!). History as a part of our world shares in this difference of kind. History is secular.

That does not mean, however, that God has no relationship to history; it only means that God is not a part of history, for he is its creator. Our modern historiography, presupposing a complete chain of events, explaining history in exclusively immanent terms, cannot as such have any theological significance. It corresponds to the secularity of history by presenting a worldly interpretation of history. This interpretation is only historically meaningful. Christian faith interprets a certain set of events in history in such a way that secular historiography is unable. The theological significance of history cannot be disputed by historiography. There are no purely historical reasons against the Christian faith.

Many attempts have been made, and are still being

made, to use historiography as a tool with which one can construct faith (the 19th century quest as well as the modern "atheistic christology" (Sölle) should be mentioned here). But our concept of continuity shows that this is both historically inadequate (since it does not correspond to what the early witnesses did) and logically impossible (because history is worldly and as such relative).

It is not possible to express the fundamental significance of the life and death of Jesus Christ historically, for we can only point to a certain unusual intensity of meaning in that life. We can (at best) only state a difference of degree as to the significance of that particular series of events. It is not at all clear logically why just this series should be made the criterion of all other history, as is done if one assumes the unique significance of that series. The character of history is relative, therefore there can be no atheistic christology. Christology is only possible if one introduces an eschatological factor. Atheistic christology is a contradiction in itself.

Further, it is very questionable whether a past event with its relative significance should have any meaning for today at all. One might ask oneself whether it is not far more important to reflect on the future than to cherish remembrances of past history. Anyway, if we are able to gain some significance for history, this significance is due to the similarity of both situations, past and present. Meaning for us is granted when history meets our

age. History cannot tell us something really new and different from what we already know. Historiography is no way out of the worldliness of our knowledge. At its best, history can prevent us from making the same mistakes as our ancestors. This, however, has nothing to do with the opening up of new possibilities for life.

The relativity of that particular history of Jesus was overcome by the early Christians. They interpreted the history of Jesus in the light of his resurrection, i.e. they acknowledged that the "once" of Jesus has been transformed into a "once for all" of Jesus Christ by the "new historical" development succeeding his death. They realized that in the midst of history they had to speak of its end. Only in this way can the difference of kind be expressed properly. And only in this way can the significance of Jesus for all ages be brought into language, for no "once" signifies a "once for all", and no history can retain the character of a criterion for the rest of history, unless it be the "end of history".

7.3.3 The Legalistic Character of History

Above we have seen that in regard to the person of Jesus the nineteenth century scholarship thought that it had provided us with a historical basis for faith.¹ For those scholars it seemed possible to speak christologically without transcending the limits of history. Our

1) See above pp.28-30.

considerations have shown that this was a mistake. The historical Jesus at his best can only be an admirable personality whom we should try to imitate. Even if Jesus were accessible to historical research - which, in terms of his personality is not the case, as we have indicated earlier - even then he could only put us under a new law. That was one of the greatest concerns of early Christian preaching to preserve the Church from coming again under another law. Therefore the early Church did not choose to speak of Jesus as a merely historical person. The Christians wanted to express their conviction that in the person of Jesus salvation had happened. That prevented them from ending their stories about Jesus with the cross.

For logical reasons it is not possible to express salvation in purely historical terms, for history cannot save us. It can only make us imitate its greatest achievements. We have to be quite clear about that: if we nowadays should wish to speak about Jesus without speaking about God, we are no longer able to speak of our salvation. We might be able to say very deep and intelligent things, but, in the end, we are forced to save ourselves by our works. It is true that we can say historically that Jesus proclaimed the way of love, that he trusted in the future of love. How does this actually help us? Who will give up his own style of life just because of a lovely dream which a remote figure in the past had? Are we not asking humanly impossible things of our contemporaries and of

ourselves when we ask them to change their life because of the historical Jesus? The call to love recorded in the New Testament is not a legalistic call. That love of which the New Testament speaks results from being loved previously, not from an order to love. The reason why it is possible for us to love our enemies is not the order of Jesus to do so, but the love of God which induces us to take a different attitude towards man. It is one thing to say that a man dreamt of a society governed by love, and another thing to say that because God is love, love has positively a future and can be trusted.

It was exactly the resurrection of Jesus which led the early Christians to the conviction that they are loved by God. The resurrection threw the light of God over the human existence of the historical Jesus. The continuity between the resurrection and Jesus is the inevitable presupposition if we are to avoid legalistic proclamation and if we want to ensure man of his salvation.

7.3.4 The Positive Meaning of History

Most of the considerations we have made above are concerned with what history and historiography is not. We shall finally turn to an outline of the positive meaning history (and therefore: historiography) has for theology. For the sake of the worldliness of history we must refuse any attempt to construct a historiography which is directly relevant for theology or which leaves still some gaps open for God. What we are concerned with here is the significance

of the perfectly secularized historiography for theology.

In my search for a model by means of which we can comprehend that significance, I have found in the "Gattung" of the parable elements promising to look at.¹ I am deliberately taking a biblical model so that we can correspond to our methodological principle.² The character of the parables presents us with a possibility of grasping the relation between the eschaton and history, for the parables are in a particular way concerned with that relation, namely in terms of "basileia" and present world. It is not for nothing that they hold such a key position in the teaching of Jesus.

The "plot of the parables is secular; 'God' is not one of their dramatis personae".³ They have this in common with history (as modern historiography conceives of it). One might conclude now that therefore the historical Jesus is the parable of God,⁴ whereby the new insights into the character of the parables as indispensable linguistic events play an important part.⁵

At this point one has to be careful about the strict comparison of the historical Jesus with the parables. The main issue in such a comparison is to show that the

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- 1) I have come to this model independently of Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, pp.243ff, who takes a different view; see below.
 - 2) See above pp.152ff.
 - 3) Keck, op.cit., p.243.
 - 4) Keck, op.cit., p.243.
 - 5) Keck, op.cit., p.245.

historical Jesus enables us to trust in God in the same way as the parables makes us believe in the "basileia".¹ Is this comparison valid?

If we want to learn something new about the character of the historical side of our continuity, everything depends on the theo-logical qualities of the parables themselves. Is the parable itself capable of generating faith in God? Who tells us that the "basileia" is really similar to the seed which grows αὐτομάτη?² Is it really the profundity of the story that constitutes the authority of a parable?³ It has to be pointed out that the parables as such are stories about the world and its problems; so they are not - as parables - disclosing anything about God. "Finitum non capax infiniti." Their disclosure-quality is indebted to the person who tells them, to the person who says οὗτος ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.⁴

But still the parable is a helpful feature in understanding the character of the historical Jesus. To begin with, the historical side of the kerygma relates to

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- 1) Similarly Keck, A Future for the Historical Jesus, p.245.
 - 2) Mk 4,28.
 - 3) Keck, op.cit., p.247 seems to go in this direction. This is consistent with his overall concept of the historical Jesus as a possibility of thinking God non-mythologically (ibid., p.243). Here the historical side (or alternatively the parables) takes on an authority inappropriate to its secular nature. Can God be brought to expression by telling secular stories or by ending the story of Jesus with the cross?
 - 4) Cf Mk 4,26.30 (ὁμοιωόμεν); Mt 22,2 (ὁμοιωθή) and others. Against Keck, op.cit., p.246, who applies the "disclosure potential" of the parables theologically. Of course, they disclose many new insights into the world and into our history, but that must not be confused with the disclosure of God.

the eschatological side as the individual details in a parable relate to its point. The point of the parables is either the "basileia" or God himself.¹ The point of a parable is identical with the principle according to which the parable is built.² The "basileia" is, as it were, the criterion for collecting the individual details which are the raw material of the parable.³ Just as the "basileia" as the eschatological factor is the principle of construction, so is the resurrection - as we have already seen⁴ - the criterion for selecting the stories about Jesus.

The relationship between the point and the individual details, however, is not onesided. It is not the case that the point is the sole governor and the only important thing in a parable. One is not meant to forget the individual details after once having grasped the point. On the contrary, the very nature of the point makes it necessary that the details are remembered.⁵ Between the point and the individual details there is a dialectical relationship: the point throws light upon the details, the details co-determine the character of the point. Just as the secular plot of a parable appears in a new light (i.e. in the light of the "basileia") whereby the plot provides

1) Jüngel, Paulus und Jesus, pp.136f: "Geht es in den Gleichnissen um die Gottesherrschaft, dann hat die menschliche Existenz ihre Pointe im extra nos der Gottesherrschaft."

2) Jüngel's "primum comparationis" which appears as an "ultimum comparationis" at the end; see op.cit., p.136.

3) Jüngel, op.cit., p.136.

4) See above pp.174f.

5) That fact has been analyzed by Jüngel, who reaches the conclusion that "das Gleichnis ... in allen seinen

categories of understanding the "basileia", so the light of the resurrection shows the history of Jesus differently, whereby that history becomes the language to express the resurrection.

The dialectical relationship between individual details and the point of a parable involves, too, the problem of authority. Whether the secular plot of the parable is capable of making people understand God is entirely dependent on the *ἐπιείθευ* producing a unique relationship between the "basileia" and the world. Whether we can trust in the theological truth of a parable depends entirely on the authority which stands behind the *ἐπιείθευ*. To begin with, the truth of a parable lies in its point: the "basileia". So, if Jesus speaks the *ἐπιείθευ* and if his conduct (and his proclamation) is determined by the "basileia",¹ so that the "basileia" is the power that authorizes the conduct of Jesus,² then this "basileia" is the authority standing behind the *ἐπιείθευ* spoken by Jesus.³ The "basileia", however, is not to be confused with the parable, the former is not identical with but only the point of the latter. In a parable the "basileia" is present not as "basileia" but as a parable.⁴ In the

Einzelzügen von seiner Pointe (lebt), aber die Pointe ... ohne diese Einzelzüge nicht zum Zuge (kommt)" (Pau-
lus und Jesus, p.137).

- 1) Cf. Jüngel, op.cit., p.185.
- 2) Jüngel, op.cit., p.188: "Damit erscheint die Gottes-
herrschaft selbst als die das Verhalten Jesu autori-
sierende Macht."
- 3) Jüngel, op.cit., p.196; also the proclamation is in-
cluded.
- 4) This absolutely fundamental insight was first made by
Jüngel, op.cit., p.135: "Die Basileia kommt im Gleich-
nis als Gleichnis zur Sprache." (the whole quotation
in italics)

parables, the "basileia" is present in a parabolic form, it is not present as a fact. So, the "basileia" is not identical with the parable; therefore the parable cannot be its own authority,¹ but rather its authority stands and falls with the truth of the "basileia" behind it. The truth of the "basileia", however, has been shown in the resurrection of Christ. So the resurrection of Jesus is in fact the power authorizing (for us!) the *ἐπισημάνη* of the parables. If he had not been raised, the truth of the parables would have been perverted into vanity. As regards the question of authority we notice that the parables are in the same position as the whole life of the historical Jesus. Just as the secular plot of the parables becomes an expression of the "basileia" thanks to the authority of the *ἐπισημάνη*, so the "secular" life of Jesus is turned into a disclosure of God thanks to the *ἐπισημάνη* spoken by God when he raised the crucified Jesus from the dead. The resurrection is similar to the *ἐπισημάνη* spoken over the parables, making the secular plot, the historical side, relevant in an eschatological sense. The dialectical relationship between point and individual details, and the tension between theological authority and worldly reality, produce the basic model for understanding the significance of historical work in theology.

It is essential that the "basileia" is present in

1) As I see it, this is one of the basic mistakes in Keck's concept; see A Future for the historical Jesus, p.247!

the parable as a parable. By being present as a parable the "basileia theou" recognizes the difference between world and God.¹ In a human form by means of a secular story the "basileia" is present parabolically, i.e. the words of our language are not capable of presenting the "basileia" as it actually is. The parabolic character of its presence is the consequence of the secularity of our world and language. It is due, too, to the secular character of reality that the "basileia" is present in words. The word-character of its presence again corresponds to the fact that an eschatological matter cannot be experienced in a secular world without the latter being transcended. The world is transcended in the word.

This quality of the parables throws an interesting light upon our problem of the historical Jesus. The "vere deus, vere homo" is not a matter of experience, so to speak, indebted to the presence of two natures in Jesus. It is rather a matter of interpretation, a linguistical event, a transcending of the world in the word, due to the event-character of God's identification with the crucified one. God is present in the life of Jesus in the same way as the "basileia" is present in the secular plot of the parables: parabolically. That is the reason why God cannot be experienced immediately in an every-day sense, but only be heard. God, by deciding for continuity with Jesus, compelled the witnesses to create a new form of story: the gospel-stories transcending the worldliness of their own plot by interpreting it in the light of the "eschaton", which is in a way already here and still has yet to

1) Jüngel, Paulus und Jesus, p.138: "Indem die Gottesherrschaft aber als Gleichnis da ist, wahrt sie die Differenz zwischen Gott und Welt ...".

arrive.

Thanks to the point of a parable the earthly world of which its plot tells appears in a new light, namely in the light of the "basileia".¹ This light ensures that the secular world which provides the material of the parables becomes capable of describing the "basileia". Not that the world as such is a parable of the "basileia", but the former is made theologically relevant by the analogy-creating power of the latter.² So, as it were, the parables can show us how the world and history are captured by the "basileia" and enabled to illustrate God "per analogiam fidei". The same applies to the history of Jesus: the resurrection is the light in which the worldly story of Jesus is turned into a biography of God. History receives theological relevance "per analogiam fidei", whereby the "fides" is indebted to Easter as the historical development of the early community clearly shows.³

Finally we have to mention another quality of the parables, namely that they are told by Jesus in order to give time to decide for or against the "basileia". The individual details of a parable try to focus the hearer's mind on their point,⁴ they are there to provide arguments

1) Jüngel, Paulus und Jesus, p.138.

2) The truth of the parables yielded through themselves is nothing else than truth about the world. Their being truth about God would presuppose the truth of the "analogia entis".

3) Here lies the difference between my view and Keck's; his historical Jesus is the parable of God in the sense of an "analogia entis" (cf. A Future for the Historical Jesus, pp.244.246); compare also the statements about the relationship of faith to history, above pp.204-207.

4) And, at the same time, on the point of the hearer's existence; see Jüngel, op.cit., p.136.

which might induce the hearer to accept the grace of the "basileia". The parables are that linguistical form most closely corresponding to God's loving approach to man. Their very character excludes any totalitarian decision, in so far as it is the task of their secular plot to concentrate us on one point, and give us arguments to think over and time to decide in. We can view the historical side of the kerygma as analogous to the individual details (or the secular plot) of the parables. It too opens up our horizon and gives us arguments to enable us to make a decision which is more than a decision about history (just as the hearer's decision as regards the parables is not a decision about the plot, but rather about the "basileia"), but it is a decision whether it is adequate to see the story of Jesus in the light of his resurrection.

The comparison with the parables has shown somewhat more concretely what place history (and therefore historiography) has to take in theology: it is as important and indispensable as the single details in a parable are, if their point is once grasped.

7.4 Epistemological Consequences

We have briefly described the methodological and dogmatic consequences of our concept of continuity. One might have expected that the answer to the critique of religion and to the challenge resulting from the death of metaphysics would have come under the label "dogmatic". If we look more carefully, however, both of these areas do not concern dogmatic theology (the question of God's non-

existence cannot be a question of dogmatics), but they are rather to be analyzed in terms of epistemology. For it depends on the way that we know of God whether the critique of religion is right as well as whether the end of the metaphysical God must mean the death of the Christian God.

7.4.1 The "extra nos" of History

We have seen above¹ that the common objection against religion is that God is produced by man and therefore untrue and to be rejected. In the context of our problem this objection appears in the form of the question whether our faith in God has any outside warrants to which it can refer as prior to it and causing it. That is the same as the epistemological question whether there can be any such faith which has a close relationship to history.

The concept of continuity developed above presents us with a possible answer to that critical objection of the 19th century critique of religion. The significance of the historical side in this continuity indicates that faith has essentially been shaped by events "extra nos", in so far as faith has been shaped by the history of Jesus. We have shown that the process from Jesus to Christ is itself a historical problem, for it left traces in history (were it not so, the objection of the critique of religion would still remain valid). The interpretation of Jesus in

1) See pp. 6-13.

the light of his resurrection was necessary in so far as God himself induced the witnesses to make it. It is, considering the evidence, improbable that the process from Jesus to Christ was due to wishful thinking, individual or social.

Our concept of continuity gives an epistemological basis for a faith which is related to concrete, "extra nos" history and still does not confine itself to the field of history and the world, where there could be no other faith than idolatry.

7.4.2 The "intra nos" of Transcendence

The main reservation arising from our present non-metaphysical understanding of the world is that neither our language nor our mind are capable of containing the transcendent God. That is true: "finitum non capax infiniti". Our concept of continuity opens up a possibility of God-talk which is neither metaphysical nor non-metaphysical.

In so far as we have seen the independent significance of the eschatological side in that continuity we may conclude that we are able to speak immanently of transcendence. While the historical side vouches for the "immanently", the eschatological side provides "transcendence". That means that our God-talk, which is necessarily transcendental, is no longer dependent upon the metaphysical possibility of expressing transcendence.

On the other hand we can agree with the presupposition that transcendence must be experienced before one

can talk about it. God was indeed experienced by those first witnesses when they were forced to see the life of Jesus in the light of his resurrection. And God is indeed experienced by us in repeating that dialectical understanding of continuity between Jesus and Christ. God is experienced in thinking again what the first witnesses had to think.

It is not that the historical Jesus is the experience of transcendence, for that would mean a deliberate immanentism. Nor that the risen Lord is the experience of God, for that would open the doors to all sorts of speculation. The thinking together of God and history as modelled by the biblical texts in terms of the correlation of Jesus and Christ is the legitimate place to experience God.

God's identification with the crucified one, which inaugurated the continuity between Jesus and Christ, inaugurated at the same time a new possibility of language: to speak of God in terms of the world. That dialectic is the axiomatic basis of Christian God-talk, due to the event-character of Jesus Christ. God conquers language.¹

1) Jüngel, Gottes Sein ist im Werden, pp.16ff, esp.p.22.

8.0 Bibliography

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