ASPECTS OF THE QUEST OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS
IN THE WORKS OF WILLIAM MANSON AND
JAMES M. ROBINSON

by

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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During the latter half of the nineteenth century New Testament scholars were engaged in a quest for the historical Jesus. Their purpose was to lay bare the Jesus of history and construct a life of Jesus as he really was. With the coming of the twentieth century, the continental scholars set aside the quest for the historical Jesus as being an impossible undertaking. This was true for both historical and theological reasons. Historically, the Gospels were seen as products of the early Church and thus they only told us of Jesus in a secondary way, if at all. Theologically, the quest was seen as an act of unbelief, as trying to found faith on something other than the kerygma of the New Testament. Rudolf Bultmann was the leading New Testament scholar who questioned whether it was possible to find the Jesus of history by means of the historical critical method. Bultmann's pupils however were not content with his almost skeptical view of the Gospels and they began to seek for the historical Jesus once more. This is the so-called "New Quest" of the historical Jesus.

Both William Manson and James M. Robinson are concerned with finding the historical Jesus. Three aspects of William Manson's quest are discussed. First, Manson’s view of history and historical study are examined. Manson sees history as a history of salvation both in a general and a specific way. In general, God is the Lord of history in Christ and is working all things together for the salvation of man. Specifically, the Bible tells of a plan of salvation that began with the Exodus of Israel from Egypt and goes on through Christ to the consummation of the age when Christ returns again. History has meaning and a purpose. That meaning is disclosed in Jesus Christ who is the center of history. He is the supreme work of God for the salvation of the world. This work of God continues through the Kingdom of God which is a continuation of Jesus' work on earth. Manson's view of historical study is grounded in the objective historical process that is ruled by God in Christ. He wishes to see the past as it really was and to see Jesus as he really was, so that God's salvation will be clear to all men. The historical critical method is to be used to examine the New Testament documents in order to do this. Second, the Gospels as historical documents are discussed. For Manson a discussion of the Gospels is a discussion of the early history of the Church for the Gospels are the soul of the Church. They contain what the Church knew of the historical Jesus. Before the Gospels were composed, the traditions about Jesus were passed down orally. This meant that they were subject to both stabilizing and disruptive factors. The stabilizing factors tended to preserve the tradition intact and the disruptive factors tended to alter the material. The Gospels arose out of this milieu and Manson has three things to say concerning them. First, the Gospels speak primarily of Jesus and only secondarily of the Church; second, the Gospels are reliable unless proven otherwise; third, the Gospels are not the creation of the Church. Third, Manson discusses the life of Jesus as he sees it in the Gospels. It consisted of seven historical crises. They were his baptism, his temptation in the wilderness, his acceptance of the designation "Messiah" at Caesarea Philippi, his transfiguration, Jesus' self-disclosure at the Upper-Room, the struggle of soul in Gethsemane and Jesus' desolation on the Cross. There is an internal side to this development that Manson also discusses, Jesus' awareness of himself and of his mission. This is revealed in three terms used by Jesus: Son of God, where Jesus expresses his uniqueness, Son of Man, where Jesus expresses his awareness of Messiahship, and Servant of the Lord, where Jesus reveals that his/
his life is to be one of suffering for the sins of the world.

James M. Robinson is also interested in finding the historical Jesus but he writes as a Bultmannian engaged in a "New Quest" and does not follow the lead of Manson. The development of his thought is traced through his earlier writings up to the definitive statement of his position in The New Quest of the Historical Jesus. That book has three parts. First, there is an introduction that deals with the state of the problem today. The second section deals with the philosophical and historical structure of the New Quest. Here he contends that the old quest needs to be abandoned because it is both impossible and illegitimate. It is impossible because the sources are not primarily historical but kerygmatic. It is illegitimate for two reasons. First, modern historiography is not primarily interested in facts. Since the older historiography was, it is now seen to be illegitimate. Second, the old quest is illegitimate because it sought to prove Jesus' authority and hence is the opposite of faith. A new quest is possible however, not along the lines of the new outmoded old quest, but along entirely new lines. This is so because radically new concepts of history and the self have emerged. History is now seen to be "the act of intention, the commitment, the meaning for the participants behind the external occurrence." A new view of the self has also emerged. Selfhood is now seen not as one's personality but as "constituted by commitment to a context, from which commitment one's existence arises." Armed with these radical new insights into history and the self, one can then proceed to the authentic Jesus material and there attempt to encounter Jesus' history and his existential selfhood. The third major section of Robinson's book deals with the way in which the new quest is to operate. The historian is to begin his work with the authentic Jesus material. He is to lay bare Jesus as a possibility of existence in this authentic material and encounter Jesus there. Robinson considers this procedure to be an objective one, but it is "existential objectivity" not the older and outmoded objectivity of the positivists. Since the kerygma also offers Jesus as a possibility of existence, one now has two avenues back to Jesus. That is, two possibilities of encounter with Jesus exist, and they may be compared to see if an encounter with Jesus in the kerygma is the same as an encounter with Jesus via modern historiography.

Robinson's view is then subjected to various criticisms. His view of history, the self, and what constitutes the new quest are all seen to be deficient for various reasons.

The further development of Robinson's opinion is then traced. His new concept of historicality is analyzed and criticized and the latest development of his thought is then looked at. Here Robinson suggests that the problem of the historical Jesus is in reality a linguistic problem and that the problem resides in the "history of the traditions about Jesus." This view is then subjected to criticism.

In the conclusion after a summary of both Manson and Robinson is presented, it is argued that Manson has presented the better of the two ways back to the historical Jesus. Four reasons are given for this. First, Manson has the better view of history and historical study. Second, Manson has the better view of the Gospels as historical sources. Third, it is Manson who presents to us Jesus as a man. Fourth, Manson has the better view of what constitutes Jesus' understanding of himself.
Abstract

During the latter half of the nineteenth century New Testament scholars were engaged in a quest of the historical Jesus. Their purpose was to lay bare the Jesus of history and construct a life of Jesus as he really was. With the coming of the twentieth century, the continental scholars set aside the quest for the historical Jesus as being an impossible undertaking. This was true for both historical and theological reasons. Historically, the Gospels were seen as products of the early Church and thus they only told us of Jesus in a secondary way, if at all. Theologically, the quest was seen as an act of unbelief, as trying to found faith on something other than the kerygma of the New Testament. Rudolf Bultmann was the leading New Testament scholar who questioned whether it was possible to find the Jesus of history by means of the historical critical method. Bultmann's pupils however were not content with his almost skeptical view of the Gospels and they began to seek for the historical Jesus once more. This is the so-called "New Quest" of the historical Jesus.

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salvation that began with the Exodus of Israel from Egypt and goes on through Christ to the consummation of the age when Christ returns again. History has meaning and a purpose. That meaning is disclosed in Jesus Christ who is the center of history. He is the supreme work of God for the salvation of the world. This work of God continues through the Kingdom of God which is a continuation of Jesus' work on earth. Manson's view of historical study is grounded in the objective historical process that is ruled by God in Christ. He wishes to see the past as it really was and to see Jesus as he really was, so that God's salvation will be clear to all men. The historical critical method is to be used to examine the New Testament documents in order to do this. Second, the Gospels as historical documents are discussed. For Manson a discussion of the Gospels is a discussion of the early history of the Church for the Gospels are the soul of the Church. They contain what the Church knew of the historical Jesus. Before the Gospels were composed, the traditions about Jesus were passed down orally. This meant that they were subject to both stabilizing and disruptive factors. The stabilizing factors tended to preserve the tradition intact and the disruptive factors tended to alter the material. The Gospels arose out of this milieu and Manson has three things to say concerning them. First, the Gospels speak primarily of Jesus and only secondarily of the Church; second, the Gospels are reliable unless proven otherwise; third, the Gospels are not the creation of the Church. Third, Manson discusses the life of Jesus as he sees it in the Gospels. It consisted of seven historical crises. They were his baptism, his temptation in the wilderness, his acceptance
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Table of Abbreviations

The Works of William Manson

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>Bist du</td>
<td>Bist du, der da kommen soll</td>
<td>1952.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CVKG</td>
<td>Christ's View of the Kingdom of God</td>
<td>1918.</td>
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<td>Gospels</td>
<td>The First Three Gospels</td>
<td>1914.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hebrews</td>
<td>The Epistle to the Hebrews</td>
<td>1951.</td>
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<td>IG</td>
<td>The Incarnate Glory</td>
<td>1923.</td>
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<td>JATC</td>
<td>Jesus and the Christian</td>
<td>1967.</td>
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<td>Messiah</td>
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<td>1943.</td>
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The Works of James M. Robinson

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<td>HUL</td>
<td>&quot;Heilsgeschichte und Lichtungsgeschichte&quot;</td>
<td>1962.</td>
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<tr>
<td>KhJ</td>
<td>Kerygma und historischer Jesus</td>
<td>1960.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQHJ</td>
<td>A New Quest of the Historical Jesus</td>
<td>1959.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHT</td>
<td>&quot;Die deutsche Auseinandersetzung mit dem spateren Heidegger&quot;</td>
<td>1964.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE ................................................. 1

CHAPTER 1. Quests for the Historical Jesus: Old and New

I. Introduction ...................................... 1

II. The Nature and Procedure of the Old Quest .......... 2

A. Reasons for the Quest of the Historical Jesus ... 3
   1. Reaction to Romanticism
   2. The Spirit of the Enlightenment
   3. A Scientific Attitude asserted itself in New Testament Studies

B. The Principal Features of the Old Quest .......... 4
   1. Acceptance of Mark as Historically Reliable
   2. The Use of Source Analysis
   3. A basic Hegelianism underlay it
   4. A Philosophy of History that looked for facts behind the Interpretations.

III. The Radical Rejection of the Old Quest .......... 7

A. The Change in the Philosophy of History .......... 8
   1. Stated by Martin Kähler
   2. Affirmed earlier by Søren Kierkegaard

B. The Rejection of the Principal Features of the Old Quest 10
   1. Hegelianism replaced by a renewed stress on God's Transcendence
   2. Source Analysis replaced by Form-Criticism
   3. Mark rejected as an Historical Source
   4. Positivistic Philosophy of History set aside and replaced by a new view
      (a) One stands within History, not above it
      (b) Geschichte and Historie must be kept apart

C. Criticism of the New Philosophy of History ....... 18
   1. It is weak on the place that facts play in its scheme
   2. It has an odd definition of History
   3. The new historians are not true to their own position
   4. Objective Research is impossible if the new view is correct
   5. The postulation of a bare, unqualified past happenedness is impossible.
CHAPTER 2. Aspects of the Quest of the Historical Jesus in the Works of William Manson

I. William Manson on the Nature of History

A. Manson's Philosophy of History is that of the Biblical Heilsgeschichte

1. The Rejection of two inadequate views
   (a) Evolutionism stated and rejected
      (1) It is not the view of the Bible
      (2) It discards faith
      (3) The goal is in the distant future
      (4) It disallows spiritual factors
      (5) It has no place for the individual
      (6) It is not serious enough about sin
   (b) Apocalypticism stated and rejected
      because it is too other worldly

2. Heilsgeschichte as God's act in Time
   (a) It begins with the Exodus from Egypt
   (b) It recognizes Israel's unique place in history
      (1) Israel as vicarious sufferer
      (2) Israel as prophetic of Christ
   (c) Christ fulfills Israel's history
   (d) The Church as New Creation
   (e) The consummation of History
      (1) Manson's uncertain views on the mode of Christ's victory
      (2) Manson's certain view on the fact of Christ's victory
B. Manson on the Two-fold Center of History .... 52

1. Jesus Christ as God’s supreme act in time
   (a) Jesus as the center of salvation-history
      (1) Jesus is the Lord of all
      (2) Jesus is the Lord and center of time
   (b) Jesus as the eternal call of God in time
      (1) Jesus is eternity in time
      (2) Jesus is the existential call of God

2. The Kingdom of God as God’s act in time
   (a) The Kingdom of God is Jesus’ new teaching
   (b) The Kingdom of God as a comprehensive formula of history
   (c) The two-fold emphasis of the Kingdom of God
      (1) Its this-worldliness
         (a) It involves Jesus’ identification with men
         (b) It stresses the importance of Jesus’ life
      (2) Its other-worldliness
         (a) It adds the dimension of faith
         (b) It adds the fact of the cross

C. Manson on History as Objective Fact and Meaning. .... 65

1. The necessity of historical facts
   (a) To provide a ground for meaning
   (b) Because Heilsgegeschichte is the record of God’s Acts
   (c) Because only Christ is the perfect revelation of God

2. The status of meaning
   (a) Meaning is objective
   (b) The atonement as an illustration of meaning

D. Manson on the Nature of Historical Criticism .... 75

1. The need for historical criticism
   (a) The nature of the sources demands it
      (1) The text-factor
      (2) The language factor
      (3) The human factor
      (4) The time factor
      (5) The developmental factor
      (6) The apologetic factor

2. A defence of the historical critical method
   (a) Defended against the fundamentalists
      (1) Because fundamentalism has an a priori view of the Bible
      (2) Because fundamentalism does not do justice to the Bible
      (3) Because criticism establishes Biblical authority
(b) Defended against the liberals

3. The Purpose of the Historical-Critical Method: to Establish the Past

CHAPTER 3. The Rise of the Gospels Considered Historically

I. Introduction: A Discussion of the Gospels is a Discussion of the Early History of the Church 85

II. A Brief History of the Early Church Before 70 A.D. as it Affects the Later Written Gospels 86

A. Jesus, His death, resurrection, and the Rise of the Church 86

B. Jewish Christianity to 70 A.D. 88

C. Reasons why no Gospels were written during the first generation 90
   1. The example of Christ
   2. Early return of Christ expected
   3. The Oriental memory
   4. The living voice of the Apostles
   5. Memory of Jesus was still fresh
   6. The living Christ still spoke
   7. Christ's life per se was not the main part of the Christian message

D. The Rise of Gentile Christianity and the World-Mission of the Church 92

E. Paul and the World-Mission of the Church 94

F. The Impact of the Hellenistic World upon Gentile Christianity 95
   1. The state of the world at that time
   2. The place of the metropolitan centers: the Gospels arose here
   3. Influence not to be overstated

G. St. Paul and the First Literature of the Church 99
   1. To meet practical needs
   2. Theology of Paul's literature is in a direct line with the main body of the Church

III. The State of the Traditions about Jesus Prior to their being Incorporated into the Written Gospels 101

A. The Oral Period of the Tradition 101
1. Traditions were preserved in preaching.
2. Traditions were preserved in the community's life.
3. The question of reliability raised.

B. The Stabilizing and Disruptive Factors as they affect the traditions about Jesus.

1. The Stabilizing Factors
   (a) Reverence for the words of Christ
   (b) The Oriental Memory --- not to be overstated, however
   (c) The use of the Old Testament
   (d) Eyewitnesses were teachers

2. The Disruptive Factors
   (a) The material was passed on orally
   (b) The material was used controversially and apologetically
   (c) The material was used in Christian preaching
   (d) The practical needs of the Church shaped the material
   (e) The voice of the Christian prophet added to the material
   (f) The "Fulfillment" of Jesus words
   (g) Assimilation to Old Testament prophecy


IV. Hanson and the Form-Critical Method.

A. The Form-Critical Approach to the Gospels.

1. The Principles of Form-Criticism
   (a) Tradition is a creation of the Church
   (b) Tradition is late and not objective
   (c) Form-Criticism disparages the part played by individuals
   (d) Assumes the existence of "typical" situations
   (e) Tradition is analogous to other folk literature
   (f) The Church had no interest in history

2. The Method of Form-Criticism
   (a) Classify material according to form
   (b) Compare it with other folk literature
   (c) Reconstruct the Sitz-im-Leben

3. The Value of Form-Criticism
   (a) A personal debt is acknowledged to Bultmann
   (b) Useful technical service done by the "school"
   (c) Clarified the place of the Church
(d) Discovered the existence of "Laws" governing the tradition
(e) Classified the various kinds of "forms" that the tradition assumed

B. Manson's Criticism of Form-Criticism.

1. General Criticisms: Form-Criticism is skeptical and anti-historical
   (a) Form alone cannot decide the historical question as Form-Criticism asserts
   (b) The tradition is not late as Form-Criticism says

2. Specific Criticisms
   (a) It operates on the basis of an unproven a priori
   (b) Its analogy with Hebrew saga is dubious
   (c) It is illegitimate to rule out personalities as Form-Criticism does
   (d) Form-Criticism cannot explain the nature of the Church's tradition nor the existence of the Church

V. Conclusion: The Nature of the Written Gospels

A. The Gospels Speak Primarily of Jesus

B. The Gospels are Reliable unless Proven Otherwise

1. Manson's generalized statement
2. Manson's "Re-historicizing" theory
   (a) In Mark 11:20-23
   (b) In Matthew 5:39-40 Luke 6:29

C. The Gospels are not Creations of the Church
CHAPTER 4. The Historical Jesus in the Works of William Manson

I. Introduction. .................................................. 141
II. The Historical Jesus. ......................................... 143
   A. The Preliminary History. .................................. 143
   B. The Historical Prologue: Jesus' Baptism .......... 145
   C. The Temptation in the Wilderness ................ 147
      1. The term "Son of God"
      2. The term "Servant of the Lord"
      3. The term "Son of Man"
   D. Peter's Confession at Caesarea Philippi .......... 158
   E. The Transfiguration. .................................... 162
   F. The Institution of the New Covenant .......... 164
   G. The Agony in the Garden. ............................ 167
   H. The Desolation on the Cross. .............. 168

CHAPTER 5. The New Quest of the Historical Jesus

I. The Rise and Development of Robinson's New Quest of the Historical Jesus .......... 170
   A. First Glimmers of the New Quest. ............... 170
      1. "Jesus' Understanding of History"
         (a) An Analysis of the Pattern of Jesus' Parabolic Teaching
         (b) The Existential Challenge of the Message
      2. "The Historical Jesus and the Church's Kerygma"
         (a) The Problem of Comparing Jesus and the Kerygma
         (b) The Hint of an Answer in Jesus' "Existential Thinking"
         (a) Existential Theology must have a Hearer
         (b) Bultmann's Method Adopted
         (c) The Problem of Getting Beyond Bultmann
      4. "A Formal Analysis of Colossians 1:15-20"
         (a) The Growing Importance of Patterns
         (b) Laying Foundations for Things to Come
B. The Birth of an Idea ........................................ 180
   1. "Review of Bornkamm's Jesus von Nazareth
      (a) The Rejection of the Old Quest
      (b) The Bultmannian Approach to History
      (c) The New Concept of Modern Historiography
      (d) The Continuity of Jesus and the Kerygma
      (e) Two new Problems Arise
           (1) Objectively Comparing Messages?
           (2) Subjectively Comparing Encounters?
          and its Beginnings"
           (a) Too Objective in its Approach
           (b) Convinces Robinson to be an Existentialist

C. The First Formulation. ................................. 185
   1. "The Quest of the Historical Jesus Today"
      (a) The Impossibility and Illegitimacy of the Old Quest
      (b) The Renewal of the Quest for Jesus
      (c) The Place of Modern Historiography
      (d) The Necessity of a New Quest
      (e) Two Remaining Problems
           (1) The Concept of Encounter
           (2) The Place of Objectivity
         (a) An Analysis of Encounter
         (b) The Problem of Subjectivism

D. A New Quest of the Historical Jesus. ............. 195
   1. The English Edition of A New Quest of the Historical Jesus
      (a) The State of the Problem Today
      (b) The Philosophical and Historical Rationale of the New Quest
      (c) The Practice of the New Quest
   2. The German Edition of Kerygma und historischer Jesus
      (a) Parallels the English Closely
      (b) The New Emphasis on Jesus' Self-understanding

II. An Analysis of Robinson's New Concept of History and the Self. .................... 220

A. Robinson's New Concept of History. ............... 220
   1. A Statement of the New Concept of History
      (a) The Act of Intention, Commitment and Meaning behind the External Occurrence
      (b) History exists only in the Event in which it becomes
      (c) History can only be known through Encounter
2. An Evaluation of the New Concept of History
   (a) It is Ambiguous
   (b) It leaves unexplained the nature of the event
   (c) It makes Events Unhistorical
   (d) History as Encounter Dissolves the Past

B. Robinson's New Concept of the Self and the Equation of History with Selfhood
   1. A Criticism of Robinson's Definition of the Self
      (a) Does not Explain what does the Committing
      (b) The Relation between the Self and Personality is Unclear
      (c) The Problem of Non-Commitment
   2. A Criticism of the Equation of History with Selfhood

C. The New Theory as a New Quest of the Historical Jesus
   1. A Statement of the New Method
   2. A Criticism of the New Method
      (a) It Fails to Reach History
      (b) Robinson nowhere defines the Concept of Encounter
      (c) It Opens the Historian to the Evil of the Past

D. Objective Historical Criticism in Robinson's Historical Method
   1. It is inconsistent for Robinson to allow it
   2. It is a rehabilitation of the Old Quest
   3. Robinson's "objective" method is too narrowly conceived
   4. It is impossible to be objective and subjective at the same time

III. The "New" Robinson
   A. Robinson's Reappraisal of His Position
   B. The "New" Robinson
      1. Statement of his position
      2. Criticism of the "New" Robinson
         (a) Destroys the knowledge of the Past
         (b) Formulae cannot guarantee events
         (c) Robinson cannot establish that event and symbol are contemporaneous
Pa^e

(d) Robinson leaves unexplained the concept of "Happened-ness"

C. Historicality and the New Quest
1. Statement of his position
2. Evaluation of Historicality as a New Quest
   (a) Robinson nowhere Explains how Historicality and the New Quest relate
   (b) Where is the Historical Jesus?
   (c) Is Whitehead next?

CHAPTER 6. Summary and Conclusion

I. Aspects of the Quest of the Historical Jesus in William Manson's Works
   A. William Manson on the Nature of History and Historical Study
   B. William Manson on the Nature of the Gospels as Historical Sources
   C. The Historical Jesus in the works of William Manson

II. The New Quest of the Historical Jesus by James M. Robinson
   A. The Rise and Development of Robinson's New Quest
   B. An Evaluation of Robinson's New Quest
   C. Further Development in Robinson's viewpoint

III. William Manson: The Better Way
   A. A Sound View of History and Historical Study
   B. A Better view of the Gospels as Historical Sources
   C. There is a presentation of Jesus as a Man
   D. A Better view of what constitutes Jesus' understanding of Himself

IV. A Renewed Quest of the Historical Jesus
   A. A Quest to be Resumed
   B. The Quest for Criteria

Appendix

Bibliography
   A. The Published Works of William Manson
   B. The Unpublished Works of William Manson
   C. The Published Works of James M. Robinson
   D. General Bibliography
Preface

We are living in a period of time in which there is a renewed interest in the quest of the historical Jesus. After suffering a period of eclipse scholars now are wondering everywhere if perhaps the rejection of the quest, that was characteristic of Continental scholarship for perhaps the last fifty years, was not a wrong turn in the road. This is true, not only in Britain and America where the earlier quest for the historical Jesus was never rejected as it was on the Continent, but also among the students of Bultmann. It is they who have instituted the so-called new quest of the historical Jesus. Consequently, there are basically two points of view at the present time with respect to this renewed interest in the quest of the historical Jesus. There are those who never despaired of the quest in the first place and continued their work in spite of the Continental rejection of their work and there are those who, having rejected the quest, are now attempting to reopen it in the so-called new quest of the historical Jesus.

It is this state of affairs that stands behind the writing of this dissertation. Two men were chosen to be examined that represented these two points of view. William Manson was selected as the one who never despaired of finding the historical Jesus. He was chosen because his work is not so well-known as it ought to be. He did, in fact, give a great deal of thought to the subjects that are now agitating New Testament scholarship. Three aspects of the search for the historical Jesus as it is found in
his work are examined. First, his philosophy of history and theory of historical studies are examined. Second, his view of the Gospels as historical sources is examined and third, the picture of the historical Jesus as it is found in his works is set forth.

James M. Robinson was selected as the second man to be examined and he represents the new quest of the historical Jesus. This new quest is traced through his works from its inception to the definitive statement of it in his major work and then through its later development in succeeding books and articles.

The whole of this study is introduced by an introductory chapter that outlines the flow of scholarly opinion as it relates to this subject. The old quest is discussed, its rejection by the scholars on the Continent and the rise of the present day renewed interest are examined. Although this is a well-known history it was felt necessary to include this to give a proper context in which to view William Manson and James Robinson.

Finally, I would like personally to thank Mrs. Mary D. Manson for allowing me to use her late husband’s unpublished writings. Without her kindness in this regard a large portion of this dissertation could not have been written.
QUESTS FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS: OLD AND NEW

I. Introduction

The so-called "Old Quest" for the historical Jesus had its formal beginnings with the publication of David F. Strauss' Leben Jesu in 1835, and continued with great fervency and dedication until roughly the turn of the century. Such attempts to reconstruct the life of Jesus on scientific grounds staggered at that time from a death-blow dealt it by German scholarship and turned from a flood to a trickle on the Continent in an amazingly short period of time. It never really died out however, in fact Hermann Sasse and Ethelbert Stauffer have made a vigorous effort to revive it, but the majority of Continental scholars buried the old quest and remained silent about Jesus except for some experimental analyses of Jesus' work based on what little could be known about him after the form-critics had whittled the text down to practically nothing.

In Britain such was not the case. Attempts to outline the life of Christ continued unabated regardless of how radical the Continent might be. The effects of form-criticism were felt by some scholars, but after reeling from the blow, they recovered their perspective and continued the program of trying to find the historical Jesus. In fact almost every scholar who worked in the general area of the Synoptics produced something on the life of Christ.
Meanwhile on the Continent after the scholars had plunged deeper and deeper into skepticism, they began a reassessment of the whole program of rejecting the search for Jesus and wondered out loud if a quest for Jesus might not be legitimate after all. In this way the "New Quest" for the historical Jesus began. Various emphases are to be found in the new quest but it is not essentially a reversal of the approach that rejected the earlier quest. Yet in a way it is a reversal of that position, for the New Quest rejects radical skepticism and a genuine effort is made to relate the kerygma to the earthly ministry of Christ. It is necessary to trace now in further detail the nature of the old quest, its rejection and the renewal of a quest for the historical Jesus.

II. The Nature and Procedure of the Old Quest

Before the 19th century there was no such thing as a "quest" for the historical Jesus. The reason for this lies in the attitude that scholars had toward the Gospels. They used the Gospels, not as sources from which one constructed a life of Christ, but as authoritative accounts of the life that Christ actually lived, and inasmuch as they were inspired of God they were to be accepted in toto. Where differences in the accounts existed, it was a simple matter to harmonize them in one way or another. But the 19th century brought a different attitude to the scholarly world
and as a result the Gospels were treated in a different way. The Gospels were no longer considered authoritative accounts for the life of Jesus but were only the sources for that life. What his life was really like became the quest of the latter half of that century.

A. Reasons for the Quest of the Historical Jesus

There are various reasons for this search for what Jesus was really like. First, one might note in this a reaction to Romanticism and the theologians of that temperament such as Schleiermacher. Under the influence of Kant they had removed the source of religion from objectively verifiable history to the subjectively apprehended eternal truths or feelings. It was the desire to bring theology back to earth that motivated, at least in part, the quest for the historical Jesus. Second, the spirit of the Enlightenment that swept across Europe swept across the steppes of theology as well. Wearied as they were of the Church's possession of ultimate truth, so they said, and the claim by the Church to be the sole owner of the truth, seekers for truth rebelled against clerical arrogance and proclaimed the right of anyone to read the Gospels to determine what was really there. They were seeking absolute truth and wanted to make that truth accessible to anyone. But more important than this was the desire to be free

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from the dogmas of the church. Jesus of Nazareth, the gentle artisan, had been buried underneath centuries of churchly nonsense and the theologians were desirous of breaking free from that restraint. They wanted to know who Jesus really was, not who the church said he was, not what the church's historic discussions contained. An enlightened spirit was one that was free from such fetters. Third, a new scientific attitude was beginning to dominate the scholarly world. The scientists were making tremendous strides by means of this new method and the spirit of objectivity that motivated science had great appeal to everyone involved in scholarly research. There existed truths of history, that one needed to search for and they could be found, much as a scientist could look for bacteria under a microscope.

B. The Principal Features of the Old Quest

Such were the factors that brought about a reappraisal of the Gospels as historical documents and initiated a quest for the historical Jesus. It remains now to examine the principal features of that quest. What were the points that made this search a distinctive movement? First of all, there was the acceptance of Mark as a historically reliable source. It is true that some writers used John as a source as well, notably Renan, but by and large Mark was the only Gospel that was considered at all reliable. For centuries the church had asserted the primacy of Matthew, making Mark an abbreviation of Matthew, but now it was proven that Mark had actually been written first and Matthew was
the one who had done the copying. So scholars could now do away with the legends of the Magi, Herod's slaughter of the children, Jesus' tirade against the Pharisees and other such objectionable material. But even Mark was not completely free from later insertions, "Paulinisms", that had been read back into it and these certainly had to be dealt with. However, as a historical outline of the earthly ministry of Jesus, Mark could be trusted and it formed the basis of the search for the real Jesus. Second, the use of source-analysis was an indispensable element in reconstructing the life of Jesus. This was the practical side of the scientific spirit. Since it was unscientific to accept anything on the basis of authority, the church and even the Bible itself were abandoned as guides, while the unfettered, unbiased spirit of inquiry was allowed full play. Since the traditional guides were blind, who could be followed? The answer appeared simple. Follow the truth. It could be apprehended by anyone who used the proper tools in analyzing the Gospel material. This was accomplished by looking into the texts to separate the kernel from the husk. The husk, which consisted of later additions made by the early church, as well as invalid interpretations read into Jesus' life, legendary accretions to the text, myths and such things as these must be excised and thrown away. The kernel, the true Jesus, the Jesus as he really was, would be left after one had removed the useless shell. It was as simple as that. If anyone had misgivings about this procedure all he need do is look at how well the Old Testament men are
doing by applying this source analysis and his fears would immediately disappear.

The third point that needs to be made about this quest for the historical Jesus is that it was basically Hegelian in spirit. This had the effect of giving a certain air of respectability to the whole movement because it was built upon such an unshakable foundation as the philosophy of Hegel. The theologians apparently believed Hegel when he said that philosophy had reached its epitome in him. The second effect this had was to give great confidence to the historians, for if there existed a great Rational Spirit that is pressing dialectically upward, and if man's mind is of the same Stuff (i.e. ultimately free and rational) as this Spirit --- and it most certainly is --- then the rational structure of past history is amenable to the rational structure of the human mind and there is no reason why man cannot produce a completely accurate picture of the past. The structure of history and the structure of our minds are in reality the same structure so it is obvious that man possesses the potential of clearly seeing the rationale of history. This philosophical point coupled with the scientific approach that was used by these theologians gave them great confidence in what they were doing.

Finally, there was a specific philosophy of history assumed by all of these historians. They assumed that history consisted of certain public data, such as places, names, facts, etc. which constituted the reality of the occurrence and that these were recoverable even if in the process of transmission they suffered
alteration. The historian stood above the material and pared away the unnecessary elements. It could be charted thus:

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Source Material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dogma</th>
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Historian

"Reconstruction"

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Facts, places, names

Reality
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It will be noted that the historian has an accurate impression of what reality is so that when he approaches his material, which consists in the case of the Gospels of reality (i.e. factual data) plus an overlay of dogma, he can separate the one from the other and lead out the reality to a reconstruction of the past as it really was. He removes the extraneous and fabulous from the true and verified and then using only what really happened, he reconstructs an accurate picture of the past. This view of history is labelled "positivistic" by philosophers of history because along with positivism as a philosophy it postulated the ultimate accessibility of truth to the seeker and the ultimately (ideally) objective attitude of the seeker as he seeks that truth.²

III. The Radical Rejection of the Old Quest

That something was wrong with this whole project ought to have been evident to everyone, but it was not until Albert Schweitzer pointed it out by cataloguing a large number of the "objective" lives of Christ that had been written.³ It then became painfully


obvious how objective some of them really were. Everyone presented a different picture; Jesus was a social-reformer, a businessman, a fanatic, a theosophist, a peasant, an Essene and so on down the line. No two really agreed on who Jesus really was --- a fine state of affairs for those whose goal was to present an objective picture of Jesus; and they all claimed to be a picture of the real Jesus. Schweitzer's book had the effect of showing how tendentious these lives of Jesus really were but he said little about the philosophy of history that motivated their writing, and this was in reality one of the most important points. Had he analyzed this he probably would not have appended his own "life of Christ" to his historical study of the existing lives of Christ.

A. The Change in the Philosophy of History

The philosophy of history that underlay these "biographies" of Christ was discussed in the late 19th century by Martin Kähler in his book *Der Sogennante Historische Jesus und der Geschichtliche Biblische Christus*. He contended that there existed a level of history (Historie) that was open to the public and could be analyzed by historians but this level of history was relatively unimportant. It was a level of reality, a series of actual occurrences but what good are they for us today if we cannot know their significance? There must be, said Kähler, another level of history where the meaning of the former lies, a level that is meta-historical but nevertheless is tied to history. This level of history he termed *Geschichte*. It is the higher level of meaning and is only
open to faith. One cannot prove it or disprove it on the level of Historie, which is the level of objectively verifiable fact. Although it is related to Historie, one must make a decision of faith either for or against it. For example, when Paul says that Christ died for our sins, the first element, "Christ died" is the historisch element open to all who wish to examine it by whatever method is best in such a case. But the second element "for our sins" although dependent upon the first is not historisch but geschichtlich and can only be believed. Lessing had posed the problem of how eternal truths could be dependent upon accidental historical events. The positivistic historians had held the hope that perhaps they could find those truths there but the implication of Kähler's book was that one cannot find any justification for his beliefs in history and what is more he ought to stop looking.

It is interesting to note that the approach presented by Kähler at the end of the positivistic search for the historical Jesus in the 19th century had been clearly stated by Søren Kierkegaard almost before the quest began. In his book called Training in Christianity he said, "History, says faith, has nothing whatever to do with Christ. As applying to him we have only sacred history qualitatively different from history in general, which recounts the story of his life under the conditions of His humiliation..." and again, "Oh, impious heedlessness, which reduces sacred history to

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profane history, Christ to a mere man! Can one then from history learn to know anything about Christ? By no manner of means. Jesus Christ is the object of faith; one must either believe on Him or be offended. It is true that history furnishes knowledge in abundance, but knowledge demolishes Jesus Christ. It will be noted that what Kähler called Historie, Kierkegaard called "mere history" and what he called Geschichte, Kierkegaard called "sacred history." There is a difference however between the parallels which must be discussed later namely, whereas Kähler allowed Historie to inform Geschichte, Kierkegaard puts an infinite qualitative distance between the two. It is necessary to choose the one or the other, a point that Bultmann also makes, but more of this in a moment.

B. The Rejection of the Principal Features of the Old Quest

The rejection of the old quest took place because the fundamental principles of that quest were denied. The Hegelian outlook, the use of source analysis, the use of Mark as a historical document, and the positivistic view of history were all, to a greater or lesser degree, set aside. This rejection must now be examined in more detail. First, the Hegelian, almost pantheistic, fusion of all things into the Being of God, who is moving all things upward by means of the evolutionary process, was thought to be a shallow reduction of the great truth of God's transcendence. Because of the

5 Ibid., p. 394.
First World War and the general disillusionment that everyone experienced, including the theologians, a reassertion of God's control was postulated. The easy optimism of the earlier Neo-Hegelian theology was rejected and men turned to such thinkers as Kierkegaard who stressed the otherness of God in terms of a dialectic between Eternity and Time rather than the Hegelian dialectic in time of the Eternal Spirit. God stands over against us and rather than directing the flow of history from within, being some immanent principle or force, he is related to history in dialectical or existential encounters, by means of the "Moment" and we must accept or reject that encounter. God's "history" intersects our history but is not continuous with it. This had a profound influence on the study of the Gospels, for whereas the older search for Jesus found in him the high-point of human possibility, even high enough to be called "divine", the newer approach stressed the discontinuity of Christ with our time-stream. He is indeed in our time and as such is subject to critical study by historians but this does not tell us who he really was, in fact it tells us who he was not, namely a mere man who is subject to the limitations of time and space. What he really was is above history, in the other realm of existence, in Eternity, and that realm is accessible only to decision when one is encountered by God in the Moment of decision.

With regard to the second point, source analysis was superseded by form-criticism. Whereas the source-critics said, "Here is a historical statement about Jesus with an overlay of dogma by the Church," the form-critics said, "Here is a historical statement that
is primarily about the dogma of the church that might or might not have a secondary application to Jesus." So in one sense this moved us closer to Jesus as a person but in a larger and more real sense this moved us one step farther away. We were moved closer by seeing the Gospels not in their later stage of composition but in their earlier oral stage. But we were moved away from the person of Jesus because the earlier view had seen the sources (howbeit later) as reflective of Jesus but now they reflect him only in a secondary sense, if at all. The form-critic must decide what the Sitz im Leben of any given pericope really is. The subjectivity of this approach is shamefully obvious, for no two reconstructions of that Sitz im Leben are alike, but nevertheless it still calls itself "scientific historiography." In reality, it just substituted a subjective "Life of the Early Church" for the subjective "Life of Jesus" that they saw as characteristic of the 19th century. However that might be, the important point to notice is that the form-critics emphasized the involvement of the Gospel writers in their work and thus removed the Gospels from the realm of objectively verifiable fact relative to Jesus, making source analysis only preliminary to the historical task of reconstructing the theology and thought of the early church.

The third foundation stone of the old Quest, the historicity of Mark, was also demolished. Wilhelm Wrede's book Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien attacked the historical structure of Mark saying that the Messianic secret was a construct placed upon the Gospel by the writer and not a part of the actual story. This
was later amplified and brought to England by R.H. Lightfoot in *History and Interpretation in the Gospel*. And if Mark as history fell by the wayside, so did Mark as a chronological-geographical source for the life of Jesus. K.L. Schmidt in *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* systematically did away with the so-called "Sammelberichte", or connecting elements in Mark, as historical. Then Ernst Lohmeyer removed the topographic elements from the plane of history in *Galiläa und Jerusalem*. This work was followed once more by R.H. Lightfoot in *Locality and Doctrine in the Gospels* and the reduction was complete. Mark could not be trusted to provide any valid historical, chronological, or geographical material; in short, it was a tissue of inaccuracies and euphemistically called "theologically-oriented."

The final foundation stone of the old quest, namely its philosophy of history, also suffered shipwreck and this is the most significant feature of all. As Friedrich Gogarten says, "The fact [is] that this controversy is concerned with a radically different interpretation of history. On both sides it is known, or thought to be known, that the reality which underlies the Christian faith is a historical reality. What the one side understands as historical is for the other side not historical at all." That is to say, what the old quest thought was historical was not historical at all and what they thought was not historical really was. A more

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radical transvaluation could not be imagined. But what is meant by "history" in this new sense and how does it relate to the study of the Gospels? The old view of history was, it will be remembered, that the historian should stand above his material, sift it, judge it, and try to outline the past as it really was; "wie es eigentlich gewesen", so Ranke said. But now J.M. Robinson says, "we have come to realize that the objective factual level upon which the 19th century operated is only one dimension of history, and that a whole new dimension in the facts, a deeper and more central plane of meaning had been by-passed... The dimension in which man actually exists, his 'world', the stance or outlook from which he acts, his understanding of his existence behind what he does, the way he meets his basic problems and the answer his life implies to the human dilemma, the significance he had as the environment of those who knew him, the continuing history his life produces, the possibility of existence which his life presents to me as an alternative --- such matters as these have become central in an attempt to understand history."\footnote{op.cit., James M. Robinson, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus, Naperville, Ill: Allenson, 1959, pp. 28 - 29.} The problem of the historian's involvement with his material now became the key problem. He could no longer stand above his material and judge it; he must now allow himself to be judged by it. Instead of standing outside the time stream as an impartial observer, he stood inside the stream as a participant, being himself a historical being. Man then becomes
responsible for history and must only look at history from the vantage point of his responsibility. To look otherwise, to seek for "objective" facts, is to deny any existential involvement in the past and hence is not historical thinking at all. It is mythological thinking. This new interpretation of history "is not primarily directed towards history in the sense in which one attempts to understand it in anticipation of what is past, but to present history understood as that which is still to occur." So the past is not history at all. It is only a call to us to realize an ontological possibility of our existence. If we do not realize this possibility and thus "historicize" the past, it simply remains unhistorical, unreal, for "all that is real for us . . . is that which we are able to understand historically." So then because responsibility is always personal, history is to be understood as personal involvement.

How does this new view then work out when one approaches the Gospels? First of all, one must realize that he stands related to history, not in a Subject/Object relation, but as Heidegger said "in" and "of" it. Man becomes "that being (Seiendes) upon which all being (Seiendes) is based in the manner of its being (Sein) and its truth. Man becomes the center of reference of being (Seiendes) as such." So then man is constitutive of all

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8 Gogarten, op.cit., p. 27.
10 Quoted by Gogarten, op.cit., p. 57.
else, everything being dependent upon him for its reality and truth; and since man is historical (i.e. existent in history) he must view history from within --- he cannot view it in any other way. It could be charted in this fashion:

![Diagram: FACT + MEANING → HISTORIAN → MEANING - "FACT"

It will be remembered from the other diagram (p. 7) that the historian stands above his material and is independent of it, but the new view sees the past as a Fact-Meaning complex that is mediated through the existential possibilities of the historian and is offered to the reader as a Meaning-"Fact" complex, the fact being italicized because it is no longer a necessary ingredient in the presentation. This view asserts the chronological-logical primacy of the Fact but the existential primacy of the Meaning. In the historical statement made by the historian the inversion of the two elements takes place and the facticity of the fact becomes superfluous because the historian's task is to mediate the meaning through having existentially encountered it, and then to offer this new "possibility of existence" to his hearers. The historian thus does not tell us about the past as it really was but about ourselves as we really are, but not in a static, "objective" sense, but as we are in the sense of what we may become if we existentially involve ourselves in the Meaning - "Fact" complex. When the historian then analyzes this complex, he expounds the former element and refused to objectify the "fact"-element, because its meaning has been exhausted in its chronological-logical primacy.
If one refuses to become involved in this material by means of an encounter, the past remains unhistorical because it has not been taken up into the history of the historical observer and thus historicized.

The second principle to be observed when one approaches the Biblical text is to realize that the distinction between Historie and Geschichte must be firmly held. Historie is the realm of past "happenedness" and Geschichte is the realm of meaning.\textsuperscript{11} Kähler had asserted a meaningful relation between the two, but now an Either/Or is thrust upon us, notably by Bultmann.\textsuperscript{12} We must believe, or be offended. If we turn to Historie we turn away from God’s encounter to earthly security in trying to prove our faith. For "the importance of Jesus in history depends for us not so much on his personal existence as on the interpretation of his person that the disciples worked out. . . ."\textsuperscript{13} Again Bultmann says "Christ the Crucified and Risen One comes before us in the Word of the proclaimed message and nowhere else."\textsuperscript{14} But if He meets us

\textsuperscript{11}The fact that these terms are often confused, even by the same writer, and used in various ways creates a real difficulty and shows perhaps that the definitions offered are not really applicable. See the note by David Cairns on p. 21 of Althaus, Paul, The So-Called Kerygma and the Historical Jesus. London: Oliver and Boyd, 1959.

\textsuperscript{12}See H.P. Owen, Revelation and Existence, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1957, p. 115.


\textsuperscript{14}Rudolph Bultmann, Kerygma und Mythos, Vol. I, p. 50. My italics.
nowhere else than in the proclaimed message, why did Bultmann write a book about Jesus himself? He wrote it because Geschichte is related to Historie and as such is open to historical investigation. But if this is true, how can Bultmann confront us with an Either/Or? In truth he cannot and this is an inconsistency in his thought. He wavers between a totally existentialist view of history that rejects past history and a modified view that attributes a certain knowability to the Historie of Jesus. Gogarten also wavers in this way. In one place he says, "the historicity of the events to which the New Testament bears witness, is not to be sought in their objective historically ascertainable character as facts that actually happened." but he also says, "our concern with history does not attain its purpose merely in the investigations which reconstruct and determine the past facts of history." That word "merely" re-opens the door to looking at Jesus as Historie and not just as Geschichte. This ambiguity is important because the new quest seizes upon it but the total historicization of understanding and the radical existential program of Bultmann were the most influential aspects of this position because they precipitated the demythologizing controversy of the 1940's and 50's.

C. Criticism of the New Philosophy of History

It remains now to criticize this view of history and to show

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15 See Miegge, op.cit., p. 125.
how its inadequacies paved the way for the new quest of the historical Jesus. First of all, the question must be asked, what place then has facticity in such a scheme? Could not "meaning" be mediated by means of a pure myth? Bultmann seems to think so, for although he firmly defends the actual pastness of the Cross and its openness to observation, he will not allow the same for the resurrection. The Cross is Geschichete but it is related to Historie. However, the same term is also used of the resurrection. He describes it as Geschichtete, but firmly denies that it is a past Historisch event; the only thing that is past is the faith of the early church. In other words, as far as history is concerned the resurrection is a pure myth. But if the resurrection is pure myth, what about the rest of Christ's life? Do we need a historical Jesus at all? That Bultmann is in a difficult position has been pointed out more than once. Second, this view has an odd definition of the word "history." Dictionaries define history as "a narration of facts and events arranged chronologically or otherwise with their causes and effects," but this is precisely what we are now told history is not: History is now a narration about ourselves in the sense of our existential future. Dictionaries are not always right but until some compelling reasons are found for this new definition of the word, the old definition is more than adequate. Third, these historians say all meaningful statements about history, which includes the present history of the historians themselves, are valid only if they challenge the hearer to an exis-
tential decision. If the statements are about "mere facts", then they are not really meaningful historical statements at all. That this is not true is evidenced by the fact that these very historians write books that purport to tell us objectively what they are thinking and how we ought to think. They claim that they are presenting a fair and unbiased account of the real historical situation, namely that the Fact-Meaning complex must be mediated through the subjectivity of a historian, making all historical statements subjective. If this is true, however, then the account presented by these historians must fall into the category of being "not really meaningful historical statements at all." Fourth, for these historians to provide us with the kerygma that challenges us to a specifically Christian encounter, they must analyze the New Testament documents and present an accurate, factual, unbiased account of what they find. But again, if history is just the mediating of an encounter, then such research is impossible. Such research implies careful detachment from subjective valuations and involvement if it is to present a true picture of the early church, and this is exactly the opposite of what the existentialist historians say history is, yet it is exactly what they themselves try to do when they examine their New Testament, even though their system will not allow it. Finally, the postulation of a bare, unqualified past "happenedness", a simple "dass" is impossible. This "dass" is what Bultmann claims stands behind the legends and stories that the early church made up about Christ. There were "events" and these "events" were modified in various ways to provide an encounter
for the hearers, but what the "events" were is impossible to know. We can only know that (dass) they happened, but nothing more. As Schmithals says, "The 'dass', not the 'was' of the historical existence of the Risen and Exalted Christ is the foundation of all Christian preaching." But clearly such a statement is impossible, for when one postulates "that" something occurred, he also postulates the possibility of knowing "what" that something was. There is no such thing as bare, unqualified existence. All existence is at least spatio-temporal, allowing a discussion of when and where the event took place, but this is just the minimal requirement for an event to be real. There are also the relations that it has with other events, the antecedents of the event, the consequences that emanate from it, negative reactions to it, and so on. So theoretically, it is possible to talk about past events, even though some might deny it by saying that all we know is "dass" they happened.

IV. The Demythologizing Controversy

While the above criticisms of the existentialist philosophy of history were being formulated, the radical historical skepticism of the movement continued on its inevitable way toward the controversy of the forties that centered around the concept of myth. For the question now became, if the New Testament documents tell us

only secondarily about Jesus (according to the form-critics) and are history only insofar as they mediate an encounter with the Risen Lord, (according to the existentialists) what relation do these documents bear to past events? They appear to talk about Jesus as he really was, but if this is invalid, how ought one to treat such statements? The answer lies in recognizing that the early Christian's thought was mythological on at least two levels. First, it is mythological when one creates, or makes use of existing materials to describe past events as though they really happened, because what is significant happens only in the Dasein of the observer. Second, it is mythological thinking when one attempts to transpose his subjectivity into an objective picture of some sort. It must be recognized that it is a mythological mentality that creates objective accounts both of what is "out there" and of what is "in here". This understanding clears the way for reading the New Testament. What needs to be done is to remove the mythological encrustations from the text and replace them by a more scientific explanation. This is to re-interpret the myth, not to do away with it, because the myth is valuable in that it mediates an encounter with Christ. But the problem is that first century myths are hopelessly out of date for today. We must then re-word the accounts of the encounter for today in order to make the New Testament material meaningful for the 20th century. But then one might ask, what type of statement is meaningful for the 20th century? Bultmann says, Anything that is consonant with
the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. All the New Testament material must be made into good existentialist philosophy before it can be understood today. The problems involved in such a venture ought to be fairly obvious. First, can the New Testament be transposed into existentialist terms? Karl Jaspers does not think so and neither do a growing number of theologians. Second, why Heidegger? and at that why the early Heidegger? why not the Heidegger of the later essays? Historians of philosophy point out a marked development in his thought from Sein und Zeit to the later Was ist die Metaphysik? and the essays, which left the projected companion volumes to Sein und Zeit unwritten. Perhaps this was because Heidegger himself saw a blind alley in that project. But if he did, the existentialist theologians did not and they accept his philosophy as the beginning of wisdom. Listen to Gogarten, "this total historicization of human existence is not merely...one of the many Weltanschauungen which in one way or another can be concocted to suit every taste. Rather one might say that it is perceived to be the original condition of human existence." So it is no theory at all, it is the "original condition" of man; Heidegger has at last shown us the infallible way.

\[18\] cf. these words of J. Munck, "Instead of being without bias, they (the New Testament men) started with assumptions dating from the 20th century [...a philosophical Vorverständnis that goes back to the first period of Heidegger's philosophy...] and they rediscovered the various themes of Heidegger's philosophy in all types of ancient history of religion, both the more reflective and the nonreflective." p. 225, "The New Testament and Gnosticism" in Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation, edited by Klassen and Snyder.

It is not necessary at this point to pursue this aspect of the problem any farther. It is mentioned only as the springboard to the New Quest of the historical Jesus, for when New Testament studies reached this stage of development a surge of conscience disturbed the theologians and they began to wonder what went wrong. Perhaps, they thought, we had better re-examine our starting-point to see if it is still possible to rescue Jesus before he becomes just another gossamer figure from the dim past of man's pre-scientific mentality.

V. The Negation of the Negation: The New Quest

A. The Beginning of the New Quest in Ernst Käsemann

A vast literature sprang from Bultmann's attempt to de-mythologize the New Testament, but it need not be discussed here even though one may find in it the beginnings of the new quest, particularly in the criticisms of Bultmann's philosophy of history. And it must never be forgotten that running parallel to Germany's denial of Jesus' historicity was Britain's level-headed analysis that saw the danger of placing too much emphasis upon historical research but also the danger of placing too little emphasis upon historical research. The first genuine reaction to the "total historicization" of understanding came in 1953 when Ernst Käsemann delivered a lecture at Marburg on "Das Problem des Historischen Jesus", which was published in Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche in 1954. In this lecture he discussed various aspects of the problem and cautioned "we must not reject the identity of the Exalted
Lord with the earthly Jesus, because to do so is to run the risk of docetism and perhaps to transform the Easter-faith of the church into a myth pure and simple." He concludes by saying, "The real problem lies in the fact that the Exalted Lord has almost covered over the earthly Jesus, yet in spite of this, the church postulated the actual identity of the two. The solution to this problem is not to be found in a return to brute facts, but in recognizing the continuity as well as the tension that exists between the earthly Jesus and the Risen Christ. The question of the historical Jesus is a legitimate question only when it questions the continuity of the Gospel with two things: First, the variations that exist within the kerygma and second, the discontinuity of the time between Jesus' earthly life and his resurrected state that produced a different attitude on the part of the disciples."

B. Further Development in the New Quest

So a new day had begun. It was now legitimate to seek for a continuity between the message of the early church and the message that Jesus preached. There was wide-spread agreement with this approach almost immediately. In 1956 Ernst Fuchs

21Ibid., p. 213.
22See the list of articles catalogued by J.M. Robinson, Kerygma und historischen Jesus, Zwingli Verlag, Zurich, 1967. pp. 11-13 for the years following Käsemann's lecture.
wrote in "Die Frage nach dem Historischen Jesus"\(^23\) that we must search for the basis of the kerygma in the actions of Jesus, not just his words, for in His Person is His real meaning. He accepted sinners and proclaimed the coming of God's kingdom in Himself. This then was the basis of the continuity between Jesus and the early church. In 1956 also Günther Bornkamm's *Jesus Von Nazareth* appeared, in which he sought the continuity along the lines laid down by Kösemann but also stressed as well the Easter-fact as over against the Easter-faith of the early church, saying, "it is...certain that the appearances of the risen Christ and the word of his witnesses have...given rise to this [Easter] faith."\(^24\) In 1959 J.M. Robinson published his book *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, which gave the movement its name, and then in 1962 an article on "The Formal Structure of Jesus' Message." In 1962 also a translation of Hermann Diem's inaugural lecture at Tübingen "The Earthly Jesus and the Christ of Faith" appeared. These last three may be taken together because the approach to the problem is much the same and they are representative of the new quest of the historical Jesus. Their purpose amounts to this: To show the continuity that exists between the kerygma and the


\(^24\)Günther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960, p. 183. However it ought to be said that he balances this positive statement with the very negative and somewhat contradictory assertions that (1) The Easter-faith of the disciples is the "last historical fact available" to the historian (p. 180), (2) the Easter stories are an evidence of faith and not "records and chronicles" (p. 183), and (3) only faith experiences the resurrection, "for it cannot be observed and demonstrated like any other event in time and space." (p. 184).
historical Jesus. Robinson says, "If in encountering Jesus one is confronted with the same existential decision as that posed by the kerygma, one has proved all that can be proved by a new quest of the historical Jesus..."  

So a continuity is sought between Jesus and the kerygma, but how is it to be sought? First, one must remove from the Gospels all that is kerygmatic because one can only find Jesus in "sayings diverging from the language of the kerygma." We use as our basis of inquiry the material left over after the critics have had their say, i.e. in "those logia that are generally held to be probably authentic." Second, one must examine the kerygma to see what it says about Jesus and one finds that it proclaims a Risen Lord who is to be believed in. This opens up a specific kind of self-understanding to us, which, in addition to having been completely analyzed by Heidegger, is at the same time the New Testament kerygma. Man is helpless, he needs to pass from inauthentic to authentic existence, etc. It is accomplished by relating ourselves to Jesus who himself achieved

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25 J.M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 92. Also p. 94, "The purpose of a new quest of the historical Jesus would be to test the validity of the kerygma's identification of its understanding of existence with Jesus' existence."

26 Ibid., p. 120.


this authentic self-hood, as the kerygma says. Third, one must compare the kerygmatic idea of Jesus' self-hood with the idea of self-hood that exists in the residue of material left after the critics remove the kerygmatic additions and see if they are the same. One finds Jesus' idea of his own self-hood reflected in the parables and the accepted logia. In the parables one finds statements about God's mercy and His acceptance of the sinful. In the logia one finds a polarity between the Now and the Not Yet, however it is not a temporal sequence but an eschatological relation. "This understanding of the present toward which Jesus' message moves is the context of his existence, in terms of which his existence actualizes itself."²⁹ This self-understanding, namely that God is at work in Jesus, bringing in His kingdom in Jesus' person is constitutive of Jesus' person and ought to be reflected in the kerygma, in so far as the kerygma is legitimate. The continuity between the two concepts is of first importance for this is the new quest of the historical Jesus, as Diem says "the historical question of truth...can consist in nothing else than the question concerning the continuity of this history."³⁰ Such then in brief compass is the history of the Old Quest, the rejection of that quest and the rise of the New Quest of the historical Jesus.


VI. The Place of William Manson and James M. Robinson

A. The Place of William Manson

It is now time to turn directly to William Manson and James M. Robinson to see what specific place they have in the foregoing history of the search for the real Jesus. Beginning with William Manson it should be pointed out that he falls roughly into the category of "continuation of the Old Quest," being a member of the "British school" of New Testament studies. Neither of these two designations, viz. "continuation of the Old Quest" and member of the "British school", is wholly apposite however. Not because Manson does not fit there but because the terms are not wholly descriptive and tend to be misleading for that reason. The term "Old Quest" is misleading in that it gives the appearance of being something that is out of date but this is, in fact, not the case. Scholars never stopped looking for the real Jesus --- in spite of the German attempt to quash all such attempts. The term "British school" is apt to be misleading in that it gives the appearance that only in Great Britain did such scholarly work exist, whereas in reality it is characteristic of America and to a certain extent of Continental scholarship as well. However, with this clarification in mind, the two terms may be used to describe the work of William Manson. He was engaged in laying the ground work for and embarking upon a search for Jesus of Nazareth to the extent that he can be known by New Testament scholarship.
Because Manson conducts his work as a member of the so-called "British school" of New Testament scholarship, he begins with a certain fundamental philosophical point of view. This point of view --- being that of Scottish realism with its postulation of an external object that exists independently of its being known by a knowing subject --- was never questioned by Manson, in fact, he nowhere discusses it at all. He accepts it as the absolute starting-point of his work. Now the thing to be noted about this point of view is that because it is a realistic philosophy, doubts never arise as to the existence of an external object. As a result Manson was fighting an entirely different battle than that of Robinson and the other continental thinkers who went the way of Bultmann. Manson's battle was against the naturalism that invariably arises along with a realistic point of view. His contemporaries were in danger of losing the subject in the object, making the subject only a part of an all-embracing space-time nexus and doomed to extinction like any other part of that nexus. The battle of the continental rationalists, since they were basically idealists, was an entirely different one, of course. They were in danger of losing the object in the subject, and whereas Deism was always the Lorelei of British theological thought, pantheism was always the danger of continental thought.\(^{31}\)

\(^{31}\)The British-Continental distinction is apt to be misleading. Actually it is the distinction between Kantian idealism and any realistic point of view. Theologically speaking the Kantian outlook has the problem of somehow bridging the gap between the sundered subject and object that is part of Kantian epistemology. [Contd.
When one understands this, it is easy to see why the more sensitive of the British theologians made use of the more or less Hegelian German theology of the late nineteenth century. They found in this an emphasis upon the Spirit and because of this they were able to use this theology to counteract the materialistic tendency of British thought. Consequently when Manson appeals to German thought, his appeal is to be understood in this light. He finds that good exegetical work has been done by the Germans. He also finds in the spiritual world of German thought — the world of encounter, meaning, and purpose — useful ammunition against the materialistic tendency of British thought. However the basic idealism of German thought never penetrated very deeply into Manson's mind. Consequently he never had the Kantian problem of relating the knowing subject to the object known. He never doubted that the Bible (and hence the events of Jesus' life) could be revelation, not as subjectively appropriated but as objectively given. He never doubted that historical study could show who Jesus was, or that faith was dependent upon such study. In this regard he follows in the footsteps of his great teacher James Denney, whose influence upon Manson cannot be overestimated.

When Manson approaches the New Testament, he does so with

31 (Contd.)

Historically one finds this done by Hegel who fused together the subject and object into a virtual pantheism, by Schleiermacher who puts the two in the same "context" open to will and feeling, by Feuerbach who denied the existence of the object (God), by Heidegger (followed by Bultmann) who rejects the distinction in favor of a higher (deeper) unity, and by Kierkegaard, Otto, and Barth who relate the two together as a paradoxical dialectical unity.
the firm belief that historical scholarship, when properly conducted, will lay bare Jesus as he really was and that such a picture as is there discerned will be sufficient for faith. In a sense it is part of God's providence. God did not leave us to grope in the dark for the single most important fact in our lives, Jesus of Nazareth, God's gift to men. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself and historical study can disclose that this is so. In this belief Manson moves through the New Testament, gathering up fact after fact, until at last he is able to synthesize it all together into a vast structure of thought built upon a series of firm foundation stones, foundations which cannot be removed.

So Manson wrote within the context of the older liberal theology with a desire to know the real past, with an understanding of history as event plus meaning, with a stress upon the fundamental importance of source-critical studies, and the absolute conviction that faith rested upon fact, not feeling. The shades of Herrmann and Ritschl were still around and Manson felt it the task of New Testament study to show the world what really happened, not to present to the world a shaven and shorn, non-dogmatic Jesus such as was presented by the nineteenth century liberals. Manson was able to do this because for him the Gospels were basically trustworthy documents and this allows such work to be done. When one uses historical criticism, the event may be established and one may find there the ultimate meaning that the event has because meaning is based upon fact, and indeed is disclosed by the fact. It is with this confidence that Manson approaches the New Testament.
B. The Place of James M. Robinson

Turning to James M. Robinson, the first thing to notice is that he comes to the New Testament by way of the Bultmannian reaction to the older liberalism. Now there are three things that need to be observed in this reaction. First, there are the points that Bultmann and Robinson have in common with the older liberalism. Here they operate as historians. They are looking at the past much as any historian would, convinced that the methods used will disclose what really happened, in principle, at least. The fact that they do not find much history in the Gospels is the fault not so much of the method itself, but of the presuppositions that they allow to dictate what the method will find. The foremost such presupposition is the acceptance of a rather forthright naturalism that will not allow any breaks to occur in the natural world order. This has the effect of forcing Bultmann and Robinson to "explain" Jesus in wholly immanent human categories. Thus there can be no thought of Jesus knowing the future so as to predict his own death and resurrection; there can be no resurrection of Jesus, if one is thinking in terms of Jesus' body; there can be no miracles, and so forth. All of these elements, so much a part of the theology of the Church, must be explained on other grounds than that of God breaking into time in Jesus. Second, Bultmann and Robinson make use of the "History of Religions" approach to the Gospels that seeks to explain them in terms of parallels in other religions. If one can find a parallel, for example, to a healing story, one has thereby "explained" that story. When Bultmann and Robinson apply
this to the New Testament they find virtually the whole of its formerly thought to be distinctive features so paralleled and thus a ready explanation is at hand for anyone who would like to find "history" in any of the Gospel episodes of healing or miracle. Since such stories abound in the ancient world and cannot possibly all be true, when one finds parallel stories in the New Testament they cannot possibly be true there either, historically that is. That they might be "true" in some theological sense both Bultmann and Robinson would grant. Third, both Bultmann and Robinson add to the above a negative use of Form-Criticism thereby providing a rationale for finding so little history in the Gospels. It was the Church that was creative, not Jesus. They were the first ones to talk of him as Messiah, Saviour, Judge, Risen again, and Lord. He was a simple Galilean peasant who did nothing that came true, and who could well have suffered a nervous breakdown on the eve of the cross, and died utterly broken and disillusioned. The Church then superimposed its theology upon Jesus in the light of their Easter faith, and the principles of Form-Criticism make this understandable by tracing the development of this theology from the days of his flesh to the days of the Church's glorious experience of him as exalted Lord. Now when all this is applied to Jesus, needless to say, it reduces him to practically a zero historically.

But there is another side to all this and in particular with respect to Bultmann. In spite of the vacuum that critical study produces he goes on to say that there is a call to faith resident
in the text, and he bases it upon the skeleton that historical study produces. Bultmann defends this theologically by saying that to base faith on anything more than a mere outline of Jesus' life would be the contrary of faith and constitute a salvation by works. Manson of course cannot agree with this and argues that such a position logically leads to docetism or even to having no historical Jesus at all. He is appreciative of the emphasis that is laid upon the Christ of faith but if this is not related in some real way to the Jesus of history he sees it as a very dangerous enterprise. Hence Manson wants to show that Jesus was conscious of himself as Messiah and wants to relate the Church's theology to that, and he wishes to do this by means of historical critical methods, the same ones, incidentally, that Bultmann uses --- minus the initial skepticism and positivism.

Now Robinson is not satisfied with Bultmann at this point either. In spite of the fact that he is willing to accept Bultmann's basic stance, he too thinks that it is necessary to get back to the historical Jesus, but the question now becomes, How? He is committed to Bultmann and his method, so the problem for Robinson is how to remain a Bultmannian and yet go beyond him, without at the same time going back to the position of someone like Manson. A formidable problem indeed, for the only way to get beyond Bultmann is to go back to history and that is exactly where Manson is. The only thing for Robinson to do is to re-define history in such a way that it will not appear to be going back to
the old view of history but forward to a new one. Now it must be remembered that there are two levels to Bultmann's historical study, the historical-critical level and the existential level and because Robinson wants to remain a Bultmannian at all costs he must also operate on these two levels as well. So what he does is to use grudgingly the first level (but use it he must since Bultmann used it), and not let it lead back to real history, but let it operate only as a prelude to real history. He then takes Bultmann's second level of analysis --- existential encounter --- and attempts to turn it into a new historical method. Now this is new. Bultmann was content to let the category remain one of "faith", i.e. above analysis and discussion. But Robinson wants to use it as a tool for getting back to history --- that which is analyzable by historical method. He hopes thereby to provide a second avenue to Jesus --- an existential one. For Bultmann this avenue led to the Christ of faith only. Robinson wants it to parallel the kerygma (which leads to the Christ of faith) but to lead back to the historical Jesus instead and thus parallel historical critical study as well. Bultmann was content to let go of the historical Jesus as a ground of faith (inconsistently retaining him, of course) and to talk only of the Christ of faith, using "objective" methods to get at the former and faith to get at the latter, but Robinson wants to turn the existential nature of faith into a new avenue back to the historical Jesus. It is this state of affairs that creates a fundamental ambiguity in Robinson, for the only way to get at the historical Jesus is by means of some
objective method, consequently he often looks like one engaged in the old quest. But the newness of his approach is that he tries to use the subjective category of existential encounter to get back to the objective historical Jesus.

Such then is the general position of both Manson and Robinson. It is time now to turn directly to the two men themselves and see what they have to say about the search for the real Jesus.
ASPECTS OF THE QUEST OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS IN THE WORKS OF WILLIAM MANSON

I. William Manson on the Nature of History

A. Manson's Philosophy of History is that of the Biblical Heilsgeschichte

When William Manson discusses the question of history, he does not do so from a detached, theoretical point of view, interested in a strictly academic answer to such questions as, How does one know the past? or, Is history intelligible? He is concerned with such questions, to be sure, but he does not attempt to answer them in isolation from the larger question of the nature of the historical process as such --- what might be called the question of historical destiny. Life is this historical process and Manson's fundamental postulate is that life consists of facts and events that are not self-explanatory, hence some principle is needed to integrate them all into one unified idea. He says "Looking out on the world we find ourselves confronted with a series of facts and events which, whatever they may mean are not their own end. There is no philosophy of human things, therefore, which does not in a sense include a teleology, or attempt to relate the existing course of things to their underlying idea or purpose."\(^1\) Everyone wants to know the End of things and seeks to

discern within the flow of events some ultimate purpose. Manson accepts this fundamental human desire and the fundamental historical attitude that he sees underlying it, namely, that the historical process is intelligible both in whole and in part. The whole is intelligible in that one may survey the total course of events and there discern what it has to say. The part is intelligible in that one may isolate one segment off from the whole, say, the life and times of Jesus, and penetrate into its meaning and place in the whole. Manifestly this can only be done because each aspect of the particular segment in question is open to the historian who is both in history as an historical being, but above history as a rational being in touch with the world of ideas and with God.

But what is the underlying idea or purpose of history, as a whole? In order to answer this question, Manson finds it necessary to reject two ideas as being inadequate. First he treats the modern evolutionary idea that tends to identify the will of God with the historical process as such. For such as hold this view "the will of God is conceived to be wrought by immanent Law, the sequence of cause and effect. The city of God wherein dwelleth righteousness, is the goal towards which our feet are always tending. It is not a miracle which comes suddenly out of Heaven from God, but an achievement of the human spirit rising gradually on the green earth we know."\(^2\) This kind of religious evolutionism wishes "...to integrate the Kingdom of God into the evolutionary

\(^2\)CVKG, p. 176.
process, nor is there any consciousness that in so doing we are taking any liberties with Jesus' own conception or putting it to uses which he did not sanction. We regard Jesus as taking fundamentally the same view of history as we do, and assigning to the world's goods and institutions the same positive value. And this idea of the Kingdom of God which operates in all modern schemes for religious improvement of humanity is thought, not unreasonably, to be justified by its results."³ History then is seen "as advancing by a series of developing stages, of which the Kingdom of God is simply the highest and last."⁴

Manson finds this evolutionary view open to serious objection however. In the first place, it is not the view either of Jesus or the Bible.⁵ Nor is it the view of the early Church. "The apocalyptic-eschatological conception of early Christianity cuts clear across the modern conception of an evolutionary progress working towards an ideal end in virtue of forces inherent in the world itself, and certainly there is no Christian theological ground for assuming for such progress an ideal or perfect end."⁶ Second, all too often the modern mind has discarded the only feature of the evolutionary theory that makes any sense of it, namely, the element of faith, and we see that "the evolving world, for lack of faith,

⁵CVKG, p. 15.
⁶"The Church in the World" World Conference of Faith and Order Address, 1933.
is evolving into nothing but ruin." Third, the evolutionary view often pushes the Kingdom of God off to the end of time as something to be waited for, an ideal that shines just over the horizon, that may be seen from afar, but is never fully realized in the here and now. This, to Manson, undercuts any real belief in progress, because if one cannot progress in the here and now, then one cannot meaningfully talk about progress at all. Fourth "...in the popular forms in which it is held [the evolutionary theory] does not allow for spiritual factors entering into, and controlling, the march of events. It overlooks the fact that as soon as in the order of the world the human stage is reached, the spiritual becomes the dominant factor. ... The mind of God reveals itself to the mind of man, and it is the Divine idea that then operates as the principle of progress. Apart from this, evolution is a merely mechanical process, of which one cannot even say that it is good." The fifth objection that Manson makes against the evolutionary view is that it has no real place for the individual who has run aground upon the shoals of life. It postulates progress only for the whole; the individual may be cast aside as of no value and "if no redeeming forces can be liberated in life other than those already working in the inexorable sequence.

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7CVKG, p. 19. This statement was written on the eve of the First World War and Manson's conviction about this only deepened as the years went on as is evidence by Manson's sermons during the years 1914-1919.

8CVKG, p. 19.

9CVKG, pp. 161-82.
of events, there is not much comfort for those who have made mistakes or are already broken on the wheel of life. Finally, the evolutionary view fails because it does not take seriously enough the retarding force of sin upon the human process. It makes a fine theory to talk of man forever perfecting himself by means of his own effort but the retrograde forces of sin are simply too real to allow this sort of talk. In short, the evolutionary view fails because it is too this-worldly, and with its this-worldly loss of any transcendent reference it has lost the ability to progress because progress implies a direction and that can only be supplied by something that stands outside the time process and directs the flow of events. Therefore, the evolutionary view is to be rejected.

The second theory of history that Manson rejects is what he calls the "Apocalyptic" view. In this view "the Will of God is conceived as wrought by intervention. God acts on human history from without. The City of God comes down out of heaven by fiat of the Almighty. It is the doctrine of the Great Surprise. The decline and fall of man is arrested by a great crisis or bouleversement, through which the Will of God is realized at one stroke and

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10 CVKG, p. 178.

God becomes all in all." It denies all value to the life of this world and the world's institutions by attempting to stand one face to face only with eternity.

Manson does see some value in the apocalyptic view of history in that it looks to God for salvation, but it is defective nonetheless. Its fundamental difficulty is that it has no real place for the world. By contrast with the evolutionary theory that is too this-worldly, the apocalyptic view is too other-worldly in its separation of God from the human process. "It is based on despair almost to a nullity. With all its passion for righteousness, and its refusal to acquiesce in the evils of the world, it becomes a sort of fatalism, benumbing and paralysing the springs of energy and life." Thus, the apocalyptic view of history must also be rejected.

Having rejected these two ideas as inadequate for expressing a true philosophy of history, Manson goes on to develop what he believes is an adequate point of view. He finds this in the Heilsgeschichte - the history-of-salvation - that is disclosed in the Bible. He says

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13 CVKG, p. 15; Eschatology, Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers, number 2. Oliver & Boyd Ltd., Edinburgh, ND, p. 2. See also "New Testament Eschatology" ND.

"...the Hebrew-Jewish conception of history and of divine revelation in history [is that] God makes Himself known, not through ideas as in the philosophy of Greece, but by mighty acts and an outstretched arm. For Old Testament prophecy history is the real field of the self-manifestation of God, and his word is the record of this manifestation. In the same manner primitive Christianity affirms that in the facts in which it had its origin the eternal God has put forth His power for the redemption of mankind. God was with Jesus. It was not Jesus in himself who wrought the mighty works, but God wrought them through him, and the high relief in which these works stand out for Christian faith in the midst of a world in which all past history has been essentially a revelation of God has its ground in the fact that the whole purpose of God has not been disclosed in the history previous to Jesus. A part, bringing with it the final resolution of the discord of history, had been reserved for a consummation at the end of time: which consummation the Christian society believes to be now announced and on the way to fulfillment in the coming and in the acts of Jesus the Messiah."

So the history of salvation is the history of God's action in time wherein he does things for his people by means of his great power; it is not simply a static revelation of ideas as in Greek thought. When Manson discusses Heilsgeschichte, he begins by observing that God's power is not to be thought of as confined to one nation or people, but that it covers all the earth and extends from eternity to eternity. This is simply the sovereignty of God. But God's sovereignty is not to be limited to a general benevolence only, there is also a special act of God that is the plan of salvation that began with Jewish particularism and ended with Christian

15 Messiah, p. 34; Bist Du, pp. 47-48. See also JATC, p. 167.
universalism. This plan of salvation had its historical beginnings in "...Israel's emergence as a nation and its particular consciousness of destiny [which] date[s] from the Exodus, the mighty event associated in all later tradition with numinous happenings of an extraordinary kind, through which the soul of a people was born and a new departure made in history." Thus "the Exodus became the foundation-fact of the whole later life and religion of Israel" and it "left an indelible mark on Israel's spiritual life and history." Because of this it is of the utmost importance to Manson that the Exodus be seen as a real fact in history.

"Canon Phythian-Adams gives a picture, full of verisimilitude of the kind of natural or more-than-natural cataclysm, which, if it happened at the moment when Moses was preparing to lead his people out of Egypt, would explain the tradition of the Egyptian plagues, the crossing of the sea itself, the appearance of the mountain 'all in smoke' and the pillar of cloud and fire, as well as other details of the tradition. Whether his picture is accurate or not, it seems clear that something very remarkable is required to explain the actual effects, and the impression made on the people; also that there must have been the people there, ready to escape, and a very remarkable leader, who, if he were not Moses, must have been extremely like him --- and nobody has suggested that he had any other name! We shall take it that the story is in its essentials historical."  

It is also important for Manson that the Exodus from Egypt

16 JATC, p. 208.
17 JATC, p. 209.
18 "Outline Studies on Redemption", (1951).
be an historical event because of the analogical relationship that it bears to the new Exodus of our salvation, for "The Christian life is, in fact, a new Exodus --- not to an earthly place of rest, such as the old Israel was promised but failed to attain through unbelief, but to a heavenly Rest, an eternal Kingdom of God." If it could be shown that the Exodus from Egypt were an illusion, that would suggest the possibility that the new Exodus based on Jesus Christ and his work on the cross might also be an illusion, which would be unthinkable.

As Israel's time progressed, she was to learn that her unique place in history was not to be construed as one of privilege, as though she alone possessed virtue among the nations, but she was to learn that her election and calling were to service and mission. Because service and mission must per force be in the world, "sacred history becomes terribly involved with secular history." But Israel had a difficult time learning this lesson about calling and service. Although God was to have been recognized as the sovereign Lord, and the king was to be a ruler after God's own heart, the theocratic ideal was never realized under the conditions of actual history and "the prophets, as custodians of the Divine ideal, had to protest again and again against the nation's lapse from God, and to call it to repentance." Election and judgment went to-

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20 JATC, p. 211.

21 Gospels, p. 42; See also pp. 41-44; WOTC p. 34. Israel never lost its unique sense of God's guidance, however. IG, pp. 63-64.
gether and arising from this came Israel's new historic destiny as the vicarious sufferer for the world. "We are now in a position to understand a little better what it means for the people of Israel to become a blessing to the nations. Israel's mission is to be achieved by her purification under the hand of God and her glorification through His grace. And as a matter of fact, when we read the Old Testament observantly, we find Israel's world-significance and world-responsibility to be constantly stated in the form that, through God's redemptive purpose being wrought out in her, the Gentiles will come to the light and will share the benefits of her salvation."22

Israel's destiny as sufferer was not complete in itself however. It was in the nature of a promise or a prophecy that was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ.23 The Jews should have known this; they should have seen that "the Christ, the pre-incarnate Son of God, was actually, though invisibly, an agent and participant in the redemption effected for Israel at the Exodus, and [that] Moses by his decision of faith was sharing in the Saviour's passion,"24 but they did not. When therefore Stephen "grasped and asserted the more-than Jewish-Messianic sense in which the office and significance of Jesus in religious history were to be understood,"25 he was stoned to death for his efforts by the

22JATC, p. 212.

23See Hebrews, pp. 82, 107, 129; WOTC, p. 32.

24Hebrews, p. 185. See also loc. cit.; IG, p. 60.

25Hebrews, p. 31. For an exposition of Stephen's whole philosophy see pp. 30-36.
Jewish nationalists who were attempting to hold on to their national historical privilege. But it still remained true that "with Jesus the new age is not only announced but inaugurated. This applies to kingdom, blessing, mission, sin-bearing, New Covenant with God and everything else that had been spoken of by the prophets."26 Jesus came as the bringer of a new covenant27 and the fulfiller of Israel's history.28 Manson summarizes what this fulfilment is; Jesus was to:

"(1) Complete the work of Moses by leading his people out of slavery, in another and this time, final Exodus; by giving them a new Covenant, inward in their heart, and a new law also inward. The new Covenant, like the old, will be inaugurated by sacrifice.

(2) Restore, and more than restore, the kingdom of his father David, and establish it forever. This was to fulfill the Messianic prophecies... 

(3) Obtain and make effective the forgiveness of sins, without which, as the Pharisees correctly saw, the people could not be acceptable to God,

(4) Reveal and make possible an achievement of the true meaning of holiness,

(5) Fulfill the purpose of the sacrifices and of the priests who offered them not only for sins, but the offering of a pure oblation in reality not only in symbol,

(6) Make available to all people everywhere and forever the privileged access to God hitherto reserved to Israel, [and]

(7) Justify the hope of resurrection and the hope of immortality."29

26 JATC, p. 215.

27 Hebrews, pp. 126, 127-29, 133; WOTC, p. 74.


29 "Outline Studies on Redemption", (1951).
Thus, all the promises of God have materialized in Jesus who marks the dawning of a new age. This new age is the eschatological time of salvation, the age of the resurrection; now the mission of the Church, the New Israel has begun. However the old age has not yet ended, so "two orders of life, therefore, two ages have come to coexist in Christianity. The New Age has begun, the Old has not yet ended. The New dates from the resurrection, the Old will last until the final manifestation of Jesus Christ in Glory," thus "Heilsgeschichte divides into two aeons. At the head of the first stands Adam in corporate relation with the race. At the head of the other stands Jesus Christ, head of the new humanity through His representative action on our behalf." At this juncture an interesting point presents itself. It will have been noted that Manson makes use of two schemata to describe the Heilsgeschichte in the Bible — a linear treatment that begins with the Exodus from Egypt, reaches its high-point in Christ and continues on until Christ's return in glory, and a "two-age" scheme that treats all of life as one age that is intersected by the new age, the age of the resurrection. By introducing the idea of the Church Manson has been able to blend the two schemata together without too much difficulty, thus making the Kingdom of God the New Age and grounding it in Christ's death and resurrection.

30 JATC, p. 218; WOTC, p. 23.
31 JATC, p. 219.
32 JATC, p. 143.
But when one turns to the second coming, an acute problem arises. Following the linear mode of thought a real return of Christ in history is demanded to complete the historical plan of salvation; but the implication of the two-age scheme is that a second coming in history is not really necessary. If the Christian is saved out of this sinful age into the new age of redemption, why must Christ re-enter the arena from which he has departed and from which he saves man? Manson apparently never gave much thought to the resolving of this difficulty, although he tended in his later years to give more place to the return of Christ in history than to the trans-temporal nature of salvation. His thought developed in this way. In his earlier writings he stressed the apocalyptic nature of Jesus' own faith and the fact that Jesus expected to return during the life-time of those who were alive at that time, but that Jesus was mistaken. He did not return and the church was forced to face up to this awful fact. What saved the church from despair was the realization that "...in a higher and truer sense the expectation was fulfilled. Jesus was always with His Church in the power of His risen life. He had triumphed spiritually in the life of His redeemed ones. In the fourth Gospel, which was written later than the Synoptics, we find that the promise of Christ's perpetual indwelling has to a large extent replaced the idea of His return on the clouds of heaven." This

33Gospels, pp. 47-48, 87-91; CVKG, pp. 165-72.
34Gospels, p. 91. See also CVKG, pp. 171-72.
point of view was developed by Manson in order to allow him to speak out against the naturalists and certain idealists who tended to identify this world with the Kingdom of God, and to say "Beyond the present world of sin and failure [lies] an eternal order, holy, just and good. . . ." The Gospels, therefore, come to us on the level of sacred history and not of secular history and Jesus' message to us is an absolute either/or --- God or the world, God or mammon, God or self. It also allowed him to make use of a modified evolutionary idea that saw the Kingdom of God as being progressively realized on earth "... by the power of God entering into the evolutionary process." Manson thought this was necessary at that time because "the belief in Evolution is so deeply rooted in the modern mind that no system of ideas which does not conform to its general outline is likely to obtain much acceptance."39

Although Manson continued to speak in terms of Christ's intersecting time like a parabola that fades off into eternity at the far end, he began to see the need for a return of Christ

36JATC, p. 32.
37"The Church and the World" World Conference of Faith and Order Address 1933. cf. also these words "In its original conception of itself the church embodies a divine idea or purpose, defined not at all by reference to the world but by reference to the world-transcending and world-displacing order of the Kingdom of God."
38GVKG, p. 162. See also GVKG, p. 20.
39GVKG, p. 18.
40Hebrews, p. 142; See also Hebrews, p. 55; Messiah, pp. 91, 93; Bist Du, pp. 112, 114; JATC, pp. 168-171.
in history to complete the plan of salvation historically, regardless of how this sounded to the evolutionary-minded people of this age. Thus in 1952, he says "...He is destined to come again in history. In other words, the focal point from which the graph of this transcendent destiny of the Son of Man is described lies on the plane of this world's history." He also began to talk of an apokatastasis or restoration of all things that is to take place in reference to this world.

In spite of this uncertainty however, Manson was certain of one thing; regardless of how one wished to express it --- whether he speaks in terms of two ages with the transcendent realm intersecting the temporal or whether he speaks in terms of history moving along like an arrow pointing to the return of Christ in glory --- God had acted in Christ in time and that affected all history, past, present and future. From creation to consummation God is the sovereign ruler of all that takes place.

B. The Two-fold Center of History in Christ and the Kingdom of God

History is for Manson Heilsgeschichte and as the history of salvation it centers in God's supreme act of salvation, which is Jesus Christ. The history of Israel had been pointing in his direction, "hence around Jesus, and in such a manner as to become

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41 JATC, p. 69; See also WOTC, pp. 90-91.
42 JATC, pp. 223-24; Messiah, p. 52; Bist Du, p. 68.
permanently associated with his personality, gather the hopes, anticipations, and promises of the Old Testament religion, while upon him are concentrated also all future imaginations of divine purpose, glory, and power. Jesus becomes the presentation-point, so to speak, of the divine working in history, the focus through which all lines of the divine plan connecting the past and the future are drawn." 43 Those who are neglecting Christ "are neglecting that divine salvation which now in Christ has entered on its final stage or manifestation. What is at stake... is nothing less than the life of the world to come." 44 He is the climactic moment of history 45 and "... the final revealer of God whose personal relation to God as 'Son' confers on Him an authority transcending all other authorities." 46 Thus Manson can say

"The Jesus of Nazareth and Galilee and the trial-hall and Calvary is here proclaimed to the world as the Logos of God, as God's Self-Utterance to men, as God's Eloquence, as God's Truth in action, as the measure of God's Mind, nay as One, who, in His human life and suffering, is yet to be hailed as

God's presence and His very self
And essence all Divine.
In the past God had said many things to the world through prophets and holy men of God, but now his very being, mind, and will have been embodied in the lowly, suffering, self-forgetting humanity of Jesus, which has given a new character

44 Hebrews, p. 44. See also Messiah, p. 123; Bist Du, p. 148.
45 Hebrews, p. 141; WOTC, p. 19.
46 Hebrews, p. 53. See also Messiah, p. 73; Bist Du, p. 92.
and dimension not only to the Christian understanding of life but to the nature of the world itself.\(^47\)

The effect of Jesus Christ's summing up salvation-history as the Saviour of the world is a far-reaching one. In as much as salvation-history is in history, Jesus, being Lord of all, is now also the Lord of history.\(^48\) He is its temporal center, as the fulfiller of Israel's dreams, but he is now also its ontological center as its universal Lord and director.\(^49\) As such he is the center of a universal history.\(^50\) Because of this he is the Lord of all nations\(^51\) and the Lord of the future,\(^52\) who is now at work in the history of mankind.\(^53\) Manson finds particular confirmation of this in the phrase \(\varepsilon \gamma \nu \varepsilon \iota \mu \) that occurs in the Gospels. He argues that \(\varepsilon \gamma \nu \varepsilon \iota \mu \) does not represent a claim on the part of the historical Jesus to Messiahsship, but rather that it embodies an existential messianic situation. "The \(\varepsilon \gamma \nu \), in other words, is not the \(\varepsilon \gamma \nu \) of the individual speaker, but the \(\varepsilon \gamma \nu \) of Jesus Christ. The \(\varepsilon \gamma \nu \varepsilon \iota \mu \) is that of the Messianic Presence."\(^54\) There is a dynamis to this Messianic Presence and Manson concludes

\(^{47}\) WOTC, pp. 30-31. See also IG, pp. 128-29; Messiah, p. 87; Bist Du, p. 108.

\(^{48}\) Hebrews, p. 93.

\(^{49}\) IG, p. 183.

\(^{50}\) Gospels, p. 19; WOTC, p. 17.

\(^{51}\) Hebrews, p. 95.

\(^{52}\) Messiah, p. 157; Bist Du, p. 186.

\(^{53}\) WOTC, p. 90.

\(^{54}\) JATC, p. 177.
from this that the "... intensity of the numinous realization of the manifestation of God in Christ, which keeps it from being too closely measured by external events, and so lifts the Presence above history, is itself the source of a larger Christian hope for history."\(^55\) Thus, "The \(\varepsilon\gamma\upsilon\omega\ \varepsilon\upsilon\varepsilon\upsilon\) of God in Christ affects all history."\(^56\) God has summed Himself up in a supreme act in time, which act is Jesus Christ, and Christ as the Lord of all is the center of History and the Lord of time, past, present, and future.

"With Christ the last hour of time has struck. The New Age, the eternal, final order, has announced itself. Jesus is the Messenger and instrument not only of a 'better' salvation than was revealed in the past, but of an 'eternal' salvation, one having the nature of eternity in it. The finality of the Christian revelation is marked not by its temporal incidence alone, but by the transcendent character of the Person, the rank, the status, and the authority of Him through whom and in whom it comes. He is not a prophet but a Son, who as the Messiah of God is the Lord of history, the divinely appointed Inheritor of the ages."\(^57\)

There is another aspect of Jesus' relation to history that is important for Manson and this is what Jesus brought to history by his presence. He says "Ultimate Reality has projected itself into time through Christ."\(^58\) Jesus Christ, who is of the nature of eternity, has himself brought eternity --- the eternal order ---

\(^{55}\)JATC, p. 182.
\(^{56}\)loc. cit.
\(^{57}\)Hebrews, p. 89.
\(^{58}\)Hebrews, p. 64.
into time. "Look back on the entire history of the people of God...and you will find no past, no yesterday in which the Christ of God has not been present and active; look forward to the future, and again there will be no period when he will not be there -- - an entirely Christological and eschatological interpretation of history! In Jesus Christ eternity is manifested in time."59 But Jesus' coming was not simply to manifest God, as though all that men needed to do was to gaze upon him and return to their old lives unchanged. On the contrary, because Jesus came, a supreme religious crisis has been created for the world. Manson says "But because Jesus not only proclaimed the Kingdom of God as a glorious event of the future, but laid the arrest and power of it upon spirit and conscience in the present, bringing it into direct practical and converting relation to men's lives, he opened a new era in spiritual history. He created a religious crisis, indeed the supreme religious crisis for mankind."60

The reason why Jesus constituted the supreme religious crisis for mankind is because he comes as the existential call of God to man. No longer is neutrality possible. Men had sought hitherto to find security in their past, or their own righteousness or their acts of charity done from a sense of duty, but not from the heart. But now all this is over. Men stand face to face with

59Hebrews, p. 187. See also Hebrews, pp. 24, 51, 55, 142.
60Messiah, p. 61; Bist Du, p. 79. See also Messiah, p. 97; Bist Du, p. 119.
the existential challenge of God in Christ that demands one's total life. It is a call to negate the self, and let go of all that the world has to offer. It demands that we renounce all claims that the world has upon us and to recognize that "negating the self means, in effect, letting the Christ replace our own Ego as the actuating principle of life in us, so that our life shall become His life in us, the expression in us of His mind, love and will, so that it shall carry with it the emergence in us of a new personality, a character determined not by self-will but by the spirit of the Son of Man." When men hear this call, they must answer it in faith and make what the Bible calls the 'invisible' things the supreme realities of their lives and determinative of their very existence. For this is what Christianity is all about. "Christianity means . . . a life in which we expose our whole existence at every point to the cutting edge, the trenchant judgment, the drastic operation of God's Word to us in Christ, a Word which as 'living' is incompatible with stagnation and death, and as 'active' gets things done. The life so laid open at every point to God's judgment upon us is the truly eschatological life, and has the nature of eternity already in it." Jesus is for Manson the center of history because he brought

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61 Messiah, pp. 83, 153; Bist Du, pp. 103, 181-82. See also Hebrews, pp. 76-77; JATC, pp. 41, 45-46, 98.

62 WOTC, p. 61.

63 Hebrews, p. 63. See also Hebrews, p. 75; Messiah, pp. 91-92; Bist Du, pp. 112-113; IG, pp. 65-66.
the transcendent holiness of God to its full expression in time in his own person. But Jesus is not the center of history only by virtue of the fact that he was God's call of repentance to man, he is also the center of history because of the transforming effect of his personality and the teaching that he both embodied and made known to the world. This New teaching of Jesus is the Kingdom of God, and it is the heart of the Gospel and of Christianity.

"The advance which here dates from Jesus in the history of religious thought consists in the fact that he takes this fully developed transcendent conception of God, and he brings it again into vital relation with the life of the world, and this not by any qualification of the holiness or 'otherness' of God and of His Kingdom but by the bringing of the present world under the form and power of the world to come. 'If I by the finger of God cast out the demons, then has the Kingdom of God unexpectedly reached even to you.' In the religion of Jesus 'eschatology', the Jewish doctrine of the last things, becomes the sign or token of the inner transformation of men and of world-history. . . . The future and higher sphere of glory already in a real sense penetrates and intersects this sphere of humiliation through the power of the Spirit. Something has crossed the dividing-line, and this not merely a vox, a summons from the world beyond to repent and believe, but a higher manifestation. While much of the traditional apparatus of apocalyptic ideas is retained in the Synoptic records and in the New Testament, the thing which is new and distinctive in the Christian revelation of God is the experience which expresses itself already in the words of Jesus about his mighty works:

'The Kingdom of God has come upon you.',

'The Kingdom of God is in your midst.'"64

64 Messiah, pp. 151-52; Bist Du, pp. 180-81. See also CVKG, pp. 18-19; Luke, p. viii.
The reason why Manson favored using the Kingdom of God as a comprehensive formula for expressing the unity of history is that it allowed him in a stroke to solve the problem of history. He had before discussed the two alternative views around which most philosophies of history gravitate --- that is, evolutionism and apocalypticism --- and had concluded that they were either too this-worldly or too other-worldly. But now, one does not need to move to either extreme, for "between the two opposing views, sharing features of each, and yet transcending both, stands Jesus' Gospel of the Kingdom of God." It shares with the evolutionary view a genuine appreciation of the "worldliness" of life, for this life is, indeed, all we have here below. It is here that the battle must be waged and the victories won. It is here that the needs of man exist and must be met. As a result, Jesus saw history as the place where his Gospel must reach out to every broken individual, and also as the place where the furthest-reaching social and collective aims could be undertaken. It shares with the apocalyptic view of history on the other hand the idea that salvation is something given, for "Salvation is intervention, the coming of God into the lives of men to make all things new," and the recognition that all our human efforts, if left to themselves,
would come to nought. One may labor and agonize and give his life for the cause of righteousness but still, "it is not by the mere working out of human processes that the Kingdom comes, but by the entrance of God in a new sense on the stage of life, the intervention of God to right the wrongs of the world, to reconcile the world to Himself, and bring it to its goal."\(^{68}\)

Thus Manson finds a two-fold emphasis in the Kingdom of God --- a this-worldliness and an other-worldliness --- and he grounds it in the change that Jesus made in the Kingdom of God idea that was current in his day when he took it into his own teaching. The change that Jesus made was this. First, "he asserted that the Kingdom of God was already being realized through him"\(^{69}\) and this had the effect of bringing the Kingdom down into time, into the here and now where men live. Second, "at the same time he profoundly altered the conception, by the new spiritual character which he gave it."\(^{70}\) This was to inject into it the proper kind of other-worldliness, lest the thought of the Kingdom's being on earth be misinterpreted in wholly political or social terms.

Manson has a great deal to say about both of these emphases. When he discusses the this-worldliness of the Kingdom he says "It is in the present world that, as ethic of the Kingdom of God, the

\(^{68}\)CVKG, pp. 179-80. See also WOTC, pp. 41, 42.

\(^{69}\)Gospels, p. 45.

\(^{70}\)loc.cit.; See also Gospels, pp. 50-51.
teaching of Jesus is meant to be applied, and as ethic of love, it represents the sublimation of a principle which is already most cohesive, strong, and fruitful in the existing life of society. It is necessary to stress this organic-ness of the Christian absolute to existence in the world, because in the family, in human friendships, in social and economic relationships, as well as in the Church, forces are at work, which, without the Christian ideal, would not attain to their full norm and significance.71 Manson wants these forces to attain their full norm and significance and that can only be accomplished when the Kingdom of God is made an actuality in human life here and now. This is possible because the Kingdom of God carries with it a summons to new life.72 and the promise of a new-birth.73 Manson summarizes his view in this way.

"We have referred once or twice to the very real interest which the Church has in bringing these activities --- science, art, industry, politics, education, commerce --- into relation with the Gospel. If Jesus Christ is the incarnation of the Eternal Word by which the world was made, then His teaching and His significance lie not away from the world, but have an organic bearing on its life. The demands which scientific and technological developments are making on us today are so clamorous and inordinate as to seem to threaten the whole place of religion in our midst. Must not this danger be countered and this fear be dispelled by the Church courageously re-asserting that all these spheres of activity come under the sovereignty and under the sacrifice of the Christian Mediator? The gospel of

71 Messiah, p. 92; Bist Du, p. 113. See also Messiah, pp. 50, 55, 89; Bist Du, pp. 66, 72, 109-110; WOTC, pp. 51-52.
72 Messiah, p. 85; Bist Du, pp. 105-06.
73 WOTC, pp. 22-23. See also IG, pp. 86-93.
the redeeming love of God is organic to all of life. . . . "74

Manson does not speak of the "this-worldliness" of the Kingdom of God in abstracto, however, but always relates it to Jesus Christ. The kingdom cannot be understood apart from Jesus and Jesus cannot be understood apart from the kingdom. Because of this Manson stresses the fact that Jesus identified himself with men. Just as the Kingdom is related to this life and the needs that inhere in human existence, so Jesus came down to be one of us. "It befitted God that His purpose of redemption --- His act of bringing 'many sons' to the glory of the World to Come --- should plumb the whole depth of human anguish and death. For the realisation of this right requirement it was necessary that the 'Son' of God, who was to be the agent and the 'Pioneer', should in His own person not only exhibit perfect obedience to God, but achieve also a perfect identification of Himself with men, and thus be qualified to be our perfect Minister with God."75 But not only does Manson stress the identification of Jesus with mankind as its perfect representative, he also stresses the importance of Jesus' life, as such. Because he was one of us, it is important that we know his life, for here, if anywhere, it would be possible to see God in action among us. In fact, the Kingdom of God is just an extension in time of Jesus'
life on earth because it was inaugurated by Jesus, defined by
Jesus, grounded in Jesus and his work and is now sustained by
Jesus who is the Lord of history and the future. Thus Manson says,

"an historical claim is asserted and is vital to
Christianity. The groundwork of the Gospel is,
and continues to be a human story. It was in a
life of earthly humiliation and conflict, the
life of a viator, that the Messianic destiny of
Jesus was disclosed. Hence from the beginning
the historical features of that life, if they
were remembered at all, would continue to ac-
company and condition all authentic Christian
conceptions of Messianic glory and power, right-
eousness and wisdom, victory and sovereignty.
And that they were remembered, and did so con-
dition the Christian conceptions is proved by
the character of the Christian tradition itself. . .
The historical and human life of Jesus remains
the subject of the gospel. . . [for] through Jesus,
as he lived on earth, the hope of the ages had
made itself known. The Kingdom of God, hitherto
only a vision or dream, a transcendent object of
hope or aspiration, had come into immediate and
verifiable relation to history." 76

Thus Jesus' life is of utmost importance and he would be less than
a Christian historian who did not seek to know it.

But Manson also stresses the "other-worldliness" of the King-
dom of God. He thinks this is necessary because of the danger
of immanentizing the kingdom and thus losing its transcendent
character. The church would then be in imminent peril of identi-
fying itself with any and every revolutionary movement that happened
to come along and of becoming nothing more than another secular
institution. Thus "the ethic of Jesus is not, indeed, to be called
humanistic in a formal sense. Its first principle is not man, but

76 Messiah, pp. 12-13; Bist Du, pp. 22-23; See also IG,
pp. 77-78.
Hence, ethical definitions are to be formulated in the light of Christianity's transcendent character and a pragmatic limitation is to be placed upon one's expectation of what the world can do, for "... so long as the Kingdom of God only intersects our mundane existence, and does not fill the whole sphere of it, there will be limits to what can be demanded of the State in its name, and to what can be set up as definition of social duty." So the ethic of the Kingdom cannot be identified with any human scheme because it has a transcendent element in it, just as in Jesus there is a historical and a supra-historical dimension.

Because the Kingdom of God brings with it the transcendent demands of God in a way never before seen, it is essentially a new work of God. But wherein does its newness lie? Manson finds the answer to this question in the Kingdom's emphasis upon faith and the Cross. Without these two elements, history will come to nothing, for it is faith that "brings the Divine idea and the human process into union," thus "claiming the historical process for God," and it is the Cross that releases the Divine Power into the world. "Jesus saw in the Cross the sole condition of His work being accomplished, and the Kingdom of God established with power. His Cross

77 Messiah, p. 89; Bist Du, p. 109.
78 Messiah, p. 93; Bist Du, p. 114.
79 CVKG, p. 182; See also IG, pp. 94-96; Gospels, p. 36, 62-63; Hebrews, pp. 75-76.
80 CVKG, p. 183. See also JATC, p. 70.
is presented to us in the New Testament as the supreme exhibition not only of the Divine Love, but of the Divine Power,"\(^{81}\) therefore, "Whatever else... the Cross may mean, it exhibits the Spirit in which the world is overcome, and the Divine idea realized on earth."\(^{82}\)

C. Manson on History as Objective Fact and Meaning

When Manson looks at history from the above *Heilsgeschichte* point of view, he sees it as a line running through time --- intersected indeed by Eternity in the form of Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate key to the process and who has been immanent within it as the *Logos* of God throughout all the ages --- but a line, nevertheless. This line now runs from Christ's suffering to his glory where it "swerves back again to that history, and meantime enfolds that history, remains in touch with that history and finds its completion in that history."\(^{83}\) Because this line is an historical line, Manson is against every attempt to dehistoricize it and transcendententalize it, by placing the locus of God's activity outside the historical process, wherever that supra-historical place may be, whether it be a mysticism that flees from history or a pseudo-apocalypticism that looks askance at it; they are both "equally

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\(^{81}\)CVKG, p. 185. See also WOTC, pp. 79, 90.

\(^{82}\)CVKG, p. 186. See also JATC, p. 222.

excluded from the New Testament point of view."\(^{84}\) The transcendent element in the person of Jesus did "not pass out of relation to, or cease to have meaning for, the terrestrial sphere of his historical manifestation,"\(^{85}\) On the contrary, Jesus is now the Lord of history, as was already seen. For this reason Manson stresses the objective historical process as the place where God's objective historical will is being accomplished. Hence, history consists of a network of objective historical facts that are externalizations, as it were, of the hidden will of God for man, and in that the will of God is made known in this way, the facts of history are replete with objective, discoverable meaning. Not that the meaning is always clear. That depends on the sequence of events in question and the perceptiveness of the observer; "Visions are for those who have eyes to see them,"\(^{86}\) says Manson. But the fact remains that history may be seen as a network of objective historical fact and meaning wherein the will of God progressively unfolds itself.

In defining history thus as historical fact and meaning, Manson gives basically three reasons why these facts are necessary. First, objective historical facts are necessary for theological meaning to inhere in. It is all very well to talk of the incarnation or the love of God, but if there is no historical ground for these ideas,

\(^{84}\)Ibid., p. 121.
\(^{85}\)Ibid., p. 115.
\(^{86}\)Sermon: Toronto; November 20, 1921.
then they become merely abstractions, or free-floating ideas that bear no relation at all to life as we know it.

"It is rightly emphasized by the authors of a suggestive modern work on the New Testament that, when apostles or evangelists declare historical events to be fulfillments of a divine purpose, what they mean is not simply that the events in question are patent of such dogmatic interpretation, but that they demand it. In other words, the revelational significance of Christian history is not a mere epiphenomenon, an interpretation that has settled on the events ab extra, but inheres in the very nature of the events... The New Testament doctrines of Christ and salvation are not merely illustrated in the New Testament facts, but they have their origin in those facts. The death of Christ did not illustrate a love of God in which Christians otherwise believed. It was the event by which they came to know the love of God." 88

Historical facts are primary, and theology, if it is to be true to the New Testament must be grounded in them. For this reason Manson rejects those theological systems that seek to detach themselves from the facts of Jesus' life. Such theologies he finds in the current emphasis upon the "wholly-other" 89 or in the "intuitional" approach to the Gospels 90 or in theological "Idealism," 91 and all of these are to be rejected as inadequate. In the second place, facts are necessary because of the nature of Heilsgeschichte

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88 Messiah, p. 125; Bist Du, pp. 150-51. See also Messiah, pp. 156-57; Bist Du, pp. 185-86.
90 Messiah, p. 147; Bist Du, p. 177. See also IG, pp. 55-56.
91 JATC, p. 21, note 1.
itself. *Heilsgeschichte* is the History of Salvation, that is to say, the history of the acts of Redemption which God performed on behalf of his people. The history of Salvation is thus, in essence, a history of historical facts. If it could be shown that these facts did not exist, that would show at the same time that there was no salvation, for *Heilsgeschichte* says that God acted in time, which thing would not be true, if it were shown that there were no historical facts. Manson presses this point with respect to the life of Jesus, especially in regard to the miracles and the resurrection. Speaking of the miracles, he is willing to admit that there is a tendency in the New Testament to embellish the stories in order to heighten the effect and also that some of the miracles are open to a non-miraculous interpretation. 92 The demon-possession stories are of this category. In all probability they represent a healing of those who were mentally ill. In spite of this, however, it would be wrong to say that the miracles have no foundation in historical fact. To do so would be to surrender, not just a "theological" description of God's victory over evil, but, to a large extent, the Gospel itself. "The miracles are associated with words of Jesus, which cannot be explained except on the assumption that the miracles were historical facts. In particular, we have words like those in Matthew xii. 28; Luke xi. 20, which show that Jesus saw in His healing power the express proof

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of His Messianic calling. So that to deny or question the miracles is to remove, not only a section of the historical testimony to Jesus, but the main part of His redeeming work.\textsuperscript{93} The same is true of the Resurrection of Christ. It simply must be true, because of the salvation that the Church has experienced on the basis of it.\textsuperscript{94} To deny it would be to deny that there ever was any act of God's power in time --- but this is refuted by the fact of the Church itself.

Finally, historical facts are necessary because it is only in Jesus that one may see a perfect revelation of God. Thus, when Paul says that the whole pleroma of the Godhead dwells in Christ, "the meaning is that in the person of Jesus Christ and in his historical work we have a perfect revelation of the mind of Him who is at once our Creator and Redeemer. We cannot anywhere or ever think of God's relation to His world except in terms of Christ."\textsuperscript{95} If he could not be seen, it would be impossible to comprehend fully God's love to man. To be sure, the whole of existence is revelatory of God in its own way. One may see God's hand at work in history, or in nature, or in daily life, if one will, but all of these fragmentary revelations are out of focus by themselves. They need some all-embracing integrative principle to

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\textsuperscript{93}Gospels, pp. 37-38. This view was recently expressed by Michael Ramsey \textit{Canterbury Essays and Addresses}, (1964) pp. 41-51.

\textsuperscript{94}Gospels, pp. 96-100; Luke, pp. 268, 281-82.

\textsuperscript{95}Messiah, p. 160; Bist Du, p. 189. See also WOTC, pp. 20-21; IG, pp. 68-69.
bind them together into a comprehensive whole. That principle Manson finds in Jesus Christ. And how does one know of Jesus Christ? Only by looking at the facts of his life as they are found in the Gospels. When one does this, Manson says "certain facts emerge which, upon any just evaluation, must be regarded as constituting an irreducible minimum of historical certainties" and these are (1) Jesus brought a new experience of God to men, (2) The task which Jesus gave himself was to reconcile "the many" to God, (3) The Christian society must ever express its new experience of God in terms of a new passion for humanity, (4) Christ died, objectively, for the sins of the world, and (5) Jesus brought to man the assurance of immortality.96 God's revelation to man consists of these facts of Jesus' life (and more) and if one were to deny that these facts could be known, he would be destroying Christianity as the revelation of God in Christ.

Manson is aware however that merely to assert the existence of certain facts is not enough in itself. There must be an interpretation of the facts that draws out the meaning that the events have for those concerned. At this point the question arises as to the status of meaning. Is it merely an arbitrary construction that is superimposed back upon the event but that, in actual fact, has no relation to the event? Or is there an objective meaning inherent within the event that is later seen and explained in whatever terms seem suitable at the time? In other words, is

96 JATC, pp. 28-31.
meaning to be thought of as subjective or objective? For Manson, the answer can only be that meaning is of an objective nature. Quoting Professor John Marsh, he says "the meaning of history, the interpretation of its facts, is something which belongs to the objective and not to the subjective order."\(^97\) Facts and meanings are both objective and they go together. Facts are the ground of meaning and meaning is the unfolding of the objective essence of the fact. Meaning flows out of the facts and is perceived by the observer as such, not because there is a passionate desire on the part of someone to find meaning in what would otherwise be a meaningless event, but because meaning was objectively there in the first place. In the words already quoted "...the revelational significance of Christian history is not a mere epiphenomenon, an interpretation which has settled on the events ab extra, but inheres in the very nature of the events."\(^98\)

This point may be illustrated in Manson by his treatment of the atonement. For him, the atonement cannot be explained simply in terms of the response it evokes in the hearts of men. To do so would be to talk about the effects of the atonement and not the atonement itself. Not that the two can really be talked about independently of one another. But that is not the point at issue here. What Manson objects to is the telescoping of the one into

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\(^97\)Quoting The Fulness of Time (1952) p. 162; JATC, p. 211. See also JATC, pp. 20, 32.

\(^98\)See above p. 67; Messiah, p. 125; Bist Du, p. 150.
the other — and in most instances it is the atonement that gets telescoped into the effects of the atonement. This has the effect of leaving one talking in abstractions about the subjective states of man, rather than about the historical acts of God. But the atonement is not an abstraction, it is the fact that Christ died for our sins, — objectively, vicariously bearing the sins that were not his own so that his followers might be freed from their enslavement to evil and live once more in the freedom of the Sons of God. Because it is God's act and not man's, the atonement stands open to all men, for all time. Christ's "...offering reveals the operation of the Eternal Spirit. The death of Jesus was no mere historical contingency but expresses the very nature of the eternal Mind and World. And because eternity is in the Act, time cannot impair or devaluate its significance."

Unfortunately, Manson nowhere spells out in any detail exactly what the relationship is between facts and interpretations, beyond the assertion that they are both of an objective order and grounded in God's objective existence. As a result, Manson's discussions at this point lack the cohesiveness that one would like to find in a subject of such crucial importance. However, his conclusions are

99 IG, pp. 74-75; Messiah, pp. 121, 123-24, 144-46; Bist Du, pp. 146, 148-50, 171-74; WOTC, pp. 80-81, 89-90; Gospels, pp. 82-84. Manson was strongly influenced by the views of Vincent Taylor on this point. See the above quotes in Messiah, especially p. 123, note 1. "See Vincent Taylor's Jesus and His Sacrifice, a work with which I feel deeply in agreement." Manson devotes 53 pages of his Theological Notes and Comments (ND) to a discussion of that book.

100 Hebrews, p. 135.
clear. History is for Manson an intelligible process and he grounds it in the fact that the mind of God is revealing itself to man and that history is the unfolding of the divine idea in time. As a result, Manson is confident that history can be understood by man, both in whole and in part, because both history and man are part of God's rational plan for the universe and both are ultimately rational.

It is only when one gives full weight to this persistent emphasis of Manson that history is the place where God works out his will for man, that one can appreciate his desire to see history as it really was. Since it is only there, in the world of space and time 101 that God intervenes for man's salvation, it is only there that evidence of such salvation can be found. Not that the evidence will be equally compelling to everyone. An unbeliever who saw Jesus perform his miracles would doubtless find some explanation for it that was congenial to his unbelief. 102 But the fact still remains for Manson that since God has acted in history, those acts can be located in history. If they cannot be found, then no one can say that God has acted. How could they? There would be no facts of history that anyone could point to as the acts of God. And if there were no acts of God, then there is no Heilsgeschichte.

101 Manson views time in much the same way as he views history, although he never develops his ideas on the subject to any degree. In CVKG, pp. 18-19, he equates time with history and in JATC, p. 36, he calls it "A structure of Divine acts in which all the parts are held together."

102 WOTC, p. 25; IG, pp. 130-31.
either, for *Heilsgeschichte* is the history of God's salvation and that is precisely what never would have happened, had God never acted in history. Hence, Manson's desire to get back to historical facts and meanings. "Over and over again," he says "we need to remind ourselves that only the tested and measurable fact has moral value, whereas the untested hypothesis may be the most immoral and debilitating thing in the world." 103

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103 *JATC*, p. 17. This conviction of Manson's came out in an interesting way in exchange that took place between Manson and R.H. Crompton in 1929. In 1928 R.H. Crompton had written a book entitled *The Synoptic Problem and a New Solution*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark. In it Crompton said, among other things, "... the resurrection became a fact of history because some of the disciples, in a state of nervous tension, thought they saw Jesus after His crucifixion." (p. 5).

Of the Gospels, he says "How can such an artificial order of events be history?" (p. 8).

[The] Synoptic Gospels are a devolution and a corruption, rather than an evolution and growth." (p. 130).

"Enlightened Christians are finding the Gospels less and less historical" (p. 131).

"... Luke's history is no history" (p. 131)

"Christ had no objective and material personality. " (p. 133)

Manson reviewed this book in *The British Weekly* in 1929 under the title "The Christ Myth Again." He says "if the book were a skit, we could understand it, but it apparently is seriously meant,"

R.H. Crompton wrote Manson a letter, dated Chalfont Park Hotel, Gerrards Cross, Bucks, May 10, 1929, taking him to task for misunderstanding his book. He says "I am quite prepared to admit that acceptance of what has been called my theory required a readjustment of the historical attitude, but it is no argument and begs the question to say: --- This theory is going to undermine faith therefore it is not true. This is the line of argument of nearly all papers. But I am not putting forward any theory. The question is: Have I unearthed any new facts?"

That is also precisely the question as Manson saw it. Crompton had unearthed no new facts, hence his book was not to be taken too seriously. Crompton's was an "untested hypothesis."
Because Manson has grounded his philosophy of history in an objective historical process, this has created in him a desire to know the past. He is constantly asking questions of the text in order to find out what happened, why it happened, and what significance the event has in history. In fact, this attitude has unconsciously affected the whole of Manson's understanding of life, even to the extent of his literary style. This constant historical interrogation of the evidence has produced in Manson a highly refined use of the rhetorical question. He can hardly begin a subject without plunging into it with a series of question-marks. Typical of this is his treatment of the Epistle of James.

"What now is the meaning of this lateness of the Epistle of James which was early enough for Hermas to know at Rome? If the author was, as tradition says, the renowned James, the brother of the Lord, the head of the Jerusalem Church, how do we explain this obscurity? (1.) Was the Epistle originally anonymous, and the opening verse of the Epistle a later addition? or (2.) Was it pseudonymous from the beginning, written after the time of James, but by literary device ascribed to him? or (3.) Was it the work of another, an unknown teacher in the Church named James? or (4.) If the work was by the celebrated James, were there reasons attaching to its destination and purpose which explain its not being widely known among the churches in the earliest periods of its circulation?"¹⁰⁴

These rhetorical questions serve the purpose of plunging one into the historical stream and confronting him with the facts of the

past. Thus historical questions are a constant concern to Manson and background information is supplied in abundance.

But how does one go about finding the past? For Manson the answer can only be by means of the historical critical method. There is no royal road to knowledge that can by-pass the long and arduous journey through the mountains and valleys of historical criticism. According to Manson the reason for this lies basically in the nature of the source material itself. If God's revelation had somehow been given by divine providence in a way unrelated to the circumstances surrounding its origin, in some timeless, non-historical way, then historical criticism would of course be unnecessary. But such was not the case. God's revelation came in time and is a part of the historical process, consequently, one must apply the canons of historical criticism to see what that revelation was.

When Manson discusses the Bible in this way, he enumerates six factors or aspects of the Bible that demand and at the same time justify the use of the historical critical method. First, there is the text factor. Because there has been no special providence to keep the text of the New Testament pure from accretion 

105 See e.g. Hebrews, pp. 7, 8-9, 15, 17, 23, 159, 163; Messiah, pp. 14, 18-19, 49, 95, 97; Bist Du, pp. 24, 29-30, 64-65, 116-117, 118.

106 See e.g. IG, pp. 55-57; CVKG, pp. 24-43; Gospels, pp. 41-44. In this regard Manson criticizes J. Munck and A. Nygren for not sufficiently relating the book of Romans "to known circumstances within the Roman community." SJT Vol. 9, p. 305.

and corruption during the course of its transmission, the critic must establish the original text. Second, there is the language factor. One must thoroughly understand the ancient languages in which the text was written if one is to understand the text. But more than this, criticism is demanded because many of the words of the Biblical text do not have an easily discernible meaning. They must be examined with great care and effort if one is to know exactly what the Bible says. Third, there is the human factor. Not everything in the Bible is a word of the Lord and although "we have in St. Paul beyond all doubt the greatest interpreter of Christ and His Gospel, can we think that on every subject he gives us the whole measure of Christian faith?"\textsuperscript{108} Obviously not, and criticism must operate here in order to discern what Christian truth is. Fourth, there is the time factor. Ancient documents must be judged by the standards of their own time, not those of the twentieth century. In order to do this one must know all that he can about the period of time in which the documents appeared. One must know the economic situation, the sociological situation, the politics, folk-ways, thoughts, literature, religion, and so on. In short one must immerse himself in the period in question so that he may judge his sources by the standards of that time. The critic must then apply this knowledge to his analysis of the sources so that the meaning of the material may be brought to light. There is no other way to do this than by historical criticism. Fifth,

there is the developmental factor. The New Testament books were not all written simultaneously, but over a period of at least fifty years. The development, interdependence, and interrelationships that exist among the documents must be thoroughly examined. This can only be done by a trained historical critic who is willing to work his way carefully through the sources and who is willing to trace these relationships without fear of where they may lead. Finally, there is the apologetic factor. The evangelists and apostles were not historians simply, but also preachers of the word. Their use of the tradition shaped it to a certain extent according to the immediate need at hand. It is only the historical critic who can take this into consideration and make full allowance for it.

So the nature of the sources as historical documents justifies the use of historical criticism upon them. Manson then goes on to develop a theory of sources that will facilitate the use of historical criticism upon them and at the same time be consistent with his own view of history as objective fact and meaning. It has been called the "kernel-husk" theory of historical sources. In this view there exist certain primitive facts that constitute the historical event, which primitive facts were then developed and enforced by the growing religious experience of the Church. However, it must be remembered that these "primitive

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109 JATC, p. 19. See also Luke, pp. 96, 235. Manson also uses this theory, only defined as "substance/form" rather than "kernel-husk", when he talks of Jesus' theology. For example, Jesus used apocalyptic terminology (the form) in order to convey his understanding of the parousia (the substance), CVKG, pp. 22-23, 46-47, 170, 171; cf. also Luke, p. 4. But one must distinguish between

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facts" are not to be thought of as bare occurrences, even though the word "primitive" might lead one to believe that. For Manson it is not just the occurrence that is objective, but also the meaning that is latent within it. So these primitive facts, which are the initial historical data, are at the outset composite or complex events consisting of the occurrence plus the meaning that is inherent within it. For this reason Manson argues against the positivists who want to get back to "simple" facts, for indeed there are no such things. Thus composite events take place and they constitute the primitive fact or kernel for which the historian is searching. But it is not a simple process. These primitive facts are rarely, if ever, found by themselves. They come to the historian from his sources and these sources, in the case of the New Testament, at any rate, arose at a considerable remove from the events themselves. What happened between the event and its incorporation into a source was the encrustation upon it of secondary elements --- the husk --- during its transmission orally from person to person and its movement from place to place. Nor is the husk always singular. Often numerous layers of husk form about the primitive fact. He says "later insights have imposed themselves on earlier, and a variorum of ideas has resulted in

109(Contd.) form and substance and realize that "this thought is independent of the extravagant forms in which... it is dressed." CVKG, p. 41. Or again "In regarding their form as secondary, we must not think that the thoughts which he used them to express were secondary." CVKG, p. 47. Apocalyptic terminology is merely the mold or form that the substance of Jesus' thought took.

110JATO, p. 20.
which it is possible not infrequently to distinguish primary, secondary, and even tertiary levels of meaning."\textsuperscript{111} It is even possible for the original event to be lost in the process or so altered that the original event is beyond accurate description. Most of the time, however, it is possible to get back to the primitive fact with a relative degree of certainty.

Now it might seem that Manson's desire to use the historical critical method, since he was a New Testament historian, would go without saying, but it did not seem so to him. He felt it necessary to defend the method against two extremes, both of which, for all their differences, agreed that religion had nothing to do with the findings of the critics --- the fundamentalists and the liberals.

In arguing against the fundamentalists, he says "The principles which criticism follows with regard to the New Testament are neither less nor more than those which apply to any literature which comes to us out of the historic past."\textsuperscript{112} But the fundamentalist would reject this. His theory of inspiration disallows any such approach to the Bible. If it is God's Word, it is God's Word and nothing more need be said. However Manson responds "The fact of the Bible being received in the Christian Church as the Word of God obviously does not of itself prescribe or guarantee the sense in which it is the Word of God. And therefore

\textsuperscript{111}Messiah, p. 1; Bist Du, p. 9. See appendix A for a discussion of these sources as found in the Gospel of Luke.

just because the student starts with preconceptions unduly limiting the range and thoroughness of his inquiry..." and the fundamentalist's a priori view of the Bible does unduly limit Bible study in just this way, therefore, it ought to be rejected. Also "the traditional a priori view of Scripture will not of itself guarantee those ends which Scripture itself is intended to serve. Never were there such high views of Scriptural authority as in the Judaism of Christ's time... [indeed] it was held that the book was written in Heaven, and simply handed to Moses complete." But the purpose of God was not accomplished thereby, in fact, it was nullified by this very view of Scripture itself. Finally, criticism does not necessarily deny that the New Testament has a special authority given it by God, it only asks that that authority be defined on Biblical not a priori lines. The faith of the Church will not be destroyed by an honest appraisal of its literature. Therefore the fundamentalist is wrong in wishing to separate religious faith from historical criticism. All that is accomplished by it is to drive thinking men away from the Church.

The liberal's separation of religious truth from criticism is also rejected by Manson. The liberal uses criticism to undermine the facts of Christianity and then when nothing is left, he says that the facts never mattered in the first place. Religion

\[113^{\text{"The Nature and Method of Biblical Studies" (ND).}}\]
\[114^{\text{Ibid.}}\]
\[115^{\text{Ibid.}}\]
is a matter of the heart, not the mind, and the sooner the two are separated the better off religion will be. In fact, to prove that there are no facts is a service to religion for it removes the last outpost of worldly security where the faint-hearted believer can hide. So criticism must actually set out to remove the "worldly" foundations of the Church. But Manson is convinced that the liberals are not using the historical critical method fairly. They approach the text with just as many preconceptions as the fundamentalist, only the preconceptions are negative ones, and they attempt to justify their skin and bones theology by saying that it is "scholarly" or "modern", when in fact it is neither. Manson puts it this way,

"In an age when the solvent of historical criticism is at work on all beliefs, institutions, and principles coming down to us out of the past, and when not even the presuppositions of Christianity are safe against negation or dispute, it may seem that the area of sure conviction which a serious mind may hold on historical grounds is not very large... We are of the conviction, however, that a larger piece and a larger measure of sure conviction are open today to an unbiased and earnest mind. There are foundations which, though temporarily submerged, are nevertheless not removed. The islet-rock on which the light house stands may be covered by waves in the day of storm, and yet uphold the light house. So even under the surge and wash of criticism there may exist unshaken foundations, broad enough to support the Church and the Christian ministry."

But what is the historian hoping to accomplish by his use of the historical critical method?, that is, when the historian approaches his task, taking into consideration all of the factors

116"Foundations Which are not Removed" (ND).
that govern his research and having the requisite mental attitude, what is it exactly that he is trying to do? For Manson, the historian is attempting to penetrate through the historical sources back to the objective facts and meanings that he has postulated as the essence of the historical process, and having found that truth, to allow it to speak to him. The quest of the historian is thus essentially a quest for fact and meaning. Manson is aware, however, that it is one thing to assert that facts are objective as he has done, and quite another actually to set out to find and establish them. But if historical study is to be true to itself, and not degenerate into being merely propaganda, this is what it must do. The historian must devise means to get through the sources to the bed-rock of the past — the objective facts and meanings — so as to understand the past and the present. And Manson does recognize a present dimension to historical study. It is not just to catalogue facts that one studies the past, but to learn the lessons that the past has to teach. However, Manson would insist that one can only do this because there is something objective there to learn.

Manson is convinced that historical criticism will ultimately win out against both the fundamentalist and the liberal and that the historical critical method will find a positive place in the work of the Church. Manson summarizes his feelings in this way.

"If the work of Biblical study is to be worthy and adequate to modern requirements, it must satisfy the conditions applicable to study in other fields of literary and historical research. In other words it must be critical and inspired
by the pure love of truth. Criticism in this field means neither more nor less than the demand that no traditional or a priori ideas of Scripture shall be allowed to come between us and the books themselves, so as either to limit unduly the range and thoroughness of our inquiry or to predispose our minds improperly towards results. Instead we must seek with unprejudiced minds to discover what the Biblical writers themselves wrote, and what they meant when they wrote it, using for this purpose whatever knowledge, linguistic, textual, historical, etc., is at our command. If we begin in this manner, not with a theory or dogma of Scripture, but with the text itself, we shall at least have the consciousness of beginning at the right end and of working towards assured results."

117"Notes on General Introduction to the Study of the New Testament" (ND). A word of caution however. Manson does not think that the historical critical method is infallible. "Criticism itself is, like all scientific processes, modest, and does not forget that no one day has a monopoly of the sun's light." "Some Principles of the New Testament Criticism and their Application," (ND), p. 8. See also Messiah, p. 132; Bist Du, p. 159.
THE RISE OF THE GOSPELS CONSIDERED HISTORICALLY

I. Introduction: A Discussion of the Gospels is a Discussion of the Early History of the Church

For Hanson, a discussion of the Gospels is a discussion of the early history of the church. He cannot conceive of them independently of why they did not appear sooner than they did, why they finally did appear at the time when they were written, what factors shaped their structure, and how they relate to the whole historical process of which they are a part. It is impossible to consider them in abstraction from the above factors. To do so would be to superimpose some alien a priori upon the documents --- whether from a liberal or a conservative perspective --- and thus to distort the nature of Christianity which is wholly dependent, historically, upon the Gospels for its form and its knowledge of Jesus. "One trembles to think" he says, "what the end would have been if Christianity had gone the way of the apocryphal gospels or of Gnosticism. Yet this was the way which all unregulated belief in the Spirit's guidance was clearly pointing. From this disaster Christianity was saved only by the possession of the Synoptic Gospels. Paulinism, not offset by the Gospels, would not have saved it."¹ Christianity depends upon the Gospels and the Church must not drift into a non-historical existence that refuses to see them in their

¹ "Was there Opposition to the Written Gospels in Early Christianity" (ND).
proper place in the history of the Church. They are, in fact, the soul of the history of the Church. To trace the history of the Church is to trace the growth and finally the writing of the Gospels.

II. A Brief History of the Early Church Before 70 A.D. as it Affects the Written Gospels

A. Jesus, His Death, and Resurrection and the Rise of the Church

Jesus never put anything into written form when he was on earth. In this regard he had been compared with other great religious leaders, such as Mohammud. However, the comparison must stop at that point because Jesus' ministry was not a wholly this-worldly episode as was the ministry of all other great leaders in the world's religions. He inspired his followers to see in him a permanent expression of God's will and purpose for man. For this reason, that is, because he was a permanent expression of God's will, neither he nor his disciples wrote anything down. Jesus' disciples were convinced that he would always be with them, speaking as never a man spoke of the things of God. It is true that he had spoken of his departure at Jerusalem, but the disciples did not understand what it meant. Jesus was to be with them forever.

But Jesus did depart and it came as a terrible shock to his bewildered disciples. They were stricken in a way that no one can imagine who had not put all his trust in something only to see it betray him. The psychological impact upon the disciples was such that the end of Christianity was written into history even
before it had begun. No illusory visions, no reflection, no later regrouping of the disciples could have salvaged Christianity from the wreckage of Jesus' death. That would have meant that Christianity could have been established as a set of ideas that Jesus propounded, but Christianity is emphatically not a set of ideas, no matter how lofty they might be; Christianity is first and foremost a person. The New Testament bears witness to nothing else than Jesus Christ himself.²

The reason why Christianity did not die along with the hopes of the disciples is that Jesus rose from the dead and appeared alive to his followers. Manson cannot state too emphatically that the resurrection is a fact of history that took place independently of his disciples awareness of it.³ It was the foundation of the Church. This is not to say however that the mode of Christ's resurrection can necessarily be determined. The evidence is not sufficient to say exactly what took place, but this does not in any way affect the fact that Jesus rose, objectively, from the dead. "Great as are the difficulties created for our understanding by this and the other records of the post-resurrection experiences, it is plain

²"Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles and to the Early History of the Christian Church" (ND); "Jesus and the Origins of Christianity" (ND); In "Theological Notes and Comments" Manson quotes James Denney Jesus and the Gospels, p. 25, "Christ is the whole of Christianity --- Christ crucified and risen. He is the whole of it on the external side, regarded as the revelation and action of God for the salvation of sinful men; and faith in Christ --- that abandonment of the soul to Him in which Paul as a Christian lived and moved and had his being --- is the whole of it on the internal side," and puts a star with his Nota Bene next to it.

³See Gospels, pp. 96-100; Luke, pp. 268-270.
that, without a foundation in the kind of experiences described, the history of the Church in its beginnings would be an insoluble problem. Something happened to raise the followers of Jesus out of the dismay into which the Master's death had plunged them and this something was the appearance of the living Jesus, raised from death and restored to his followers.  

This proved to the disciples that they had been right --- Jesus would be with them forever --- only not in the way they had envisioned it. He was with them in reality, first as a real, resurrected, though indescribable presence, then as a mystical presence, at one with yet somehow not to be confused with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Since there was communication with Christ, again, nothing was written down.

B. Jewish Christianity to 70 A.D.

The Church at this time was a Jewish body. "In the first period of its life, the Christian Church remained entirely within the bosom of the Jewish community, nor was there any distinct sense that its future destiny lay through separation from the parent-body and entrance on a new path of life. The followers of Jesus frequented the Temple, and in everything approved themselves as that Elect Israel which they believed themselves to be."  

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4 "Notes on Early Christian History, and Development of Doctrine, up to and Including St. Paul, Section I The Resurrection of Jesus" (1922).

5 Ibid., Section III "The Holy Spirit in the Early Church."

6 "Notes on the History of the Christian Church in the First Three Centuries" (1922).
most part the early Christians stayed in Jerusalem, or so Acts leads one to believe, but there can be no doubt that the Christian mission was also conducted simultaneously at other centers in Israel. They also went from city to city preaching and healing. The activity of those in Jerusalem included preaching, baptising, the confirmation and educating of converts, healing, and fellowshipping with the Apostles. Above all they gave attention to the teachings of Jesus in the sure hope of his early return. They based this hope on the words of Christ himself when he said that some who were standing in his midst would not taste death until he came (Mark 9:1). For this reason they saw no need to reach beyond the confines of their own Aramaic-speaking community --- the earliest tradition of Jesus was in Aramaic --- to the world at large. It was soon to be the scene of a great catastrophe in which the nations that had raged against God and His Anointed would be removed from memory forever. This mentality, with a certain amount of adjustment that had to be made on account of Paul's Gentile ministry, remained the Jewish-Christian point of view until Jewish-Christianity lost its historic place in 70 A.D. The important thing to remember about it with respect to the Gospels is that the tradition that is embodied in them took its rise in this Palestinian community.

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C. Reasons Why no Gospels were Written during the First Generation

During this time no Gospels were written and there are specific historical reasons for this. First, as was seen, the Church had the example of Jesus himself who wrote nothing. He had taught as the Rabbis (howbeit with greater authority) relying entirely upon the impact of what he said. The crowds responded to his words because they came as life and power. When the Church set out to establish itself, it had Jesus’ example to follow. It too sought by the impact of the spoken word to arouse the conscience of Israel to repentance in the last days. Words of power and authority were what mattered, just as was so with Jesus. Peter is a good example of this; when he spoke at Pentecost in the power of the Spirit, a multitude turned to righteousness. Second, the mind of the Church was set towards the future. Jesus would soon vindicate himself by bringing this world-order to an end. Why then should records be kept of the past when the Church’s life was in the future? Third, due place must be given to the remarkable nature of the oriental mind that relied upon memory and not upon books. Now there is always the tendency to think that other ages and cultures respond to their circumstances in the same way that we ourselves do. The inclination today would be to write something of importance down lest it be forgotten, but such a bookish approach to events of

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9Gospels, pp. 10-11; "Studies in St. Luke’s Gospel II" (ND); "New Testament Literature" (1945); "The Gospel According to Mark II" (ND); "Was there Opposition to the Written Gospels, etc." (ND).

10"Introduction to St. Paul’s Epistles" (ND).
importance was not that of the rabbis in Jesus' day. There was an almost unnatural dislike for the printed word that caused them to scorn the use of written records. They remembered the things of importance, all else could just as well be forgotten. Hence the disciples of Christ were not inclined to write down what he said. Fourth, there was the living voice of the Apostles still to be heard. Those who had been chosen by Christ to be leaders of the New Israel were preaching in the presence of all Jerusalem what Jesus had done and said, how he went about doing good and proclaiming the arrival of God's kingdom in himself. If anyone needed information, he could ask those who knew what had happened. Records could never answer questions. They could say in a fixed form, perhaps, some of the things that had transpired, but the Apostles could speak and here was first-hand information for all who wanted it. Fifth, for many people there was no need of records because the memory of Jesus was fresh in their minds as well. They, too, had heard him preach. They had seen his mighty acts and gathered about him as he made his way through the cities of Judah. Not everyone had done this, of course, (those who had not could ask the Apostles what they wanted to know) but enough had so that questions were not as frequent as might be suspected. Most were satisfied with their own memories and the shared experiences of other believers. Sixth, the living voice of Christ was still to be heard. They did not need to look to the past for Jesus' voice to be heard. He was still speaking to the Church through the Holy Spirit. Christian prophets were making known his will
at the present time. Here was Christ at work among his people. If there were any questions that needed answering, Christ's present guidance could be sought. The significance of this post-resurrection mentality cannot be over-emphasized. It was not a dead Jesus, but a living Jesus Christ who was worshipped. He was alive and leading his Church into all truth through the Holy Spirit. Finally, the Church did not write out Christ's life for the first generation of its existence because Jesus' earthly life, per se, was never the main part of its proclamation. It was not so much the details of what Jesus said or did that constituted the message of the Church, but who he was -- God's Messiah, who died for our sins and rose again. This is not to say that his life was of no importance to the early Church; it was indeed, but the gospel message was not a long biographical sketch of a man who lived in Nazareth -- it was the good news of what God had done through his Anointed One, Jesus Christ. Everything that was said about him was said from this perspective, even those things that were said about his life.

D. The Rise of Gentile Christianity and the World Mission of the Church

The Church was not to stay confined to Jerusalem however. Although the breach with Judaism had been foreshadowed in the teaching of Jesus, it was the death of Stephen that brought about the sundering of the Church from its parent body and as such was the first great turning point in early Christian history.\(^\text{11}\) It was not just

\(^{11}\) "Notes on Early Christian History, etc., Section IV, The Church in Jerusalem"; Hebrews, p. 25; JATC, p. 200.
that because of Stephen the believers were scattered from Jerusalem, but more than this, it was Stephen who '. . .grasped and asserted the more-than-Jewish-Messianic sense in which the office and significance of Jesus in religious history were to be understood."\(^\text{12}\)

It was Stephen who saw that the call of God was to go out to all men everywhere, not just to the Jews alone. Steven saw '. . .that the call to the Church of Jesus was to leave the Temple and all that went with it behind, and to go forward, no longer clinging to historical securities, no longer thinking to capitalise the grace of God in the Jewish ordinances and cultus, but throwing in its lot with the crucified Son of Man, to whom the throne of the world and the Lordship of the Age to come belonged."\(^\text{13}\) Stephen's attack upon the Jews took the form of a long discourse on Israel's history in which he showed that God had never intended the Temple to be permanent. But this attack was directed at the complacent Jewish-Christian Church also. The result was that "in the course of time, when St. Peter and possibly other Apostles, were constrained to move out and to take part in the wider mission inaugurated by Stephen's men, stricter older fashioned Christians grouped themselves around James of Jerusalem and James was a pattern-saint of the legal and Levitical type."\(^\text{14}\) Christianity then spread out from Jerusalem to the Hellenistic world --- Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, Libya, Cyrene and finally to Rome,

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\(^{\text{12}}\)Hebrews, p. 31; See also "The Gospel and the World" (1933).

\(^{\text{13}}\)Hebrews p. 32; See also JATC pp. 201-3.

\(^{\text{14}}\)Hebrews p. 37.
taking the traditions of Jesus with it. Thus began the world mission of the Church.

E. Paul and the World Mission of the Church

The Apostle Paul represents the world mission of the Church par excellence, and his place in it cannot be overemphasized. He carried on the principles enunciated by Stephen concerning the relationship of Christianity to Israel, and the free offer of the Gospel to the Gentile world, but he overcame the negativism found in Stephen by emphasizing the fact that Israel had been transmuted into the Church. For Paul there need be no antagonism between Israel, properly understood, and the Church, because the Church is the New Israel. Armed with this insight Paul went out into the world to conquer it for Christ.

Manson feels that the motivation that Paul felt came from his eschatological perspective. The coming of Christ was tied in with the world mission of the Church. Christ could not return until the Church's work of evangelizing the world was accomplished and hence Paul restlessly went from place to place, attempting to reach that last one so as to usher in the fullness of God's Kingdom. One can see in this a continuity between the Apocalyptic views of Jewish-Christianity and Paul, only Paul had removed the strictly "imminent" element that characterized that of Jewish-Christianity by relating Christ's return to the mission of the Church.

Thus Christianity came into contact with the Hellenistic world

\[15\] JATC p. 203; Hebrews pp. 38-41.
and the impact of the Hellenistic world upon Christianity, as the early missionaries and evangelists went throughout the world, had far-reaching effects. For one thing, Christianity became Gentile Christianity and this created a crisis in terms of the essence of the faith. Was it a Jewish faith that led Gentiles in, or was it essentially a universal faith that allowed both Jew and Gentile to enter on equal terms? The question was eventually settled along universalistic lines, but not without a serious struggle, the full effects of which will probably never be known. Equally as important as the relationship of Jew to Gentile was the question of the form that the Gospel was to take. Here Gentile Christianity parted company with Jewish Christianity by allowing the thought-forms of the Gentile world to become part of the structure of the message.

F. The Impact of the Hellenistic World upon Gentile Christianity

It is important to keep in mind, according to Manson, the state of affairs in the Hellenistic world in the early days of Christianity because it was this world that Christianity went into and that determined the shape of Christianity for all time. It was a world that was profoundly disillusioned with the potentialities of man. The old Greek image of the rational man who could look to Olympus for order and stability had been replaced by a fearful looking to unpredictable Elements over which one had no control. "The Graeco-Roman world of the time lay under the crushing weight of an astral fatalism which checked all initiative, and precluded all free
expansion." This fatalism expressed itself in a number of ways. First, it created a society of great immorality and immoderation. Because one had no control over his own destiny, the only thing that could be done was to derive from the world as it was any pleasure that was immediate and complete. This, as always, was expressed, for the most part, in sexual terms. Second, it produced a general atmosphere of fear and helplessness in the face of the "principalities and powers" that determined the course of the world. What was one to do in the face of these irrational principles that could neither be seen nor understood? Third, it opened the door for the mystery religions to preach their gospel of personal salvation to the disillusioned of the world. This is an important point for Manson because he sees in the mysteries a preparation for the Gospel, in fact it would not be amiss to say that Christianity is the supreme example of a mystery religion.17 As far as the mysteries themselves are concerned, we actually know very little about them, partly because the mysteries enjoined silence upon their votaries, but also because our sources are later than the early Christian era. However, enough is known to see why they had such universal appeal in the disintegrating world of Paul's day. First and foremost, the mysteries proclaimed a profound Divine sympathy for man. When a worshipper heard "Be of good cheer,

16 "The Mystery Religions and their Relation to Early Christianity" (ND).
17 JATC p. 111.
O mystae, for the god is saved, and for you too from your trials shall proceed salvation," this was reality to him "as nothing in the circle of his inherited beliefs was real. An objective reality of godhead was given to man's faith which they could at least connect with their own broken experience, their longing for vital renewal and their hopes of immortality."¹⁸ The mysteries also had appeal because of their respect for human personality. The traditional religions had become a matter of expediency and the individual was never consulted as to what transpired. State religion had become simply a means of maintaining the social order. But the mysteries were different. They were entered voluntarily and the individual felt that he had a place. Here was a god that cared for him. Finally, the mysteries were religions of revelation. They spoke with authority in a way that the rationalistic State religions never could and there is always an open ear to the sound of an authoritative voice.

One must be careful however, according to Manson, not to over-emphasize the influence of the pagan world upon Christian theology. While it is true that the thought-forms were provided by Greek Philosophy, the mysteries, the Greek piety, it would be a mistake to see in this any dilution of the Gospel. Manson argues

"It has become the fashion among certain theologians --- conspicuous examples are W. Bousset in his Kurios Christos and Rudolf Bultmann in his recently published theology of the New Testament --- to make much of the Hellenistic Christianity which developed in the world in the New Testament.

¹⁸"The Mystory Religions and their Relation to Early Christianity" (ND).
period, and to separate it off from the less speculative, less sacramental and more eschatological theology of the Hebraic primitive Church. According to this teaching the Christian religion taken into the Greek world underwent a sea-change, being instinctively grasped and interpreted in forms of the religious thinking current in that world, a world already penetrated by gnostic ideas and accustomed to the rites of the mystery-religions. It is difficult, however, to think of the development in question coming about instinctively through the operation of ideas 'in widest commonality spread.' Rather should we think of it --- in the form in which it is represented by St. Paul, in the writer to the Hebrews, and in the Johannine evangelist --- as originating within, and as part of the evangelism of the world-mission preachers of the Church, who proclaimed Jesus Christ as God's answer to the religious and Philosophical, as well as the moral needs of all men, and saw in him the meaning lying behind all of the symbols of human speech, a meaning, however, only made known through the Spirit of God to those who receive the Gospel."19

Manson also stresses the place that great metropolitan centers had in the development of Gentile Christianity. 20 Paul always aimed for the crossroads of a territory when he preached because there he would find a world in transition, ready for the Gospel and ready to carry it on to other parts of the world. So Paul

19 "The Apostle and the World Mission of Christianity" (1954). Compare also "Some Present Tendencies in New Testament Criticism" (ND) "What about the Greek and Oriental mysteries in this connection? Theories of their influence have been carried far, even to the extent of attributing to this source St. Paul's view of the Christian sacrament. For myself, I cannot think that there is much, if anything at all, in this view. . . What is probable is that Paul shares to some extent with the mysteries the language of Greek mysticism, and that Greek mysticism in time supplied a certain mould for Christian doctrine. That is a very different thing from saying that St. Paul derived any elements of his theological system from the mysteries."

went to Ephesus, Antioch, Corinth and Athens so that the Gospel might take root and flourish in the great centers of the world.

G. St. Paul and the First Literature of the Christian Church

All the while there was no need felt for a full length written account of the life of Jesus. Certainly this does not preclude the use of short written accounts of incidents in Jesus' life, but a life of Jesus was never considered by any one of the official leaders of the Church. Nevertheless the Church did develop a literature at this time and it is a point of utmost significance that what brought about the first literature of the Church was not some theoretical "biographical" need but the practical needs of a growing Gentile Christianity. The Pauline churches were in need of instruction so Paul undertook to instruct them concerning the faith. Hanson stresses the fact that Paul was the first Christian writer because he wishes to emphasize that Christianity has been, from the very beginning, a supernaturalistic religion. "The earliest form in which we find the Gospel of Christianity is the Pauline form, a form which presupposes not only the resurrection (I Cor. 15:1ff; Rom. 1:1-4), and the atoning death of Christ (II Cor. 5:14-21), but his pre-existence (Phil. 2:5-11), and mediatorship in creation as well as redemption (Col. 1:13-22). The Pauline Gospel is the Gospel of the Risen Lord, the Son of God, who laid aside His glory, and descending to the world effected the reconciliation of men with God through His death."21 There can never be a getting back to the

"facts", if by that one is thinking of wholly this-worldly events that take no account of Jesus' transcendence. The earliest Christianity, indeed, the Christianity that arose along with the Gospels and moulded them into the shape they now have, is a Christianity that sees in Jesus God reconciling the world unto himself. Hence, Manson stresses the priority in time of Paul's epistles.

Manson is aware, however, that to speak this way is to leave open the possibility that Paul has radically altered the Christian message. Merely to assert the priority in time of the Pauline construction is not to prove that he is right. It does however, and Manson expects everyone to acknowledge this, make that the most likely explanation. Since Paul began writing within twenty years of Christ's death and resurrection, and in contact with the Apostles who knew Christ after the flesh, it is not likely that Paul would simply invent some elaborate and alien system in contradistinction to the main body of believers. Nor is it likely that the Gospels, which are a product of the very same Gentile Christianity that Paul is a part of, would be a departure from Paul back to some more "primitive", i.e. non-dogmatic, point of view. So Manson wishes to stress, not only the priority of Paul's theology but also the continuity of Paul's theology with that of the Church before him. Hence he says:

22 "Towards an Understanding of the Sermon on the Mount" (1945).
23 "Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels" (ND); "Jesus and the Origins of Christianity" (ND).
"While, therefore, St. Paul was destined to make a unique contribution to the interpretation of the Christian revelation and to the development of the theology of grace, nothing hinders the assumption that from the beginning his start was from positions already given in the Gospel and teaching of the world-mission of the Church. This applies to his recognition that with Jesus, crucified and risen, the New Creation (I Cor. 4:16), the eschatological age (I Cor. 5:17-18) had begun, that the man from heaven had appeared who was destined to be the head of a new humanity restored to God in Him (I Cor. 15:45-49) that the old order of the law of sin and death was rescinded and superseded (Rom. 8:1-4), that indeed the New Order was Christ fulfilling Himself in humanity (II Cor. 5:14-19). All this, though with added insights and powers of expression, was the working out of principles already essentially latent in Stephen's interpretation of the act of God in Christ. And the same holds true of St. Paul's insistence on the Cosmical significance of the person of Christ. For while the attribution of such a developed theology to Stephen and his first followers is not to be thought of, it can be made out from the concurrence of St. Paul, the writer to the Hebrews, and the Johannine Evangelist in this matter, that at a very early time in the history of the world-mission a conception of Christ's significance for all men which lent itself to statement in the form that in Him, as the light of the Gentiles, the Wisdom of God had appeared, or, as the Johannine writer puts it, the word was made flesh."24

Thus Manson ties together the tradition about Jesus before the Gospels were written, Paul, and the world-mission of Christianity.

III. The State of the Traditions about Jesus Prior to Their Being Incorporated into the Written Gospels

A. The Oral Period of the Tradition

During the time between Jesus' death and resurrection and circa 70 A.D. when the Gospels began to be written the "traditions

of the acts and words of Jesus circulated freely in memory and on
the lips of Christian teachers and evangelists. It was this
in fact that kept the traditions about Jesus alive. The constant
use of these traditions by the early Christian propagandists in
order to illustrate and enforce their message kept the traditions
fresh in the minds of both hearers and speakers alike. For after
all, what was the Gospel but the Good News of what God had done in
Jesus Christ? Because he died for our sins and rose again, it was
necessary to rehearse those facts and whatever other facts were con-
sidered important at the time of preaching, hence the traditions
stayed fresh in every one's mind as the Gospel message was preached
again and again across the ancient world. But it was not just the
fact of preaching that caused the words of Christ and the incidents
of his life to be remembered. The traditions of Jesus played a
large part in Christian life and worship. When questions concerning
baptism, the Lord's Supper, prayer, almsgiving, and so on, arose,
answers were sought in Jesus' life and words. Thus the Christians'
life was circumscribed by Jesus' life and this was true even in the
Hellenistic churches where the mystical union of the believer with
Christ might have tended to make the believer's life an other-worldly
affair. What kept the Hellenistic Christians down to earth was
the realization that the exalted Christ was identical with the earthly
Jesus, so one could see how the exalted Christ lived while he was
on earth and could live his own life accordingly. It can still be

26 Ibid.
called mysticism, but it was a historical mysticism, tied into space and time, because Jesus lived in space and time as well. So the traditions about Jesus circulated freely according to the needs of the situation, being shaped and reshaped as the occasion demanded it, with little regard being given to such things as the historical order, or exact notes of time and place.

B. The Stabilizing and Disruptive Factors as They Affect the Traditions about Jesus

All this raises the inevitable question concerning the historical reliability of the traditions about Jesus. If it is true that the immediate circumstances determined the shape of the tradition, with what confidence can one still speak of the traditions as they relate to Jesus? Is it not possible that he has disappeared in the telling and re-telling of stories about him? Manson recognizes the difficulty involved in this but feels that sufficient place must be given to the stabilizing factors that exist alongside the factors that might tend to disrupt the tradition. In fact, the whole of the pre-literary period of the Gospels is to be seen as the interplay of two sets of factors, those which tended to stabilize and preserve the tradition in its original integrity and those which tended to dilute the tradition by the introduction of alien elements and ideas, and Manson is convinced that the stabilizing factors were the dominant ones during this time, thus the tradition may be trusted.

The factors which tended to stabilize the traditions about Jesus according to Manson are the following. First, "The reverence
which all would feel, Apostles and hearers alike, for the words and institutions of the Lord Jesus would disallow any extravagant recasting of His words into entirely new forms. Because Jesus was the one who spoke with authority and power, and it was his words that had brought about the new life being proclaimed by the Apostles, there was great reluctance to alter anything. Such an alteration might rob the words of their potency. This is not to say that Jesus' words were not adapted to new situations, but it does say that such adaptation must be seen as in line with the original intention of Jesus, or else the Apostles would not have so adapted it. The second factor that would stabilize the transmission of the traditions about Jesus is the remarkable tenacity of the oriental memory. Since theirs was essentially a non-literary approach to the facts of the past, one would expect (and finds) that when they chose to do so remarkable feats of memory could be performed. "This", says Manson, "Would certainly make for a maximum of accuracy and fidelity wherever it was a question of simply transmitting what had been received." Manson does not want to overdo this reliance upon the singularity of the oriental memory, however. The desire to answer all the difficult historical questions concerning the gospels by an appeal to what the oriental mind could do is completely rejected by Manson. One finds some-

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27 "Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (ND); Messiah, p. 21; Bist Du, p. 32.

28 Ibid.
thing of this approach in *The Days of His Flesh* where David Smith argues that the oral tradition about Jesus "...emanated from the Apostles, being their testimony to the things which they had seen and heard." It was then "...preserved and disseminated far and wide by the Catechisers; and, when the Evangelists composed their narratives, they simply reduced the oral tradition to writing, each adopting the version of it which was current in his locality." "The evangelic tradition has thus been preserved in three editions...and it is a striking evidence of the fidelity therewith the True Deposit was guarded that these three editions, though circulating in regions so remote and diverse, have remained so true to their common source. So little variation have they undergone in their independent transmission that it is possible to arrange the first three Gospels --- hence called the Synoptics --- in parallel columns, exhibiting almost verbal agreement. And such divergences as they display make it clear that their agreement is not due to interdependence... The truth is that each Gospel is an independent reproduction of the Apostolic tradition, and the differences are such variations as were natural and inevitable in the process of oral transmission."  

Manson admits that a certain amount of stereotyping of tradition would result from the frequent repetition postulated by Smith

29 *The Days of His Flesh* by David Smith, p. xvii.

30 loc. cit.

31 Ibid., p. xviii; See also pp. XIX-XXVI. This is also the view of Arthur Wright, *The Composition of the Gospels* (1890) and *A Synopsis of the Gospels in Greek* (1903), pp. XIV-XX, and more recently M.G. Tenney, *The Genius of the Gospels* (1952).
but to go on to the conclusion that the Gospels are the end product of such a process is to be rejected because

"(1) The Oral transmission process might conceivably explain the agreements of the Evangelists in matter, and sequence, but it is difficult to see how it could possibly explain the constant agreements in the minutiae of language, grammatical forms, and so forth.

(2) The original oral tradition would be in Aramaic, as comparative study of the Gospels has made plain, but what we have to explain is the close agreement in language of documents which are written in Greek. It is obvious that the translation of an Aramaic tradition, however constant in its forms would not always result in identities in the Greek equivalent, as the work of translation would always offer a considerable variety of possible renderings between which the translator had to choose.

We conclude therefore that our Gospels are not independent reproductions of an original oral tradition."32

The third stabilising factor that helped to preserve the tradition intact was the influence of the Old Testament upon the early Christian community. "The Old Testament proved an anchor not only of comfort but of steadfastness. By it Christianity was prevented from drifting into speculation, being held securely down to a firm basis in history. Christians were reminded continually that the gospel was neither a mystery-myth nor yet a philosophy, a system of truths accessible to the natural reason, but the result of a special activity of God in history continued through the ages and perfected at last in the person and work of Jesus Christ."33

32"Literary Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels" (ND)

This caused the early Christians to regard their own history with care. As surely as God had acted in Israel's history, so had God acted in their own and they recalled their own tradition just as they looked to the Old Testament for the history of Israel. In fact, this certainty that God had acted in time, was reinforced by the church's use of the Old Testament to such a degree that the church looked upon Israel's history as its own history. Thus Jesus was the fulfilment of the Old Testament and they regarded His history with the same degree of reverence that they gave to the history of Israel. This kept the church from evaporating into some gnostic fantasy as well as preserving the traditions about Jesus.

Finally, Manson says that the traditions of Jesus were preserved from gross distortion by the presence of eye-witnesses who served as teachers.\(^{34}\) Their presence made itself felt throughout the entire church. They were the source of most of the tradition, they were the guarantors of it throughout the first generation of the church, they were the teachers who passed on what was approved as true, and they were the defenders of the faith against error. Therefore, although "our Synoptic Gospels are not by direct witnesses of the original facts of Jesus' life, . . . they rest ultimately on the evidence of such witnesses,"\(^{35}\) and may be trusted for that reason. Those who had seen Jesus in the flesh, lived and travelled with Him,

\(^{34}\) See Gospels, pp. 10, 12, 16; IG, p. 54; Messiah, p. 21; Bist Du, p. 32.

\(^{35}\) "The Place of the Gospels in the New Testament Literature" (ND).
deserted Him to their shame at his death, and seen him alive after three days were the ones who passed on the traditions that eventually became the Four Gospels of the Christian Church.

There is another side to the coin, however. Not only were there stabilizing factors at work in the early history of the church tending to preserve the traditions in their integrity, there were other factors at work which tended to alter the traditions according to some present pressing need. Manson recognizes that these exist and is willing to give full place to them. First, there is the inevitable fact that material which is passed down orally would suffer corruption. It must be remembered as well that the tradition began in Palestine, in Aramaic, but was passed on in the Hellenistic world, in Greek. There existed no official "translating agency" to handle the job of getting the material from Aramaic into Greek, so right at the source there was the possibility of misshapen tradition, although from the looks of it, there was not a great deal of distortion due to this. After being put into Greek, the word of Christ went from place to place and "in the process of oral transmission, the material was digested, sifted, arranged, and interpreted by the Spirit from prophecy, etc."36 Added to this there were the occasional lapses of memory, erroneous interpretations being made by the Christian preacher that became part of the tradition, assimilation to Old Testament prophecy, explanatory comments being inadvertently inserted into the words of Christ,

36 Ibid.
and so on. All of this was inevitable by virtue of the fact that
any process of oral tradition would have such liabilities built
into it and the oral process that passed down the traditions of
Jesus was no exception. The second of the "other factors" at
work was the use that the church made of the traditions of Jesus.
Of necessity, the traditions were pressed into controversial and
apologetic service.37 This being so, the tradition was shaped
according to the apologetic needs of the moment. Not that this
was an arbitrary process; it was not. The words of Jesus no
doubt, could be properly applied in most of the instances where
they were so used. But in the process, the original place of the
saying of Jesus became obscure and if the particular word of Jesus
were frequently used, it disappeared entirely. Third, the tra¬
ditions were used extensively in early Christian preaching without
any great regard for what might be considered biographical concern.38
The incidents of Christ's life were used to prove a point, not to
satisfy curiosity. Because of this the same incidents were used
numerous times, in numerous different contexts, and for numerous
reasons. In this way, the traditions became somewhat fluid and
tended to flow into whatever mould was provided for them, whether
that mould be provided by the Hellenistic or the Jewish world.
Fourth, there were the practical needs of the church that were met

37 Messiah, p. 21; Bist Du, p. 33; See also Messiah, pp. 44, 56; Bist Du, pp. 58, 72; "The Gospel According to Mark II" (ND).

38 "Notes on the Religion and Theology of the Synoptic Gospels" (ND).
by the traditions. Believers needed instructions, questions had to be answered, difficulties in the Christian life had to be settled, guidance for life had to be provided, the example of Christ had to be placed before the Christian, and so on. The only place where this could be found was in the tradition about Jesus, consequently it was used in whatever way it was needed and because each situation was different from every other situation the tradition found itself being shaped in a dozen different ways.

Fifth, "... There were prophets in the Church claiming to speak by inspiration of Jesus, and leaving their words in the memory of the hearers." This would naturally affect the traditions of Jesus, as these words would tend to be taken as the words of Jesus himself. Sixth, Jesus had made predictions concerning future happenings, some clear, some very obscure. As events transpired it was natural for the Church to see those events in terms of Jesus words, but the process also worked in a backward direction, Jesus words were affected by the "fulfillment" and were brought into line with it by the Church. Finally, since the Church searched through the Old Testament to find prophecies of Christ, it was natural to see his life in the light of those prophecies and to follow more closely the pattern that they discerned there.

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40 Messiah, p. 21; Bist Du, p. 33.
41 Messiah, p. 22; Bist Du, p. 33.
42 Messiah, p. 21; Bist Du, p. 33.
interesting point because at first appearance it seems to conflict with Manson's statement that the use of the Old Testament by the Church was a stabilizing factor. Upon reflection, however, it is clear that the Old Testament could be both a stabilizing factor and a disruptive factor, because different sections of the Old Testament would affect the Church in different ways. The historical material in the Old Testament would reinforce the historical consciousness of the Church in its stress upon Jesus' life in the world, but the prophetic material would cause the Church, in their belief that it was literally fulfilled in Jesus, to see this life in the light of what they believed the Old Testament to have said. Jesus' life must have followed the pattern discerned in the Old Testament because it spoke of him. In this way, the Old Testament could function both positively and negatively as far as the tradition was concerned.

All of these factors, in contradistinction to the stabilizing factors, tended to shake the traditions of Jesus loose from their historical moorings and explain why, when the Gospels were finally written, they reflected, to a greater or lesser degree, the Church in which they were used. However, Manson still insists when summarizing the situation "It is quite plain that while all allowance must be made for the modifying influences exercised on the tradition by the situations in which the Christian preachers and their communities found themselves, and the necessities of their propaganda, this does not mean that original elements of history were not carried forward; indeed the evidence is to the contrary,
the Gospels contain many words and incidents which cannot be explained as arising purely in the faith of the Church."  

C. The Reasons for the Rise of the Written Gospels

Beginning about 70 A.D. the Gospels began to be written\(^4\) and just as there were historical reasons why they were not written by the first generation of Christians, so there are historical reasons why they were written by the second generation. Basically Manson sees this as a need for the truth about Christ and the facts of his life. At a time when, because of various reasons, that truth was in danger of being lost, the Church set about to preserve it, lest it be lost forever or distorted beyond recognition. Thus Luke's specific purpose in writing, for example was "to provide a fuller and more accurate statement of the Gospel facts than already existed."  

More specifically, the reason why the Gospels were written is as follows.\(^5\) First, those who had known the Lord personally were quickly passing away. Because such a premium was placed upon eyewitness testimony this was a very serious matter and the only way it could be settled was if the testimony of the eye witnesses was preserved before they all passed on. The need for written accounts of Christ's life was thus evident. Second, the Church had by this time expanded beyond the region where those who had seen Christ

\(^{43}\)"Notes on the Religion and Theology of the Synoptic Gospels (ND).  
\(^{44}\)Messiah, p. 20; Bist Du, p. 31.  
Gospels, pp. 11-12.
in the flesh, and were still alive, lived. They needed instruction in the things of Christ and these needs could not be met by a reliance upon word of mouth testimony from the Apostles. The only possible solution was to produce written material that embodied such testimony and then send it into these remote areas so that the Church could survive there. Third, there was the simple fact that the number of converts had grown to such a degree that the work could not be done by the number of accredited persons available. Fourth, false teachings had arisen within the Church and had become a serious problem. As long as the traditions of Jesus were oral, there was no way to counteract this influence, for who could say which story about Christ was accurate or authentic? Thus the need for written information that could be checked and verified. This would allow for the rejection of what was false and the acceptance of what was true. Fifth, attacks were being made on the Church from without. Distorted statements about Christ were being spread abroad and the Church had no way to counter them as long as their message was simply oral. It was then a matter simply of one story against another. But if an authoritative account could be produced, then any story about Christ could be checked and the false reports of the enemies of the Church could be shown to be false. Sixth, a mystical approach to Christ was beginning to make its influence felt and was in danger of separating Christian experience from historical fact almost entirely. Hence, if the distinctive character of the Christian experience was not to be dissolved and lost in the general atmosphere
of a mysticism which was quite unethical, it was imperative to keep the thought of the Spirit in the closest connection with Christ, the source of the new emancipating religious consciousness, and so to prevent "liberty" being confused with mere licence.\textsuperscript{47} But how was the thought of the Spirit to be brought into a close connection with Christ, if the knowledge of Christ was disappearing with the Apostles who were one by one passing away? The only answer was written gospels. Finally, gospels were being written, but were judged to be inadequate from the Church's point of view. The only thing the Church could do was to produce Gospels that were adequate and would truly represent what the Church thought.

It was for these reasons that around 70 A.D., the first of the four gospels was written, and provided the Church with the facts about Christ's life that were necessary to keep it distinctively Christian, i.e. Christ centered.

IV. Manson and the Form - Critical Method

For Manson it is axiomatic that the history of the Church and the history of the rise of the Gospels are two sides of the same coin. This being the case, it brought Manson face to face with a position, new in Manson's day, that also claimed to be a historical description of the rise of the Gospels, that of Form-Criticism. The Form Critics were attempting to work their way back through the form of the Gospel materials to the historical situation that gave the Gospels rise. The conclusions reached were, for the most part,\footnote{47"The Spirit and Tradition: A Study in Early Christian Experience" (ND).}
of a radically negative nature and Manson felt it necessary to take up a position vis-à-vis the new approach to the Gospels. The more Manson gave thought to the new position, the more he came to the position himself of rejecting it, even though he was willing to grant that much that the Form-Critics said was true.

A. The Form - Critical Approach to the Gospels

In order to understand why Manson ultimately found himself lined up against the Form-Critics, it is important to see exactly what he conceived Form-Criticism to be. When this is done it becomes quite clear why he rejected it. The principles that he sees as constitutive of Form-Criticism as an approach to the Gospels begin with the fundamental observation that the tradition which is embodied in the Gospels is not primarily about Jesus at all but is in fact the creation of the Church and as such "its contents represent a distillation from the life of the Church, from its preaching, its debates with Jewish opponents, its ethics, its catechetical activities, its theology and its cultus. Its messianic categories are an attempt, necessarily inadequate, to state in terms comprehensible to itself the essential mystery of the personality of Jesus, and are not to be ascribed to him."48 The tradition of Jesus thus represents the mind of the Church, its awareness of itself as it stands against the world, and when it sought to interact with the world, as it was forced to do, it armed itself with whatever it needed to substantiate its claims. Thus the traditions

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48 Messiah, pp. 20-21; Bist Du, p. 32.
about Jesus were created by the early Christian communities and are essentially a function of the social life and mentality of that community.\textsuperscript{49} The varied needs of the community produced the various forms or styles that the tradition has and it is possible for the critic now to work his way back through the layers of the material to its original form.

The second thing to note about the Form-Critical approach to the Gospels is that it postulates the necessarily late production of the traditions, and coupled with the lateness of the material is the non-objectivity of its content.\textsuperscript{50} This produces the fundamental scepticism that runs through virtually the whole of the Form-Critical approach for if the material really is late and if it was produced unconsciously as it were, being elicited by the needs of the Church independently of any check upon the Church's creative impulse, then one would have every right to be sceptical. The material so produced would be merely propaganda, pious indeed, but propaganda none the less. Third, Manson notes that "Form-Criticism in the interests of its general theory disparages the part played by personal influence in the shaping of the evangelical tradition..."\textsuperscript{51} The general theory Manson has in mind involves the fundamental scepticism just mentioned and of necessity it would reject any influence upon the tradition by persons who would be in a position to know what had taken place. If such persons were

\textsuperscript{49} Messiah, pp. 24, 26; Bist Du, pp. 36, 38.
\textsuperscript{50} Messiah, pp. 20-21; Bist Du, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{51} Messiah, p. 28; Bist Du, p. 41.
allowed to play any part in the shaping of the tradition, it would create the possibility that the tradition could be trusted, but this the Form-Critics cannot allow. It would also mean that the communities were less of a factor in the development of the tradition than the Form-Critics suppose them to be.

Fourth, "Form-Criticism assumes the existence in the early Christian community-life of typical situations or activities which constituted the matrix of the 'form' of the various elements in the tradition," that is, there was some sort of inner necessity at work within the community that forced the development of the tradition to go along certain lines and in order to provide a ground for talk about a pattern that the forms followed it was necessary to postulate "typical situations" that could produce "typical" material, i.e. the forms of the tradition. So the community lived its life in a typical fashion producing material that was illustrative of those typical situations and in the process storing up the material that was later to be incorporated into the Gospels. "Every literary type has thus its 'Sitz im Leben,' whether it be the cultus, its various expressions, or work, or whatever. The 'Sitz im Leben' is not a single historical event but a typical situation or mode of behaviour."  

52 *Messiah*, p. 22; *Bist Du*, p. 33.
53 "The Synoptic Gospels: Notes on Literary Analysis of Sources, and Form-Criticism of the Material" (ND) p. 45d. Manson is here relying on Bultmann's *Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition* (1931), pp. 1-8, 347.
Fifth, Form-Criticism contends that the material produced by
the Christian community was produced analogically to the way in
which tradition was produced in any ancient community. This
means that a study of the folk literature of other nations will
provide a clue as to how the traditions of the Christian Community
were produced. Particularly fruitful here is the application of
principles found to be operative in the Old Testament by Hermann
Gunkel. Form-Criticism sees no reason why these principles should
not produce the same results when applied to the Gospel traditions.

Finally, Form-Criticism, at least in the form represented by
Rudolf Bultmann, contends that the Church had not the slightest
interest in history, nor did it preserve very much real history. It
was interested only in its present situation and the needs that
were experienced there. The past was of no real concern at all.

These then are the principles that underlie the Form-Critical
approach to the Gospels as understood by Manson, but what is the
Form-Critic then to do? The task is, as Manson sees it, on the
basis of the above principles to make one's way back through the
tradition to the earliest possible form of the tradition. In this
way the original form of the tradition will be found. Manson de-
scribes the method by which Form-Critics seek to get back to the
original form of the tradition as being three-fold. First, it
is necessary to separate out the traditions and to classify them
according to their form. This produces such things as sayings,

54 Messiah, pp. 24-25; Bist Du, pp. 36-37.
55 Messiah, p. 26; Bist Du, p. 38.
56 Messiah, p. 25; Bist Du, p. 37; "The Synoptic Gospels:
Notes on Literary Analysis of Sources, and Form-Criticism of the
Material" (ND).
parables, legends, narratives, and so on. In doing this one must be careful to separate the units of tradition this discovered from the redactional framework which is, for the purposes of this analysis, wholly secondary. Second, one must analyze this material in the light of what knowledge has been gained by the study of other popular literature. In this way, it is possible to reduce the unit of tradition under consideration to its original shape or form. Third, one must then reconstruct the 'Sitz im Leben' out of which the unit came. One has then understood the tradition and its place in the living situation that gave it rise.

When Manson goes on to assess the value of the Form-Critical approach to the Gospels he is quick to acknowledge the obvious truth that it embodies as well as the patient and careful work that has been done by the Form-Critics. Thus, he personally acknowledges "a very real debt" to Bultmann's Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition.57 He also acknowledges "...that the school of Form-Criticism has rendered useful technical service by its critical analysis of the evangelical tradition..."58 In this regard Form-Criticism has helped to clarify the place of the Church in the formation of the tradition. It used to be thought that the Church played little or no role in the production of the Gospels,

57 Messiah, p. vii. See also Messiah, p. 56; Bist Du, p. 72; Luke, pp. 53, 61, 165. This debt is even more evident in Manson's notes, see for example, "The Synoptic Gospels: Notes on Literary Analysis, etc." where over 40 pages are devoted to a detailed study of Bultmann's Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition. Manson was also favorably disposed toward other of Bultmann's works as well. See SJT, Vol. 5, pp. 302-304; JATC, pp. 190, 197.

58 Messiah, p. 26; Bist Du, p. 38.
it all being ascribed to the work of the Holy Spirit or the memory of the apostolic author. But Form-Criticism has helped us to see that the sayings of Jesus "were preserved and collected at first not from any interest in them of a biographical kind 'as utterances of a famous man,' but for the practical reason that the Christian communities needed them 'in order to order their lives according to them.'"\(^{59}\)

This would mean that the tradition of Jesus has been colored by the Church's theology in a more than peripheral way. Manson has been willing to admit this for a long time. He is quite willing to accept that during the oral period of the tradition it was "...freely adapted to the evangelistic and missionary ends of the Christian society and underwent modification, partly by reference to the changing historical circumstances of the time, and partly through the Church's need of giving fuller and preciser expression to its experience of Christ."\(^{60}\) So then one must recognize that there are basically two kinds of material in the Synoptic Gospels. "There is (1) an authentic historical element of words and incidents going back to Jesus, and there is (2) an interpretative element which has accrued from the side of Christian reflection, mysticism, or Gnosis. These two, taken together, make up the faith-tradition of the Gospels."\(^{61}\) Consequently, he welcomed Form-Criticism's stress upon the creative role of the Church.

\(^{59}\)Messiah, p. 56, quoting Martin Dibelius, *Gospel Criticism and Christology*, p. 38; Bist Du, p. 72.

\(^{60}\)Luke, p. vii. See also Messiah, pp. 32,37; Bist Du, pp.45,51.

\(^{61}\)"Notes on the Religion and Theology of the Synoptic Gospels" (ND).
It is also evident to Manson that there were "laws" of some sort in operation when the traditions were being formed. Beyond the mere acknowledgement of it however, he does not go. He merely says, "obviously the answer to the question how far the tradition has preserved, how far it has refracted the image of Jesus of Nazareth will depend to some extent on the laws governing the transmission of the material in the practical service of the community during this period." But this at least would mean that it is legitimate to talk of the "forms" that the tradition had, for if there were laws at work shaping the tradition, then it would follow that the tradition would be shaped according to these laws. Hence, Manson is quite willing to say that one may talk of the forms of the tradition and in fact goes on to do so himself.

B. Manson's Criticism of Form-Criticism

In spite of these concessions to the Form-Critical approach to the Gospels, however, Manson found himself unalterably opposed to it as a systematic rationale for studying those documents. Basically, Manson felt that Form-Criticism was inordinately sceptical in its treatment of the sources and needlessly anti-historical in its

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62 Messiah, p. 21; Bist Du, p. 32. Manson's willingness to acknowledge these laws is derived from Erich Fascher's Die formgeschichtliche Methode (1924), pp. 213-214. "Fascher thinks it illusory to speak of 'Das Werden der Form' as if with Dibelius we could conclude from style to particular use or application. Literary parallels have 'no genealogical but only analogical significance.' Even today the human formative impulse produces anecdotes and miracle-stories which in their formal structure are very similar to those in the Gospels. Life shapes these forms and thus to speak of a 'Sitz im Leben' is justified." "Synoptic Gospels: Notes on Literary Analysis, etc." p. 60A. See also Messiah, p. 26; Bist Du, p. 38.

63 Messiah, pp. 37, 43, 46, 51, 57, 63; Bist Du, pp. 51, 57, 61, 67, 74, 81.
orientation. He says "I have assumed on what seems adequate grounds, that the tradition of the Church from the beginning embodied a substantial core of authentic historical reminiscence of the word and work of its Founder..." 64; indeed, "at no vital point is the authentic voice of the Master inaudible or his lineaments obscure." 65 For Manson this picture of the historical Jesus was of utmost importance; without Jesus Christianity would have evaporated away into nothing.

Manson found particular support for this point of view in the works of Erich Fascher, E.F. Scott, and James Denney, as is evidenced by his unpublished notes as well as by references to these men in his published works. With respect to Denney, he says, "On pp. 146ff. [sc. Jesus and the Gospel] Denney addresses himself to the criticism of views which are essentially those of the Form-Critics of today. Wellhausen's scepticism [is] to renounce any return to the Jesus of history. 'This,' says D.[enney] 'is not relief, but ruin, it is not the securing of their religion, but an abandonment, not to say the renunciation of it' (p. 148)." 66 This well summarizes the way Manson felt about it as well. To give up the Jesus of history is to give up what Christianity is all about. Christianity is Christ

64 Messiah, p. vii.
66 "Theological Notes and Comments II" (ND). Manson had studied with Denney and was perhaps influenced by him more than any other individual. He is the only theologian that Manson ever quotes in his sermons (See e.g. "Sermon: Pollokhields East, Dec. 1918). Manson says of Denney "what he [as author of CVKG] owed to Dr. Denney for counsel and encouragement he can, however, never adequately tell." CVKG, p. 10.
and Christ is not some "religious experience," but Jesus of Nazareth, who lived and died and rose again. To abandon him is to abandon Christianity.

There are two corollaries that Manson sees to this point of view. The first is that since the question of the historical Jesus is a historical question and not a literary one, it is illegitimate to say that the form alone can be used to decide for or against the historicity of any given incident, as the Form-Critics assert. "We must not generalize, however, and say that the sayings are entitled to more trust than the narratives. 'There are forms which have their 'Sitz' already in the life of Jesus, and such as have it in the community' (p. 223) [of Erich Fascher's Die formgeschichtliche Methode] --- F.[ascher] as against Dibelius and Bultmann contends that "Die Form allein lässt keine historischen Werturteile zu,'"67 or drawing from E.F. Scott, he says "The literary structure of the records is made a ground for assessing their historical and religious value. It is claimed that by mere analysis of their form we can tell that most of the narratives of Jesus are imaginary, or in any case were mainly fashioned by the community itself out of a few very slight recollections" (p. 135) [The Validity of the Gospel Record]. Scott thinks that "the forms of the Gospel tradition afford no proof that it is not historical, but the contrary,"68 and this is precisely what Manson contends:

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68 Ibid., p. 58c.
"The question of the historicity of the contents of the tradition is not, therefore, decided by their form."\(^{69}\) The second thing that follows from a historical, rather than a Form-Critical approach to the Gospels is to reject the conclusion that the material found in the Gospels is necessarily a late production. "According to Form-Criticism the tradition incorporated in our Gospels is, for the most part, a late product, and a product of the Church's mind at that, which came into existence at a time when an objective record of the history of Jesus was no longer possible,"\(^{70}\) but this view is to be rejected. It is true that the Gospels were put into written form at a late period in the first century, but this does not mean that the material thus written down originated at that time. To assert that is to ignore the whole of the earlier period of the Church's life and the fact that it was the history of Jesus that brought the tradition into being, not vice-versa.

This then is Manson's general position with respect to Form-Criticism, but he has some more specific things to say about it as well. First, he contends that Form-Criticism is unduly speculative and operates on the basis of preconceived ideas of an a priori kind,\(^{71}\) and this is a highly questionable procedure. Not only would this tend to vitiate the results that would come from analysis carried out along these lines, but it is in principle bad scholarship,

\(^{69}\) Messiah, p. 27; Bist Du, p. 39. Manson makes this point numerous times; see Messiah, p. 64, 70, 75, 146; Bist Du, pp. 81, 88, 94, 174.

\(^{70}\) Messiah, p. 20; Bist Du, p. 32.

\(^{71}\) Messiah, p. 22; Bist Du, p. 33.
because "Criticism in this field means neither more nor less than the demand that no traditional or a priori ideas of Scriptures shall be allowed to come between us and the books themselves, so as either to limit unduly the range and thoroughness of our inquiry or to predispose our minds improperly towards results." To assume what one is seeking to prove, or worse yet, to disregard the only evidence that exists in favor of an unproven theory is a highly presumptive procedure and unfortunately Form-Criticism does precisely this. For this reason alone, if for no other, it ought to be viewed with suspicion. Second, the parallel that is made between the early Church and Hebrew saga is not a very likely one.

"It is an exceedingly dubious analogy which is chosen when the rise and development of the early Christian tradition is explained in terms of processes which have worked in the folk-literature of the primitive peoples or in early Hebrew Saga. The period which divides Jesus from the composition of Mark is little more than a generation. In two generations from Jesus the literary fixation of the tradition in our Gospels was complete. In the first generation there were many persons in the Christian community who had seen and heard the Lord. What is of even greater importance at this point is that the level of intelligence in the original Christian groups and circles must have been relatively high. It rested upon Jewish standards of education, and the conservative mentality of the Beth-ha-Midrash may be considered to offer a closer analogy to that of the Church than the naive creativeness of a primitive story-telling society." Third, Form-Criticism is wholly out of line when it rules out the place of individuals in the production and preservation of the early Christian tradition. "It is quite impossible with Form-

72 "Notes on General Introduction to the Study of the New Testament" (ND).

73 Messiah, p. 27; Bist Du, pp. 39-40.
Criticism to rule out the influence over the community of commanding personalities, apostles and others, who had a share in its life. Communities do not create, especially when there are leaders upon whom it is instinctive for them to lean.

Manson is convinced that "The main sources of our Gospels were personalities and personal testimony rather than tradition current in the community. Peter stood behind the greater part of Mark, and similar personal testimony, probably that of Philip and others in Caesarea and Jerusalem, lies behind the special matter of Luke. The fact of Matthew's use of Mark shows that local tradition could not compete in range and quality with that of Apostolic personalities." Form-Criticism may disparage the part played by personalities but "... the Petrine hypothesis with regard to the Marcan Gospel as stated by so careful a scholar as Johannes Weiss has by no means been discredited." This means that the role played by the Church in the creation of the traditions is not nearly so large nor vital as the Form-Critics suppose. Manson says "I have not in fact been able to accept the tacit assumption of the Form-Critics that the images and ideas by aid of which the post-resurrection Church represented to itself the person and work of its Lord were necessarily of the nature of make-shifts, the product of its own life and thought,

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74 Messiah, p. 27; Bist Du, p. 40.
75 "Towards an Understanding of the Sermon on the Mount" (1945).
76 Messiah, p. 28; Bist Du, p. 41. Manson thinks Form-Criticism is wrong in rejecting the patristic tradition with respect to Peter's standing behind the Gospel of Mark and quotes Erich Fascher to that effect. "The Synoptic Gospels: Notes on Literary Analysis of Sources, etc." p. 63b.
and not of his."77 The Church did play a part, no doubt, but that assertion must be kept in its proper place by also recognizing that people who knew the Lord were also involved in the production of the tradition. Finally, Form-Criticism cannot explain the very existence of the Church, nor many of the features that are a part of the Church's tradition, for "If the tradition had unfolded itself smoothly out of the mind or theology of the Church, how do we explain the presence in it of enigmatic words such as the saying of Matthew 11:12 about the Kingdom of heaven suffering violence, which the Church probably did not understand, or of the obscure parables such as that of the Sower, to which it had apparently lost the key, or of utterances like Mark 10:18, which by seeming to limit the perfect goodness of Jesus must have been offensive to its Christology, or of ethical principles like "Resist not evil" and "Love your enemies," which certainly were not any mere overflow of the Church's moral life?"78 The tradition, as it stands, is just not the sort of thing that one would have expected had it been created by the Church, indeed, "if the history had sprung from doctrines of Messianic apocalypticism, or of some esoteric school of Jewish thought in Palestine or in the Dispersion, how different the history would have been!"79 But not only is Form-Criticism unable to explain the Church's tradition

77Messiah, p. 28; Bist Du, p. 41.
78Messiah, p. 28; Bist Du, p. 41.
79"The Synoptic Gospels: Notes on Literary Analysis of Sources, etc." p. 66A.
as it now stands, it is unable to explain the Church itself. The Church and its faith arose because of *something*, but what was it? "We must assume 'some extraordinary reality' so powerful and impressive that it could not easily be lost within the limits of a generation, either by simply falling out of memory, or by being so transfigured and exalted in imagination as to preserve almost no trace of its original aspect or proportions. . . .No one who approaches the figure of Jesus from the standpoint of an earnest effort to lead a spiritual life can regard [the life of Jesus as found in the Gospels] as unreal or unhistorical."  

V. Conclusion: The Nature of the Written Gospels

As was seen above, for Manson, a discussion of the Gospels is a discussion of the whole historical complex that gave them rise. The Gospels arose at a specific time, for specific reasons and are shaped the way they are because of specific historical forces that were in force when the Gospels arose. Because this is so it is also possible to describe the Gospels in a general way, once one has determined what forces were at work in the shaping of the Gospels, that is, one may make certain generalized conclusions as to the nature of the Gospels.

A. The Gospels Speak Primarily of Jesus

The first thing that Manson concludes as to the nature of the Gospels is that they tell us primarily about Jesus and only

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80"Theological Notes and Comments II" (ND).
secondarily about the Church. The traditions about Jesus that are embodied in the Gospels are just what that implies, they are traditions about Jesus. Since the Gospel concerns the good news of God's activity in Christ for the salvation of the world, it is only natural that the things that he said and did would be remembered and passed on. Now it is true that in the process of passing the traditions down from the first generation to the second and in passing the traditions along from one place to another, a certain amount of alteration took place. Manson is quite willing to acknowledge that this is so, in fact, he discusses what must have brought some of these changes about. He notes that there was a poetic-creative impulse at work in the Church. Thus he says that no explanation of the birth narratives in Luke will be historical which ignores this impulse to be creative. "But while literary criticism thus decides the origin and the age of our evangelists' source, it does not enable us to penetrate that source to the original data on which the tradition was based. Here however it may confidently be asserted that no explanation of these narratives will be truly historical which does not recognize in some degree the influence of Messianic prophecy and of the Old Testament narratives of the births of Isaac, Samuel, and Samson, as well as the presence in primitive Christianity of a powerfully inspired poetic-creative impulse." Manson also says that the tradition was shaped according to Old Testament prophecy. That is,

81 Luke, pp. 4, 6, 7, 12.
when an event was described, if some Old Testament passage looked like a prophecy of that event, the New Testament writer did not hesitate to mould his description of that event along the lines of the Old Testament. 83 It is also evident that there was at work an idealizing interpretation of history. 84 Many of the original facts were thus seen through the prism of a Christian consciousness that read an idealized scheme back into the earlier history. But for all of this Manson would still insist that the Gospels are primarily about Jesus and only secondarily about the Church.

B. The Gospels are Reliable Unless Proven Otherwise

The second thing that Manson concludes concerning the Gospels is that they are historically reliable unless proven otherwise. A good case in point here is Luke's treatment of the miraculous element in his sources. After Manson notes that the world-view of Luke's day was saturated with the belief in miracles he goes on to say "Hence the frank and eager interest with which Luke reports this element in the tradition must not operate to the exclusion of his claim to be within his proper limits as a conscientious historical witness. . . . The tendency to impart a miraculous colour to this or that event in the primitive tradition was doubtless strong, but it was not ungoverned. . . . The tradition clearly shews a certain reserve in regard to the miraculous, and we may be certain that Luke, open as he was to the idea of the supernatural, did not

84 Luke, pp. 11, 12.
introduce this element where he did not find it." Thus, properly understood, Luke is a conscientious historical witness.

Manson wishes to say more than this concerning the Gospels however. Not only are they, for the most part, historically reliable, there are indeed times when what was a free-floating tradition was actually put back into its historical context. That is, Manson would postulate a "re-historicizing" tendency at work in the Gospels, in addition to the strong historical interest of the Synoptic writers. This re-historicizing theory needs to be looked at in a little more detail for if Manson can establish it, he will have done something of great significance.

During the course of Manson's preparation for his Cunningham lectures he spent a good deal of time analyzing specific Synoptic logia, as well as the views of other New Testament scholars. One section of this analysis he entitled "Passages which may indicate how the original character of a word or act of Jesus has been obscured by later tradition." The wording of this is significant because it shows that Manson had set out to analyze material where words and acts of Jesus had been obscured by later hands. The result of his analysis however was not what he had expected. Rather than showing that later revision had obscured the earlier words and acts of Jesus, the possibility suggested itself that the later use of the tradition actually restored the tradition's true historical nature to it, that is to say, later usage had "re-historicized"

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86 "The Synoptic Gospels: Notes on Literary Analysis of Sources, and Form-Criticism of the Material" (ND).
the tradition.

This position was first stated tentatively by Manson in his "Notes." In treating Harnack's position on Mark 11:22-23 and the parallels, he observes that Harnack found the Q version in Matthew's Τῷ ὁπει rather than in Luke's ἤ συκαμίνω (ταυτη) and correctly preferred it to Mark. But Manson then adds the interesting remark "But has not Mark preserved the historical context and definite original significance of the saying: the implied reference to the prophecy in Zech 14:4ff? The Q saying is generalized." 87 Manson then discusses Matthew 5:38ff.

"We might compare again the text of Matthew 5:38ff with Luke's parallel. Har[nack] p. 59f [of The Sayings of Jesus] assumes the original Q text:

οὐτὸς σε βασιλεῦει ἐπὶ τὴν ΣΕΣΙΓΝΥΣ γόναν σου στρέψων
καὶ τὴν ἐλλην, καὶ τῷ θελοντὶ σοι θελήναι καὶ τὸν
χριστόν σου λυσεῖν, ἀφες κυρίῳ καὶ τῇ ἀφαίρεσιν

which though Harnack does not notice the point

has echoes of the Servant-passages in Isa. 50:6-9.

Luke on the other hand, as H[arnack] points out

'has replaced the vulgar βασιλεῦει by τυγχάνω

the awkward un-Hellenic and diffuse τῷ θελοντὶ

σοι etc...'. The relation of the Q text here to Isa. 50:6-8 raises a difficult but interesting question." 88

Upon reflection, Manson's tentative assessment of this material became a positive one. He became convinced that later revision had in fact re-historicized the earlier material and that one could generalize on the basis of it. He says "it ought also to be remembered that if here and there a once 'situation-less' word of

87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
Jesus has acquired a secondary or 'ideal' context in the course of the tradition, it is equally true that a number of once situation-less words have been taken back by the same course of tradition to what look like their original historical settings. He offers a summary statement of his position in which he asserts "... (1) that history in unseen ways controlled the Church's tradition to a greater extent than is commonly recognized, and (2) that the development of the tradition was not uniformly away from history, but sometimes led back to historical starting points."

Manson attempts to substantiate this point of view by an analysis of the two Synoptic pericopae that suggested this idea to him in the first place. The first of these is Mark 11:20-23. He begins by saying that the logion about "casting a mountain" in Mark 11:20-23 is rather abrupt in this context which is about the cursing of the fig tree. However since it is set near the Mount of Olives it might be natural enough. In Q (Matthew 17:20b and Luke 17:6) the logion is quite "situation-less." Harnack thinks that Matthew's Q is better than Mark or Luke and Bultmann says that an independent logion of Jesus has been attached by Mark to the miracle-story of the fig tree. But Manson says neither Harnack nor Bultmann has seen the really crucial thing. In Zechariah 14:4 it is said that on the Day of the Lord "His feet shall stand... upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of

89 Messiah, pp. 37-38; Bist Du, p. 51; Luke, p. 190, is an illustration of this.

90 Messiah, p. 30; Bist Du, p. 43. See also Messiah, p. 54; Bist Du, pp. 70-71.
Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west. . ."\textsuperscript{91} He then argues:

"This supplies a striking background for the saying in Mark and gives rise at once to the question whether the original logion of Jesus was not actually uttered on or near the Mount of Olives and with precise reference to it as Mark suggests. In that case a word of Jesus which, as we see by its Q form, had become situation-less and generalized has been reinstated by Mark in its proper historical context. As we can hardly explain this result as accidental, we must either suppose (a) that the tradition known to Mark preserved traces of the original historical context of the word, or (b) that Mark, noticing the pregnant prophetic allusion in the word, connected it with the Mount of Olives on the strength of the Zechariah-prophesy. As, however, there is no explicit allusion either in Mark or in his follower Matthew to the Zecharian-passage, the former alternative seems the better. Jesus had the Old Testament passage in mind, and the tradition followed by Mark was here true in history."\textsuperscript{92}

The crux of Manson's argument is in this sentence ". . . a word of Jesus which, as we see by its Q form had become situation-less and generalized has been reinstated by Mark in its proper historical context."\textsuperscript{93} The fact that it is situation-less in Q (Matthew 17:20b Luke 17:6) shows that the logion had early lost its historical "location" and circulated about independently of anything like a historical context. In order for Mark to have reinstated it in its proper historical context, he must, of necessity, have gotten it from the free-floating milieu and, armed with proper

\textsuperscript{91} Messiah, pp. 29-30; Bist Du, pp. 42-43.

\textsuperscript{92} Messiah, p. 30; Bist Du, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid. (my italics).
historical knowledge, put it back where it belonged. Manson says that this result is hardly accidental and then offers two explanations for it. Either Mark got the logion already preserving traces of its historical context, or Mark, upon reflection on Zechariah 14:4, put the logion near the Mount of Olives because he took Zechariah 14:4 to be prophetic. Now the bewildering thing about this is that Manson has already rejected both of these possibilities. The first is rejected in that Mark could hardly have reinstated a free-floating logion back into its historical context, if the original logion already had traces of that context attached to it. Mark would then only be writing down what the tradition said. The second has already been rejected flatly by Manson's statement that the tradition has been put back into its proper historical context. Alternative two would say that Mark is acting on the basis of a non-historical reflection derived from a prophetic allusion in an Old Testament prophecy. So alternative two is also to be rejected. Manson continues his argument, however. He reinforces his rejection of the second possibility with the extraordinary statement that it cannot be true that Mark is being influenced by the Zechariah passage because there is no reference to the Zechariah passage to be found here, either in Mark or in Matthew who follows him, in spite of the fact that he has just asserted that it is the relationship of Mark 11:20-23 with the Zechariah passage that raised the whole question in the first place. He then says, of all things, that the first alternative is right --- even though he has just gotten through saying that it is wrong. Then one final note that makes the mystery complete: In the light
of the above statement, it is clear, says Manson, that it was Jesus who had the Zechariah passage in mind all along — the one that is not alluded to by either Mark or Matthew, and the conclusion is therefore that "Mark was here true to history."

Manson's argument here is hardly a model of clarity but to the extent that he does say something, it is to be regarded as inadequate for the following reasons: First, the relation of Mark 11:20-23 to Zechariah 14:4 is anything but clear. On the one hand he wants to build his whole case on it, and on the other hand, he says that there is no explicit reference to it either in Mark or Matthew and thus one cannot make any deductions on the basis of it. And when one compares the Zechariah passage to Mark 11:20-23 it is no wonder that Harnack and Bultmann overlooked it. The two passages have nothing whatever in common. About the only connecting-link that exists — and this is the foundation of Manson's argument—is that in the Zechariah passage the Mount of Olives is a mountain and the Mark passage has the word "mountain" in it, and that something happens to the mountain in both passages. In Zechariah it "shall cleave in the midst thereof" and in Mark it is "cast into the sea." There is hardly enough here to build a whole argument on and even Manson admits that the relationship is not an explicit one. Second, it assumes that Jesus had the Zechariah passage in mind when he uttered the mountain-logion and this argument is based on the fact that Mark could not have had the Zechariah passage in mind when he wrote his Gospel because there is no clear reference to the Zechariah passage to be found in Mark. Why it must be
assumed that because Mark was not thinking about the Zechariah passage Jesus was, is never stated. A much more likely situation is that neither one had the Zechariah passage in mind. Finally, it assumes that Mark received the mountain-logion situationless and then inserted it into a historical context (howbeit the right one). But Manson himself rejects this by saying that the first of his two proposed explanations for the non-accidental result of Mark's placing the logion properly is to be accepted, namely, "that the tradition known to Mark preserved traces of the original context of the word." If this is true, and it likely is, Mark could hardly have gotten it situation-less.

The second illustration that Manson uses to show a "re-historicizing" tendency in the Gospels is an analysis of Matthew 5:39-40 Luke 6:29. Manson notes that Luke has discarded three Greek expressions - ἐπιτίμησε, ὀτρέψεως, and κρίσην — in favour of smoother words and that for this reason Harnack considers the Matthew text to be original. Manson then compares the Greek text of Matthew 5:39-40 with Isaiah 50:6,8 (LXX):

Matthew 5:39-40

ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν μὴ ἀντιστήσητε
τῷ πονηρῷ ἀλλ' ὡς τις σε ἐπιτίμησεν
εἰς τὴν δὲ εἰρήνην οὐκ ὑπάρχει ὀτρέψεως
καὶ τὴν ἀλλήν καὶ τῷ θέλοντι σοι
κρίσην καὶ τὸν χωτικὸν σου λαβεῖν
ἀφετέρῳ καὶ τὸ ἰμάτιον.

Isaiah 50:6,8 (LXX)

τὸν νωτὸν μου δέδωκα εἰς ἁμάρτια
τὰς δὲ ἁμαρτίας μου εἰς ἐπιτίμησιν
τὸ δὲ πρόσωπόν μου οὐκ ἀπετρέψατο
δι' ἐμοὶ ὁ δικαίωμα μεταξὺ τῶν
ὁ κρίνομενος μοι; ἀντιστήσην μοι
ἀμα.

94 Messiah, pp. 31-32; Bist Du, pp. 43-45.
He notes that the Isaiah passage is one of the "Servant of the Lord" passages and that there is remarkable linguistic similarity between Matthew and Isaiah. Assuming that the Q logion is a genuine word of Jesus, and even Bultmann is willing to grant this, and that it was uttered in Aramaic,

"We have next to ask ourselves whether or not the requirement of non-resistance in its original form was consciously worded by Jesus with an allusion to the example of the redeeming Servant of Yahweh in Isaiah. If it was, we may then explain the coincidences in expression between the Greek version of our Lord's word in Matthew and the LXX text of Isaiah in one or other of two ways. We may assume (a) that the Greek translators of Q observed the allusion to the Isaianic Servant in the saying of Jesus and reproduced it in a form reminiscent of the language of the LXX. In this case the Q form of the saying is conserved in Matthew and lost to a large extent in Luke. Or we may assume (b) that the Greek translators of Q did not pick up the allusion to the Servant, in which case the Q form would be as in Luke. In this case, however, we should have to suppose that Matthew noticed the allusion which Q had missed, and restored the original character of the word under Septuagintal influences. In the one case the tradition preserves the original colouring of the saying throughout; in the other case it restores the colouring after it has been temporarily obscured."\(^\odot\)

So Manson argues. But so generalized an argument as this is of no real value in proving that there is a "re-historicizing" tendency at work in the Gospels. What he must go on to show is that (a) is false and that (b) is true. Then he could reasonably argue that Matthew has in fact re-historicized the Q material by putting back into it its lost allusions to Isaiah 50:6,8. But

\(^{95}\) Messiah, pp. 31-32; Bist Du, pp. 44-45.
Manson nowhere does this and the reason for it must be evident. No one could seriously assert that Luke here is the original version of Q. Harnack has cogently argued the contrary and even Manson is inclined to accept the strength of his argument. Since this is the case, how can Manson use this material to prove that there is "...as the case may be, the restoration of the historical character of a tradition,"\textsuperscript{96} to be observed here? Quite obviously, he cannot. Manson's re-historicizing theory must therefore be rejected because he cannot produce any cogent evidence for it.

In spite of the fact however that Manson's re-historicizing theory must be rejected, his generalized conclusion still stands, the Gospels are historically reliable unless proven otherwise.\textsuperscript{97}

\textbf{C. The Gospels are not Creations of the Church}

The final conclusion that Manson makes concerning the Gospels is that although they are Church documents, they are not the \textit{creation} of the Church. The Church acted as the custodian of the tradition that it had received and passed on, sometimes altered, most often not, what it had received. This is not to say however that as custodian of the tradition the Church simply handed over the traditions without making use of them in the contemporary situation. This was not the case. The Church did sometimes alter the material and often used it to explain itself. Thus, for example, when the Church came into contact with the followers

\textsuperscript{96}Messiah, p. 30; Bist Du, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{97}Luke, pp. 53, 56.
of John the Baptist, they made use of the traditions of Jesus concerning John. 98 But such usage does not mean that the church made up the stories about John. Rather there was a free-floating milieu of tradition, some logia with historical contexts attached to them, some quite situation-less. Then from this store of logia the Church drew when it needed material to refute an antagonist. Gradually the number of anecdotes became less and less as the eye-witnesses died and from the remaining logia and stories, the Gospels were written. And even here a selective principle was at work. In no Gospel is the whole story told. They represent a selection of the stories and anecdotes that were current at the time and place where the particular Gospel in question was written.

One final remark on this point. Although it is true that the Gospel material circulated orally before it was written down and there is the likelihood that some post resurrection material was added to the common store of logia and anecdotes, this does not mean that the whole process took place unchecked. There existed during the first generation of Christianity, when most of its stories about Jesus were oral, eye witnesses who could be called upon to verify the stories to see if they were authentic or not. In fact it was partly because these very eye witnesses were dying off that the Church wrote down the material of Jesus in the first place. So when one talks about the pre-literary period of the Gospels he must be careful not to make his case too negative, there were positive factors at work as well as negative ones.

THE HISTORICAL JESUS IN THE WORKS OF
WILLIAM MANSON

I. Introduction

The question now arises as to who Manson thought Jesus the Messiah to be. That is, on the basis of his view of history and his view of the nature of the Gospels as historical sources, what can be known about Jesus. This is a historical question and the answer must lie in what Manson's view of history and historical sources is. But at this point a problem arises. Although Manson says a great deal on the subject of history, he nowhere wrote directly on the subject of Jesus as a historical person. He says a great deal about what Jesus taught and claimed himself to be, but of his life as a *curriculum vitae*, he nowhere wrote. Despite this fact however, which must be taken into consideration when one considers Manson's view of the historical Jesus, something may still be said on the subject. Manson does speak summarily on what he considers Jesus' life to be and says a great deal about the claims and titles of Jesus. This fact allows one to go through Manson's works and put together a picture of Jesus as a historical person, even if it is not as complete as one might wish it to be.

One final word by way of introduction to Manson's view of Jesus as a historical person. The fact that Jesus' life cannot be written up as a biography is not to be considered wholly as a minus, historically speaking. The fact that the events of Jesus' life as they are found in the Gospels cannot be put in some provable
historical sequences does not mean either that the events are not true or that we are at a loss as to what to say regarding these events. It is true that they cannot be put in any historically provable sequence, but the events allow one to speak nevertheless. Only one must be careful what he says. He must test each piece of evidence in its own right to determine what can be said about it.

Turning directly to Manson it is found that he writes of Jesus' life from two points of view. First, he writes from an external historical point of view. One would expect this of course, Manson's view of history being what it is. Since he is convinced that the Gospels as historical documents are, for the most part, trustworthy accounts of Jesus' life, one would expect to find him arguing pro and con the historicity of the events of Jesus' life.¹

The second point of view from which Manson writes is what might be called the internal or psychological-historical point of view. Here Manson talks of Jesus as a person undergoing crises and developing in his understanding of himself and his life. There is a large amount of external history involved in this, but the emphasis is upon Jesus' reaction to the events and his psychological state at the time of the crisis or event.

For Manson it is impossible wholly to separate these two points of view. The reason for this lies in the fact that often it was the event that gave rise to the psychological state of Jesus at that particular point in time, or it was the psychological state of Jesus

¹See Messiah, p. 12; Bist Du, p. 22.
that brought about the external event. This being the case it is necessary to look at Jesus' life from these two points of view more or less simultaneously. When this is done it is possible to understand why Manson structures Jesus' life as a series of seven historical crises. These crises mark the progression of Jesus' internal development as seen in the events of Jesus' life. This series of crises will be the outline for this particular section.

II. The Historical Jesus

A. The Preliminary History

Manson divides Jesus' life up into certain sections and calls the first part, that is, the period of time from his birth to his baptism, the preliminary history of Jesus' life.\(^2\) The reason for this is two-fold. First, we do not have much to go on in dealing with these years and second, it was Jesus' baptism that began his public ministry, properly so-called. This is not to say that these years are unimportant however. During this period of time one can still discern, even in the scanty material available to us, the beginning of Jesus' developing consciousness as God's Son the Messiah.

This period begins, quite naturally, with Jesus' birth. In dealing with this Manson speaks with a certain amount of reserve. While being careful not to deny the possibility of a virgin birth, he nowhere unequivocally affirms it. He prefers to speak of the sources and what they took Jesus' birth to be. Consequently, he

\(^2\)Gospels, p. 21.
Un¬savs: 

"(1) The Virgin-Birth of Jesus was not apparent¬ly a universal part of the earliest evangelical tradition, since it is not recorded by the Gospel according to Mark, and is nowhere directly alluded to in the rest of the New Testament. But this silence is no reason for questioning the historical fact.

(2) The divergent accounts in Matthew and Luke show that when the Evangelist wrote, the original facts were not current in any one fixed form.

(3) As to the great central truth, which the birth narratives embody, the unique and supernatural relation of Jesus to God, there is no uncertainty. It is certified by all that Jesus taught regarding himself, and it is presupposed by the Gospel history. Jesus claimed to be the Son of God in the most absolute sense (Matthew 11:27, Luke 10:22). Knowing this, we have all."

Later Manson wrote that some uncertainty existed as to whether the virgin birth was attested by the Judean source from which the rest of the birth narratives were derived. In spite of this, however, Manson still contended that even the Judean source did not cease to be a witness to the supernatural character of the birth of Jesus. "Jesus would still be more than the product of an historical development and more than the culmination of an ethical process in humanity. Jesus comes from God in fulfilment of the agelong promise of redemption, and Luke's addition, if it be an addition, touches only the mode in which, according to the presuppositions of an age in which the supernatural was commonly defined in physical or supraphysical terms, the entrance of Jesus into history was rendered possible."

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Of Jesus' early years in Nazareth little is known. We may surmise that in many respects Jesus' childhood was like any other childhood of that time, this being excepted — Jesus even at this early time knew himself to be something more than just another child. This is hinted at in Luke 2:49. Jesus' answer here to his parents is full of significance because "He who now spoke of God as His Father was soon to speak of Himself as Son of God in a sense surpassing all ordinary human consciousness." The germs of the filial consciousness that later found expression in the words 'all things have been delivered unto me by my Father, and no one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him' (Luke, 10:22) are here to be seen.

B. The Historical Prologue: Jesus' Baptism

Manson treats the ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism as the real historical prologue to Jesus' public ministry. What was evident only in germinal form during the preceding years now finds a fuller expression from a Jesus who is more consciously aware of who he is. In this regard "the baptism at the Jordan stands as the frontispiece to the ministry of Jesus in Mark. It represents the first step towards the retrieval through Christ of that integrity with God from which man lapsed through disobedience."  

But Mark sees more in Jesus' baptism than just the beginning of a historical process of redemption. It is expressive of a whole philosophy of history and of time, because in the Bible time and history are not a stream but a structure. They are:

"A structure of divine acts in which all the parts are held together. First, there is the exodus from Egypt, then to this is added the prophetic interpretation of Israel's calling based on that event, then to this in turn is linked the later eschatology of Israel having part of its roots in the same event. So Israel's religious history becomes a coherent unity. Its elements are like the linked components of a moving train with the Exodus travelling forward like the rest and bringing up the rear. In the shaft of light within which the Bible presents the history of salvation the beginning and end of the process are interconnected. So John appears as the fulfilment of an Exodus promise, and when Jesus at his baptism passes through the waters of Jordan He is inaugurating the completion of what was begun at the Red Sea."

John came proclaiming that Israel must repent and be baptised because of the impending judgment. One was coming who would baptise with fire. But what did this mean to Jesus? Why did he come to be baptised if John's baptism was one of repentance? Here Manson sees the first great crisis in Jesus' life. Jesus had been struggling within himself as to what his destiny was to be and how he related to John who came baptising. Jesus had been meditating upon Isaiah 53 when he went to be baptised and his thoughts centered round the Suffering Servant there depicted. He then went to John and in his first public act identified himself with sinful man and heard a voice from heaven attesting that this was well-pleasing to

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8 JATC, pp. 36-37. See also WOTC, pp. 33-34.
God. 9 Jesus was now certain of his Messianic vocation. 10 As to the heavenly voice which contained an echo of Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1, "If Jesus had already been thinking of these two figures in connection with Himself, the meaning of the Divine voice would be perfectly apparent. It meant that the two lines of Old Testament prophecy, marked out respectively by the Davidic Messiah and the Suffering Servant of the Lord, were now to be united and fulfilled in Himself." 11

So Jesus at his baptism became aware of the mystery of his own person. He was God’s Son in a way that no one else was; he was the Messiah who came fulfilling the Old Testament promises of a Servant and a Son who would offer redemption to Israel; He was God’s suffering Servant who was to lay down his life for mankind, and he was the one who was well-pleasing to God. 12

C. The Temptation in the Wilderness

The first crisis in Jesus’ life was quickly followed by a second and "if the Baptism represents the moment when the sense of His messianic vocation became fully clear and certain, the temptation in the wilderness represents the subsequent conflict through which the mind of Jesus passed in connection with the Messianic ideas of His own time." 13

Jesus was compelled by the Spirit to go out into the wilderness

11 Gospels, p. 28. See also CVKG, p. 130.
12 WOTC, pp. 26, 36, 81-82.
13 Gospels, p. 28. See also IG, p. 18; WOTC, pp. 36-37.
of Judea there to fast and pray. At this time Jesus, conscious
now that he was the Son of God, struggled with the idea of what
sort of Messiahship his was to be. The first temptation dealt
with the contrast between Jesus' present state of hunger and the
will of God as revealed. Why was God's messiah hungry when he
was doing God's will? Surely God would provide both for him and
for the nation. Turn the stones into bread and verify that God
had called him to be the Messiah. This temptation thus became
the temptation to seek a sign from God and thus tempt God. But
Jesus did not doubt God whether a sign be given or not.\textsuperscript{14} In the
second temptation "Jesus is invited to construe his election by
God in terms of a Messiahship founded on earthly rule."\textsuperscript{15} But
Jesus rejects an earthly rule that would have to be built upon
militarism and hatred of Rome. The third temptation turns upon
whether a special calling from God would be accompanied by a sign.
The tempter uses a Messianic Psalm to entice Jesus into accrediting
himself. But Jesus rejected it. "He saw men being led astray
by fanatical hopes, expecting interventions of divine power
instead of reasonably submitting to the declared principles of God's
spiritual government of the world, and this severance of God's
power from the ethical nature of His holy will Jesus will not
approve."\textsuperscript{16}

The ultimate meaning of the whole of the temptation would
"therefore seem to be that Jesus, conscious of a singular respons-

\textsuperscript{14}Luke, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{15}loc. cit.
ibility to seek the redemption of his nation, has to meet the challenge of certain facts and ideas, all more or less connected with the traditional conceptions of Israel's Saviour, by which the clear imperative of his call is threatened or obscured.\textsuperscript{17}

Jesus thus passed through the second great crisis unscathed.

At this point it is necessary to pause for a moment to put things in order psychologically, by examining the terms that Jesus used to explain what his Messiahship was to be. Having rejected three false views of Messiahship, what was the proper conception to be? Here Manson singles out three terms that show what Jesus understood his destiny to be.

The first term is the title "Son of God." Manson cannot say too emphatically or too often that a unique relation existed between Jesus and God and that that relationship was expressed by the title Son of God. Jesus was aware of being related to God in a way that no one else ever was or ever would be.\textsuperscript{18} This filial consciousness of Jesus was one that had been with him from the very beginning of his life. His divine Sonship "is implied by the birth-narratives of Matthew and Luke, and we have also seen reason to believe that such a relation formed the basis of our Lord's consciousness from the start, preceding and underlying His official Messianic consciousness."\textsuperscript{19} Jesus thus was born as Son

\textsuperscript{17}loc. cit., See also Luke, p. 36; JATC, p. 38; CVKG, p. 72; Messiah, pp. 52-53; Bist Du, p. 69.

\textsuperscript{18}Gospels, p. 78; Messiah, pp. 72, 103-109; Bist Du, pp. 91, 125-133; IO, pp. 67, 136, 160; Hebrews, p. 97; WOTC, pp. 30-31, "Jesus Christ and the New Testament Religion" (ND), p. 28.

\textsuperscript{19}Gospels, pp. 77-78; See also Luke, p. 9.
of God and as he grew he grew in awareness that he was indeed Son of God. The Temple incident shows this. "Jesus is already understood to use the name [My Father] with a unique intensity of realization and with a corresponding consciousness of filial obligation and responsibility."\(^{20}\) As Jesus grew his own self-awareness grew until at his baptism his Sonship to God became a final certainty. "The words 'and no one knows who the Son is except the Father' take us back to the experience of Jesus at his baptism, which made a separation between him and other men, consisting as it did in the revelation to Jesus of the Messianic mystery. Here then the underlying filial consciousness of Jesus... comes at last to open expression. If Jesus did not possess from the start a sense of the absolute uniqueness of his own experience of the Father, the recognition has been forced on him by his peculiar fortunes and by his extraordinary engagement to bring Israel to God, and it involves not only that God is the source of Jesus' knowledge of himself as the Messiah, but also that because of this knowledge Jesus is uniquely commissioned to declare God to Israel."\(^{21}\) Jesus then went out and preached that God's Kingdom was coming and he did this because he knew that he was the Son of God. He based his whole life and preaching of the Kingdom of God on this fact.

"We take the sequence of thought to be this, that God was so real to Jesus, so close, so immediate, so interfused in all things, that to pass from this consciousness to the thought of God's idea as already realized in the world

\(^{21}\)Luke, p. 128.
was but a single step. The consciousness of God in which Jesus lived and moved contained in potency the full realization of God's plan of redemption for mankind, nor is there any doubt as to what that consciousness was. It was the filial consciousness, hinted at in Luke 2:49, and openly disclosed in Matthew 11:25-27 (=Luke 10:21-22). The declarations made in this passage rest not on the momentary glimpse of a truth which was not habitual to Jesus' mind, but are rather the welling up of convictions which were always present and which formed the continuous substratum of his consciousness. On the one hand Jesus knew Himself to be living in complete harmony with the mind and will of God. On the other hand He was just as conscious that in men around Him this harmony was non-existent or broken. But in the sense of having and possessing God Himself He had the assurance that God's idea for humanity could not be long hindered. He had only to reveal God to men and the Kingdom would have come. This which we may take to be the ultimate connection between the filial consciousness of Jesus and the proclamation of the nearness of the Kingdom was, of course, powerfully reinforced by the baptism-experience in which Jesus' thought of His vocation attained final Divine certainty and Jesus in proclaiming the nearness of the Kingdom was reserving the thought of whatever mediatorial work it devolved on Him to do. 

So strong was Jesus' certainty that he was God's Son that not only did he base his message of the Kingdom upon it, but he based his whole certainty of success upon it. "This Credo [that He would be vindicated by His return] rested on an experience of God which Jesus knew to be absolute and final. When we trace it to its ultimate roots, it is based on the sense of a perfect and unbroken fellowship with God, realizing the idea of Sonship to the Father. Jesus was conscious of being perfectly at one with God..."

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22 CVKG, pp. 77-78. See further CVKG, pp. 76, 79, 125-126; Luke, pp. 64, 222.

23 CVKG, p. 173. See also CVKG, p. 174.
Hanson makes one final observation about the title "Son of God." Not only is it used in a filial sense, denoting Jesus' unique relation to God, it is also used in a more or less official sense denoting that Jesus was the Messiah. "Thus the High Priest adjures Jesus to tell them whether He is 'the Christ, the Son of God.' The apposition of the second of the two titles to the first shows that they are to be taken as practically equivalent. The admission that Jesus is the Son of God implies no more here than that He is the Christ."

The second term that Manson sees as a self-designation of Jesus which is expressive of his own consciousness of himself is the term 'Servant of the Lord.' Now it is true that Jesus never used the term as a subject, that is, Jesus never said "the Servant of the Lord came to seek and to save that which is lost" but this does not mean that the idea was not in Jesus' mind. The idea permeates the whole of his thought as a predicate. For example, Jesus said, 'I am among you as one who serves' (Luke 22:27), or 'The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45). Now the important thing to note about the Suffering Servant concept is that it nowhere in Jesus' day was used to denote the Messiah. It was far from the thought of Jesus' Jewish contemporaries that the Messiah should suffer. But to Jesus, the Messiah could only be

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24 Gospels, p. 77. See also GVKG, p. 154.
25 See Messiah, p. 111; Bist Du, p. 134.
the Messiah if he suffered. "Rejected and despised, and yet the Messiah! Nay, rejected and despised, and therefore the Messiah! This is the Christian 'mystery' into which Jesus' mind has now been initiated, and into which he must initiate his followers. Judaism had never ascribed to the Messiah a destiny of personal suffering. . . On the other hand, Jesus, in bringing the Kingdom of God to Israel now knows himself appointed for humiliation, hatred, and rejection, and the conception of a Messiah who fulfills his destiny through suffering becomes from this time onwards a recurrent note in his teaching."27

The climax to this line of thought that was running through the mind of Jesus comes when he pronounces his life to be a ransom for many. Jesus saw this as the logical consequence of his thoughts on Isaiah 53. Thus "when Jesus said 'the Son of Man must suffer,' he was expressing not a historical probability, however great, but a moral necessity inseparable from His consciousness of His calling. . . As we have seen, the mind of Jesus from the time of the baptism onwards was continually centering round the conception of the Suffering Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53, and now certain words in which He speaks of His death make it clear that the necessity which He claims for His death finds explanation in the Isaianic passage. In other words, Jesus' death is sacrificial."28 Thus Manson feels it appropriate to say that Jesus lived and died as God's obedient Servant who always did God's

28 Gospels, p. 82.
will even to the laying down of his life.

The third term to be examined relative to Jesus' Messiahship is the term 'Son of Man.' Manson calls this the characteristic self-designation of Jesus.\(^{29}\) It occurs some eighty times in the Gospels and is always put on the lips of Jesus. Nowhere does someone else refer to Jesus as the Son of Man. This fact leads Manson to conclude that the term cannot be the creation of the Church, but must be a term used by Jesus when referring to himself. It stands to reason that if the term were a creation of the Church, one would find it being applied to Jesus, but such is not the case. It is only applied by Jesus to himself. Consequently one can only say that Jesus used the term of himself.\(^{30}\)

In discussing this term Manson notes that "the title occurs in every stratum of the evangelical tradition, being found in Mark, in Q, in the special sources of Matthew and Luke and in the Fourth Gospel."\(^{31}\) Thus the title represents an integral part of the original tradition and no one can give any adequate account of Jesus' words without taking it into consideration.

On the vexing question of the origin of the term, Manson examines the possible places that it could have come from. He observes that the term is used upwards of ninety times in Ezekiel and there it "denotes the prophet himself whom God has raised up and sent to the children of Israel to win them from disobedience

\(^{29}\text{CVKG, p. 122.}\)
\(^{30}\text{See Messiah, pp. 65-66; Bist Du, pp. 82-84.}\)
\(^{31}\text{CVKG, p. 131.}\)
to righteousness,"32 but Manson does not think that Jesus drew the term 'Son of Man' from Ezekiel; "Certain peculiarities in Jesus' usage of the expression are against its derivation from Ezekiel."33 It is more likely that the term came from the book of Daniel by way of the apocalyptic thought of his time.34 This being the case there is no disputing its Messianic significance for although it is true that the term is not a Messianic title in Jesus' day, there can be no disputation of the fact that the term had Messianic reference. Therefore when Jesus chose the term Son of Man to designate his special function "no rejection in substance of the Jewish hope of salvation is implied. Nevertheless the preference of the term not only indicates that the Kingdom which Jesus seeks comes from God, but reflects and signifies that association of Himself with humanity sinful and suffering, towards which His complete obedience to God as the Beloved Son impelled Him. The prediction in Daniel gave Him language by which...His extraordinary sense of divine engagement to bring Israel to God could be stated."35

But Jesus did not simply take over the term from Daniel and the apocalyptic writings of his own day. When he took it he made two very important changes from those writings. First, "by relating the title to the present, Jesus asserted that what was predicted concerning the Son of Man was already being fulfilled in Himself," and second "by associating the Son of Man with another

33loc. cit.  
34CVKG, p. 123; Luke, pp. 52-53; Gospels, pp. 75-76; "Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels" (ND), p. 57.  
35WOTC, pp. 27-28.
conception, not hitherto regarded as Messianic, viz, the 'Servant of Jehovah' conception in Deutero-Isaiah, Jesus taught that the Messiah could fulfil his destiny, and the Kingdom come, only by the Cross."36

When Manson examines the term, he notes that it is used by Jesus in three different ways.37 First, there are those sayings such as Mark 14:62, Matthew 19:28, 25:31, and Luke 17:24 where the parousia is in view.38 Here Jesus the Messiah is expressing his certainty of ultimate triumph over the evil forces that exist in the world. It makes no difference what the rulers of this world do or say about him, in God's own time He will return with the clouds in divine judgment to vindicate his earthly claims and to rescue his earthly flock. The second class of Son of Man sayings are those which occur in such passages as Mark 2:10, 28; Matthew 11:19, 8:20; and Luke 19:19 where Jesus' life on earth is in view.39 The significance of this group of sayings is that we "understand them to mean that the eschatological hope is already being fulfilled, inasmuch as Jesus is already Son of Man under conditions of His earthly life."40 The final group of Son

36CVKG, p. 124.

37In JAIC, pp. 68-70, Manson only allows for two categories. These are, first, "a group which bear his humiliation, which associate the fortunes of the Son of Man with the condition and experience of humanity" (p. 68) and second, there is the "ultimate sublimation of the Son of Man in contrast with his earthly humiliation" (p. 69).

38CVKG, pp. 132-34; Messiah, p. 115; Bist Du, pp. 139-140.

39CVKG, pp. 134-139; Messiah, pp. 116-117; Bist Du, pp. 140-42.

40CVKG, p. 135.
of Man sayings is the series that predicts suffering and death for the Son of Man. 41 "Jesus here expressly identifies Himself as Son of Man with the Suffering Servant of God in Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12..." 42 Thus the Cross becomes a necessity for the Son of Man to fulfil his task on earth and must be accepted before the final parousia in glory.

Now when all of this is taken together, it is evident what sort of Messiahship Manson conceives Jesus' to be. Jesus comes as the Son of God who is aware of the mystery of His own person, the mystery expressing itself in Jesus' claim to forgive sins and in Jesus' unique place in the history of his nation. He is Son of God in a way that no one else ever could be. He is also Son of Man, which term in Jesus' mouth is expressive of a Messianic calling. He comes, as the Man in Daniel, to live, to suffer and ultimately to come again in glory, after the cross has been endured. In enduring the cross he is the Servant of God as predicted by Isaiah. That Servant who suffers for the sins of the people and does not hold back even unto death. This then is what Manson conceives Jesus' messiahship to be and it is this that filled Jesus' mind as he returned from the forty days fast and temptation in the wilderness. Jesus now knew that he could not rely upon worldly power but only upon God, even though that meant ultimately going to the Cross. But what matter if a cross had to be endured, if this was the only way God's Kingdom would come. Since the

41 CVKG, pp. 139-144; Messiah, p. 116; Bist Du, p. 140.
42 CVKG, pp. 139-140.
Servant is come to do his master's will, that will must be done even if it means going to the cross. But the cross would not be the end. Beyond the cross there was the certainty of triumph and victory. Jesus would come again in great glory to vindicate himself and all who trust in him.

D. Peter's Confession at Caesarea Philippi

After John was imprisoned, Jesus came to Galilee and taught in and around Capernaum. Thus his Galilean ministry, which lasted about eighteen months, began. His mission here was three-fold: he was to preach, to heal and to perform miracles to the glory of God. Dealing with each of these in order, Jesus' preaching was that the Kingdom of God had come in his own person and works. The great time of God's visitation had arrived in the work of Jesus. Everywhere Jesus went he tried to make clear what that meant. It meant to repent of one's past sins and begin to live a new life of submission to God. It also meant to see in Jesus' person the locus of the activity of God. Here in person was God's representative Man who was proclaiming the Good News of deliverance to the captives and the opening of the eyes of the blind. One thing that Jesus did not do at this time however was to proclaim openly that he was the Messiah. This is evident from the book of Mark where one reads of a messianic secret. This secret is to be taken as historical. Jesus did not want to acknowledge that he was the Messiah (though in fact he knew this to be the case) because of the

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43 See Gospels, pp. 30-39; WOTC, p. 38.
danger of his teaching being misconstrued. He did not want to be taken as a political Messiah. As a result he chose terms, such as Son of Man, that did not have any political overtones to designate himself.

But Jesus' ministry was not just to preach. He was also called to heal those who were ill. Here God's power was made manifest. The Kingdom of God was coming in power now in the midst of God's people. It was God's desire that all evil should be combatted in His name and illness was as great an evil as any. Consequently Jesus reached out his hand to heal the deaf, the blind, the sick, and the demon-possessed.

Finally, Jesus was to perform miracles in the name of God. Manson makes much of this fact in describing Jesus' Galilean ministry.

"(1) All our records ascribe to Jesus a miraculous power over the bodily, as well as the spiritual, nature of men. Our earliest Gospel, the Gospel according to Mark, presents the Lord far less as the teacher than as the healer and succorer of men. In fact, if in Matthew we have the argument from prophecy that Jesus is the Christ, in Mark we have the argument from miracle.

(2) The miracles are associated with the words of Jesus, which cannot be explained except on the assumption that the miracles are historical facts. In particular we have words like those in Matthew 12:28, Luke 11:20 which show that Jesus saw in his healing power the express proof of his Messianic calling. So to deny or to question the miracles is to remove, not merely a section of the historical testimony to Jesus, but the main part of his redeeming work.

(3) The general question of the miracles is not to be settled by abstract consideration of what is possible on merely general grounds, but only by consideration of what Jesus was and
what he came to do. It is only due to the position which He holds in the Gospels that we should begin with Him, and not with any theory of what is scientifically normal. If Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, and if God raised Him from the dead, then it creates no difficulty that he should exercise a redemptive power over the forces of nature to which there is no analogy in ordinary human experience. In fact, the miracles are to be proved by Jesus, not Jesus by the miracles. 44

Jesus did not confine his work strictly to Galilee however. He undertook a journey that went northwards into the region of Tyre and Sidon. Here too his power was displayed and God's beneficent rule was shown to men.

As was said, Jesus was, for the most part, silent concerning his Messiahship, but he did make certain claims concerning himself that his disciples and other thoughtful people were certain to have noticed. 45 First, he claimed to forgive sins. Second, he claimed to re-enact the Old Testament Law on his own sole authority in his "I say unto you" pronouncements. Third, he made the most absolute claims to the lives and to the obedience of his followers. Fourth, he claimed to be the fulfiller of all past history, and fifth, he claimed to be the judge whose word would decide the destinies of all men at the last judgment.

These claims were certain to have been noticed by all who spent any time at all with Jesus and the question would naturally arise 'Who is this Jesus of Nazareth?' This exact question came up when Jesus' Galilean Ministry was almost over and he was thinking about

44 Gospels, pp. 37-38.
moving Southwards to Jerusalem to present himself to the leaders of the Nation. It took place at Caesares Philippi and Manson says this is the third great crisis in Jesus' life. Here Jesus, following his rejection in Galilee laid aside his previous reserve and announced his intention to go as Messiah to Jerusalem, and called on His disciples to leave all for his sake, taking even their lives into their hands. It took place in this way. 

The question was propounded in full view of recent happenings in Galilee, including possibly the menace to his life from Antipas. What under these circumstances was to be thought of his work and of its issues? Jesus, who has never till now unsealed his lips even to his disciples on the subject of his Messianic calling, feels that the time has come to throw off his reserves, and he begins by asking 'who do the crowds say that I am?' Various answers are given but the title 'Messiah' is nowhere mentioned. But "when, however, Jesus turns to the inner circle of the disciples and asks 'And who do you say that I am?' the verdict which was missing on the part of the nation is at once forthcoming. Peter, as spokesman of those with whom Jesus has shared his most intimate thoughts of the will of God, pronounces him forthwith the Christ of God. ... According to this confession Jesus stands alone. He is above the prophets. He is the final messenger of God to Israel, the Anointed One to whom judgment is committed, and through whom

\[46\text{IG, pp. 18-19; WOTC, pp. 56-57.}\]
\[47\text{Luke, p. 106.}\]
the Reign of God comes... Jesus at last knows that his work, despite seeming frustration, has not been in vain, and the assurance confirms him in going forward to whatever fate awaits him at the hands of the nation. With Peter's confession the second or Messianic period proper in the Ministry begins."

E. The Transfiguration

Very soon after the third crisis in Jesus' life came the fourth. Mark places it six days and Luke about eight after Peter's momentous confession at Caesarea Philippi. Jesus had taken Peter, James, and John with him away from the other disciples and had begun to pray. "What follows would seem to be of the nature of a vision seen in a trance." Jesus' appearance was altered and his dress turned dazzling white. The meaning of this symbolism was well known in Jewish circles. Judaism knew of a heavenly life in a body of dazzling light. Here it meant that Jesus was filled with God's glory and was seen to be more than a man, he was God's Son filled with God's heavenly light and set apart from all other men. "As for Moses and Elijah who appeared in a vision of glory, etc., Judaism probably included these two historical figures among the men who, after suffering, 'have been taken up' (2 Esdras 6:26). They are intimately associated in Jewish thought with the coming of the Messiah (Malachi 4:4-5) and if the disciples in their vision see them by the side of Jesus, a psychological explanation may be found in the working of this idea upon their subconscious

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mind."  A cloud overshadowed the group and a voice called out that Jesus was God's Chosen one who must be listened to. This final proviso has here a very special point. "Recalling the prediction of Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15, 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet... like unto me; unto him you shall hearken,' it summons the disciples to lay to heart what Jesus says about his death. Hitherto they have resisted that teaching. Now they see it to be involved in the very nature of the Messiah's office. The transfiguration thus signifies the Christianization of the Messianic idea."  

Manson summarizes the meaning of the transfiguration in this way: "By thus transferring their thoughts from the older Messianic ideas to a new centre in a Christ exalted through suffering, the transfiguration becomes the complement and verification of Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi. In both confession and transfiguration the 'mystery' of the personality of Jesus occupies the foreground. In both Peter is prominent, and tries to divert Jesus from going to Jerusalem... In both the death of Jesus is a determining conception (9:22,31). In both Jesus is declared the Chosen of God. Confession and Transfiguration are thus like the parallel limbs of a double rainbow against the dark sky of the Messiah's fortunes."  

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52 Luke, p. 113. See also IG, p. 19.
F. The Institution of the New Covenant

After Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi and the transfiguration, Jesus was now certain what his destiny was to be. He realized that he must go to Jerusalem to present himself to the leaders of the nation only to be rejected. The rejection was to be a final one, even to death. There the Son of Man must suffer at the hands of his people and his disciples must be prepared for just such suffering themselves. With that Jesus moved on toward Jerusalem.

Manson summarizes this part of Jesus' ministry in this way:

"Jesus now turned his face southwards (Luke 9:51) and after passing through Galilee in as unob- served a manner as possible (Mark 9:30), crossed the Jordan and proceeded towards Judea along the Peren side of the river (Mark 10:1). As we see from Mark 10:1, and by the contents of this section of the Marcan Gospel, it was a period of continuous popular instruction as well as of special training for the twelve. . . . One subject now dominated the Lord's mind and reappears continually in his private instruction of the twelve. In a series of repeated predic- tions he strove to bring home to them the neces- sity of His suffering and death (Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33). The intelligence was received by the disciples with blank amazement and incredulity (Mark 8:32, 9:32, 10:32). It imparted a new element into their thought of His Messiahship, for which they were not prepared. But how deep- ly it exercised the mind of Jesus appears, not only by His reiterated announcements of it, but by the strange agitation of spirit which sometimes came over Him in the course of this journey (Mark 10:32)" 53

All this led up to the final week of Jesus' life which Manson describes in some detail. He does this for two reasons. First,
this week is the best attested period of time in Jesus' life and hence it is possible to describe it in some detail, and second, because of the great importance of this week. "In Holy Week we stand before the supreme events which, with their sequel on the first Easter Day, constitute the basis and have shaped the character of the Christian faith."\(^{54}\)

Manson describes the events in this way:

"The light falls on a meridian stage of time on which the concluding acts of a great historical drama, linking together past, present and future time, are passing into fulfilment. Jesus of Nazareth, known to the mass of His contemporaries as a prophet, though not yet as more than a prophet, has arrived at the Holy City for the festival of Passover, and is acclaimed by His disciples and by other pilgrims with wavings of palm branches and with verses chanted from Psalm 118 which celebrate the blessed One who comes in the name of the Lord and brings in the reign of righteousness (Mark 11:9-10).

The next day, Monday, Jesus visits the Temple, cleanses its courts of secular traffic, and protests that, as His Father's house, the sanctuary is to be a house of prayer for all nations (Mark 11:17).

On Tuesday, being interrogated by the hierarchy and the scribes as to the ground of His authority for so acting, Jesus reserves His answer, but in the open parable of the Vineyard, and in other parables and answers to questions, He confronts the rulers of the nation with their age-long unfaithfulness to God's requirement of obedience from His people, and warns them of the terrifying responsibility which has now come to rest on them (Mark 12:9-11), predicting also the destruction of impenitent Jerusalem and the advent of the Last Judgement of the world.

Wednesday is passed in rest and seclusion at Bethany, but on the evening of that day a woman disciple, divining the secret of Jesus and

\(^{54}\)WOTC, p. 17. See also WOTC, p. 20.
prescient of His approaching death, significantly anoints His head with costly unguent, while Judas sells Him to the authorities (Mark 14:311). 55

On the morning of Thursday, the day before his death, Jesus commanded Peter and John to meet a certain servant, who, according to a prior arrangement would be carrying a water-jar. He was then to lead them to an upper room in the house of an adherent of Jesus' and there they were to prepare a final meal for the Lord. 56

The meal was a cheber or chaburah which was a religious festival with a ritual element. 57

Manson recognizes that there are textual difficulties and differences in the three accounts of the last supper, but nevertheless feels justified in concluding "...all three accounts agree in the following points: (1) All three connect the broken bread with Jesus' body. (2) All three connect Jesus' Blood with a covenant which He here makes. (3) All three represent Jesus' Blood as being shed 'for many'" 58

The significance of these agreements cannot be overemphasized and Manson wishes to press the point home. Jesus the Messiah has now arrived at the final moments of his life. He knows, indeed he has known for some time, that he

55 WOTC, pp. 17-18. See also Gospels, pp. 93-94.


57 Messiah, p. 139; Bist Du, pp. 166-67. This is Manson's final position on the nature of the meal. In Gospels, pp. 93-94, Manson accepted the Synoptic chronology and called the meal a Passover. In Luke, pp. 242-243, he moved to the position of saying John's chronology was correct but the meal was a Passover nonetheless and justified this by an appeal to Chwolson. Here, in Messiah, p. 139, he rejects his two earlier positions and calls the meal simply a cheber.

58 Gospels, p. 85.
must die in Jerusalem. It is so imminent that he had secretly to prepare for the meal he now eats with his disciples, and it is at the final meal that he reveals in symbolic yet unmistakeable terms what the meaning of his person and Messiahship is. His self-disclosure as Messiah has now reached its high-point in the explanation that his coming death was a sacrificial death for the sins of his people. The above agreements of the sources make this plain. "Here again" says Manson, "as in Mark 10:45, the echoes of the passage are unmistakeable. The words 'for many' --- 'this is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many' contain a clear reference to Isaiah 53:11,12. As the servant there 'poured out his soul unto death,' so Jesus here represents His blood as shed for many. The words 'my blood of the covenant' at the same time recall the institution of the Passover Covenant in Exodus 24:3,8 where Moses says of the sprinkled blood, 'Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you.' Jesus, therefore, in giving Himself up to death, was conscious of taking the sins of men upon Himself, and thereby establishing a new covenant with God. And here we reach the culminating point in His Messianic consciousness."^59

G. The Agony in the Garden

After Jesus had undergone the fifth crisis of his life in the Upper Room where he finally explained in open terms that his death

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^59 Gospels, pp. 85-86. See also Luke, p. 241; WOTC, pp. 73-74; Messiah, pp. 145-146; Bist Du, pp. 173-174; IG, pp. 73-74.
was certain and that it was sacrificial, the sixth crisis quickly followed. Jesus is now in the garden praying over his recent decision and "the dark premonitions which had gathered round the Saviour's mind during the closing moments in the Supper-room acquire a terrible intensity in the ensuing hour on the Mount of Olives." Even at this final stage in Jesus' life Satan is making a play to divert Jesus from the Cross. The last battle was now being waged. Jesus realized the tremendous significance of this time and prayed in agony that he be strengthened to drink the cup of death without faltering. It was a terrible moment but "the last decision was fought out to victory." 

H. The Desolation on the Cross

Late on Thursday night, just after Jesus had prayed so agonizingly, yet victoriously concerning his coming death, Judas led a group of Jewish authorities to the garden where Jesus was arrested. The trial of Jesus that followed is described by Manson in this way:

"We can distinguish two stages in the trial of Jesus, and it is important to take them singly. First Jesus is brought before the Sanhedrin, and asked by Caiaphas whether He is 'the Christ, the Son of the Blessed' (Mark xiv, 61). To this question He replies in the affirmative and on that ground is condemned. The blasphemy (Mark xiv. 64) lies not in the fact of a Messianic claim being made, but in the fact that it is made by One who answers so little to the Jewish ideal. Later, Jesus is brought before Pilate, and there the accusation takes a political form. Jesus is arraigned on the ground that He claims to be 'the King of the

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61 IG, p. 19; See also WOTC, p. 71.
Jews' (Mark xv. 2), and on this ground is finally surrendered by Pilate to His accusers. The desire of the religious authorities to involve Jesus on a political charge thus triumphed. The religious accusation alone would not have been sufficient to make a case before the Roman procurator. 62

Early on Friday morning, after being scourged, Jesus was taken out of the city and crucified. 63 The great event was now accomplished. Jesus the Messiah had died for the sins of the world.


I. The Rise and Development of Robinson's New Quest of the Historical Jesus

A. First Glimmers of the New Quest

The first glimmers of Robinson's new quest appeared in January of 1955 when he wrote an article entitled "Jesus' Understanding of History." In this article he was trying to find what Jesus thought history to be by analyzing Jesus' parabolic teaching. He says that Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer had seen the eschatology in Jesus' thought but did not carry through their insight. It remained for Bultmann (and others) to see that the Kingdom of God was not on the pattern of "immanent-transcendent" but "present-future" and that the problem of time and history was thus central. "Rather than temporal occurrence being merely an example or shadow of transcendent reality, so that the source of the truth of temporal occurrence is outside time, one came to grapple with the outlook that the ontological basis of historical event is itself historical event rather than some eternal possibility or potentiality." With Paul the resurrection was the event where he saw the future anticipated in time --- an "inaugural

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2Ibid. p. 18. Later Robinson appears to contradict this. "Such is the example Jesus gives his disciples as to how to react to a situation characterized by the prophetic presence of the non-historical in history" (Ibid., p. 24); Also, "The ontological correlative to history is God's reign, but this is a paradoxical affirmation of faith, in that God's reign is non-historical, unambiguous" (loc. cit.)
event". But can one find the same anticipatory attitude ("inaugural event") in Jesus? Robinson studies the eschatological parables in order to see. The eschatological parables have been misunderstood all through history. Today it is known that they are to be interpreted existentially --- find one point from the hearer's point of view where the existential challenge lies. "The eschatological parables are largely concerned with the clarification of the theological situation in which the original hearer of the parable finds himself. . . The hearer finds himself placed between the already-historical and the not-yet-historical [and] it is precisely this tension-laden situation between prophetic history and not-yet-historical fulfillment which is the basis and theological setting of the eschatological parables, calling forth their utterance."3

Since the parables are not allegories, they do not contain historical details, but only a formal pattern of past history and future glory. The details of the parable are only significant when they produce a response. So the formal outline of the parable must be examined to see if this "historical" pattern is in evidence. Robinson concludes that it is and says "The monotony with which the parables have repeated this basic pattern is striking."4 This "prophecy-fulfillment" pattern runs through all the parables. An illustration of this pattern may be seen in the parables of the

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3Ibid., p. 19.
4Ibid., p. 22.
mustard seed (Mark 4:30-32) and the leaven (Matt. 13:33). They "picture a situation not simply characterized by a word prophesying the future, but by a past event which prophesies a future event. Nor do we have in either parable a continuous narration, but rather a story reduced to the two decisive events determining the limits and the characterization of the situation described. The hearer identifies himself chronologically with the time between the two points, the paradoxical situation of living upon the basis of a past event which is prophetic of a future event. ..thus it is the claim of a historical point of departure for the not-yet-historical which sharpens the sensitivity for the otherness of the prophesied future event, i.e. for its non-historicity."5

Apparently the conclusion to be drawn from this "promise-fulfillment" dialectic that characterizes the eschatological parables is that the "promise-fulfillment" idea also dominated Jesus' understanding of history, otherwise he would not have structured the eschatological parables (which talk of "history") in this way.

In this first article, the seeds of Robinson's new quest may be seen. There is the analysis of a pattern of Jesus' teaching that is made to lead back to Jesus' "understanding" --- here his understanding of history and only secondarily his self-understanding. There is also an existentialist approach to the problem. It is not so much what Jesus said, but rather the existential challenge and understanding that underlies the pattern that is important and everything is to be subordinated to that.

5Ibid., pp. 20-21.
Robinson continued his study of Jesus and in the winter of 1956 wrote "The Historical Jesus and the Church's Kerygma." Here Robinson is concerned with the relation of Jesus' views about himself to the church's kerygma about him. Robinson wants to show why there is no scholarly consensus on this problem and to offer a new way to resolve it.

Historically, critics have been able to distinguish "Jesus" from Christology and thus the question arose "How can the historian explain the rise of a movement so different from its founder? Where are the lines of historical continuity?" Now traditional methodology had set up two sets of criteria for deciding the authenticity of Jesus' sayings: first, the closer to the church, the less authentic; second, the more like Judaism, the more authentic. There are sayings where Jesus expresses a view about himself and these criteria operate as to whether they are considered authentic or not, e.g. the "Son of Man" and "Ransom" sayings. The result is that because of these methods we end up with a Jesus very much like Judaism and not very much like the church. So what is to be done? Robinson says that these methods are not to be abandoned but supplemented. "The current methods were set up for the purpose of establishing the authenticity of sayings, and succeeded to such an extent that one has a quantity of sayings of Jesus whose authenticity is generally accepted among leading scholars..."

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7Ibid., p. 40.
Since we therefore have a body of material whose authenticity is no longer in need of proof, a method can be developed which presupposes this fact and builds upon this material. One can investigate the known teachings of Jesus for antecedents of the church's kerygma; and one can investigate the church's kerygma for an expression of Jesus' known teaching. This investigation is to be done below the linguistic level however, at the level of meaning, beyond what is visible on the surface.

Robinson then summarizes the eschatological teaching of Jesus and concludes that Jesus saw in his work (himself) the coming of a new age. He then relates this to the church's kerygma. "Here, then, is the historical point of departure for the subsequent attribution to Jesus by the church of Messianic and divine titles. There is a terminological growth from "not me, but the Spirit in me", to "my words and my works", to "me", and on via the Messianic titles to the supreme Johannine "I am ..." statements. For reasons stated earlier it is difficult to determine how far in this movement within the history of ideas Jesus himself went, and when he left off and the church took over. But this problem in the history of ideas, interesting though it is, fades in importance before the fact of crucial importance for the historical understanding and theological evaluation of Jesus and the early church: These titles are a development inaugurated within the humble self-consciousness of the historical Jesus."  

8 Ibid., pp. 43-44.  
9 Ibid., p. 46.
The same thing can be done with Jesus' ethical teaching. He said that to do good in the present evil aeon would bring suffering. "Is it not probable that a person who taught and performed such an ethic would expect to have to suffer?" All of Jesus' teachings are filled with the idea of suffering and with the idea that the present evil aeon brings death. But Jesus looked beyond demonic death and carried on. "This is the point of departure within Jesus' self-consciousness for the kerygma's proclamation of the miracle of the resurrection." It is still a question however as to how Jesus saw his suffering relative to God's saving action for the world. "Yet, Jesus' understanding of his actions, e.g. in the exorcism struggles, as instrumental in overthrowing Satan and inaugurating God's reign, makes it possible to comprehend historically the telling of the crucifixion and resurrection as a kerygma of saving significance Jesus himself had begun the process of interpreting his struggle and suffering as God's action overthrowing Satan and inaugurating the kingdom, so that the basis was already laid for interpreting his crucifixion as a struggle with a demonically-understood death, and his resurrection as a definitive victory over sin and death achieved for all mankind, and administered from heaven by the enthroned Christ." 

Robinson concludes all this by saying "What is important is that the kerygma is not talking about a person who never existed

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10Ibid., p. 46.
11Ibid., p. 48.
12Ibid., p. 48.
(i.e. it is not completely foreign to Jesus' own existential thinking), but rather it stands in a positive relation to the viewpoint of the historical Jesus."

What Robinson says here can hardly be called very revolutionary. Although he would like to see in this a breakthrough in the traditional impasse on the relating of the kerygma to Jesus, all he has done is to suggest that one look for the beginnings of the kerygma in Jesus' self-consciousness, i.e. in Jesus, and for a development of Jesus' teachings in the kerygma. But this is hardly new. Manson had been saying this for years. However, this article did locate the problem for Robinson; somehow Jesus and the kerygma would have to be compared. But the question then became, How? The way Robinson set up the comparison here was along very objectivist lines --- simply comparing the meaning of the authentic Jesus material with the kerygma. In doing this one would then find Jesus' self-consciousness. Robinson was soon to move beyond this "stand back and objectively compare" attitude but the idea of comparing Jesus and the kerygma remained as the new quest developed. It is interesting to note that a clue to the direction Robinson would take as he moved out of the "positivist" camp (the "stand back and compare" idea) is present in this article in Robinson's comment that the kerygma does not talk about a person who never existed, "i.e. it is not completely foreign to Jesus' own existential thinking." This identification of a person's existence

\[13^{\text{Tbid.}, \text{p. 49.}}\]
with his own existential thinking later became the link between history and selfhood, and ultimately between the past (history) and the present (the selfhood of the believer today).

In July of 1956, Robinson reviewed Bultmann's *Theology of the New Testament*[^1] and another dimension was added to his thought. The review is largely descriptive, but he does find reason both to commend and to criticize Bultmann. He commends Bultmann in that he "begins where the Gospel begins, with the presentation of the earthly Jesus as the word, moves from the incarnate word to the preached word, then from the preaching of the word to the hearing of the word, and finally from the hearing of the word to faith as eschatological existence."[^15]

He criticizes Bultmann for one-sidedly reacting to "historicism"[^16] and because of the narrowness of Bultmann's norm of interpretation that sees the eschatological tension as dialectical rather than chronological.

"The fact that the majority of the literature which the early Church produced and preserved did not recognize the Bultmannian norm is partly due to the decline of the Church in the second century. But the historian will wonder if this odd incongruity is not also partly due to the narrowness of the definition of the norm itself. It is also the historian who will be concerned by the way in which normative Christianity is not explained historically, but occurs as a *creatio ex nihilo* in Paul and then independently in John. Therefore he will not rest content until he has, on his more humble phenomenological level, supplemented the existential norm with a description of the historical unity or continuity within the early

Much of the raw material for such a study is found in Bultmann's scattered references to the kerygma; for when the development of the kerygma is traced through the first century of the Church's existence, the historical continuity in the movement, and the historical potentiality out of which the theologies of Paul and John arose, becomes visible.17

Robinson concludes his review of Bultmann by saying that, in spite of the above criticisms, New Testament studies from this day forward can never be anything but Bultmannian. "The history of the discipline will move through this work, not around it, and a considerable amount of the scholarship of the coming generation will be devoted to learning from it, perfecting it, criticizing it, dismantling it, and emulating it in the movement to a further synthesis."18

In this review, Robinson picks up an important point that was hinted at in "Jesus' Understanding of History" but missed in "The Historical Jesus and the Church's Kerygma", namely, that existential theology must deal primarily with the hearer as he hears the existential challenge. One cannot talk about the existential "content" of something, but only existential call and response. If there is no response, it is not existential. For pointing this out, Robinson commends Bultmann. But Robinson criticizes Bultmann for the narrowness of his existential norm. He still wants to have a continuity between Jesus and the church's kerygma and says that Bultmann himself (?) has provided the raw material for such a continuity. But the work must be done through Bultmann's work.

17Ibid., p. 267.
18Ibid., p. 269.
(Robinson concedes this), through the kerygmatic fragments on the "humble phenomenological level" of historical study.

At this point a problem arises. Robinson concedes that New Testament work must be Bultmannian and that it must be kept existential, but he also says that one must also go beyond Bultmann somehow. The idea occurred to him in his first two articles to look in the authentic Jesus material for Jesus' self-consciousness, but (especially in "The Historical Jesus and the Church's Kerygma") it is too "objectivistic"; it lacks existential call and it lacks a "hearer." The idea is still valid though, and the solution must be sought in the kerygmatic material -- but it must also somehow be "historical." This is necessary so that Jesus will not become a "person who never existed." But how? How can one get beyond the objectivism of "The Historical Jesus and the Church's Kerygma" to the existential approach of Bultmann (since all New Testament study must be Bultmannian), and yet go beyond Bultmann back to history without going back to objectivism? That is the question.

In the Fall of 1957, Robinson wrote "A Formal Analysis of Colossians 1:15-20"\(^\text{19}\) which was a purely formal analysis to see "if the existence of a liturgical unit composed prior to the composition of Colossians can be detected."\(^\text{20}\) The article simply assesses, in a formal way, whether such a unit can be reasonably assumed. The conclusion to which Robinson comes is of no con-

\[^{19}\text{JBL, Vol. 76 (1957) pp. 270-87.}\]
\[^{20}\text{Ibid., p. 271.}\]
sequence as far as the new quest is concerned, but what is of importance is Robinson's growing interest in "patterns" and "formal" analyses, because it is this which will, in part, provide him with an answer to the question posed by his review of Bultmann. He will work through the pattern of the kerygma and the pattern ("formal structure") of Jesus' message to find the historical Jesus --- not this time on the objective level, but on the level of meaning and existential self-understanding. It will also provide him with a foundation for his re-statement of the new quest when he sees that the first formulation of it is beset by various problems --- the reformulation that came when he developed his concept of "historicality." Historicality seeks to locate history in the very nature of the pattern itself, thereby solving the problem of how to relate language (the kerygma) to history. Language, as pattern, _is_ history.

So, although this article did not say anything that was of much significance, it was of great importance in the development of Robinson's new quest in that it helped Robinson to structure his thought along the lines of patterns and formal analyses.

**B. The Birth of an Idea**

The Fall of 1957 also saw a review of Günther Bornkamm's _Jesus von Nazareth_\(^{21}\) and this was the beginning of a new phase in Robinson's thought. Robinson calls Bornkamm's book one of the most

significant that has been written since the second world war. The reason for this is that it represents the replacement of Barthianism by Bultmannianism. But it also represents the attempt of the "group" to get beyond the "Bultmannian consensus." Here the accentuation of the historical Jesus by the Bultmannians, Käsemann, Fuchs, and Bornkamm, stands within the context of the first programmatic criticism of Bultmann's whole New Testament theology from within the Bultmannian group.22 It is now possible to re-open the quest of the historical Jesus. "The quest is now possible not because our view of the sources has changed, but rather because our view of history has changed. An understanding of history does not consist essentially in the still impossible reconstruction of chronology, psychological development, and causal relationships, but rather in an encounter with 'history as occurrence and event'. . . If it was illegitimate to replace faith with objective proof, a quest could be legitimate which attempted instead to mediate a confrontation with the call for belief or unbelief presented by the historical Jesus."23 Robinson also began now to talk about the impossibility and illegitimacy of the nineteenth century quest of the historical Jesus and to set the "new quest" --- a phrase which he used for the first time in this review --- over against it.

According to Robinson, however, Bornkamm only investigated the legitimacy of a new quest, but he did not go on to say why one

22 Ibid., p. 311.
23 loc. cit.
ought to go on to talk about the historical Jesus rather than just the kerygma. So Robinson suggests why this is.

"This necessity [for a new quest] resides basically in the existential situation created when modern historiography made the historical Jesus accessible apart from the kerygma, as he had not been since the first disciples, so that one must either listen in his message for an encounter with the reality of the kerygma (although not necessarily with its conceptual formulations), or by neglecting his message tacitly reject the kerygma's insistence that the Lord is Jesus. This logical consequence is not based upon the rationalistic view that Jesus is primarily a teacher with a system, but rather upon the contemporary view of history presented among other places in the preface to Bultmann's Jesus and the Word. The message reveals the historical intention (i.e. the historical reality in the actions), which in turn reveals the view of existence constituting the self: i.e. through the message one encounters the person. If this historical encounter with the person of Jesus cannot confront one with the judgment and grace of God's presence, i.e. become the eschatological event, then it is impossible for the eschatological event taking place in the encounter with the kerygma to be described as an encounter with Jesus." 24

Robinson also finds another reason for reviewing the quest. "[The] gradual shift during the past generation in the comparison of Jesus' message and historical person with the church's kerygma is doubtless a further, so to speak, post facto reason for the present renewal of the quest of the historical Jesus." 25

Reading Bornkamm's book gave birth to the idea of the new quest for Robinson. All of the aspects of it are here. There is the rejection of the old quest as illegitimate and impossible --- as seeking to prove faith. There is a Bultmannian approach that does

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24 Ibid., p. 312.
25 Ibid., p. 313.
not look for "positivistic" history, and that operates within the fragments of material allowed to be authentic. There is the attempt to find the "person" in the fragments, and the attempt to compare the "person" of Jesus with the Christ of the kerygma. But what really allows it to be a new historical quest is Robinson's discovery of a new view of history. This "modern historiography" mediates an encounter with a person through his message and, in as much as it is historical, here is a second avenue to Jesus, parallel to the kerygma. What one is to do is to compare the encounters and see if they are the same. This represents a marked shift in Robinson, or rather a sharpening of the point. Robinson does not want to go back to merely objectively comparing "messages", so now he has a way out. Through the message encounter the person. But how can a person be met in a message? Robinson says because a person is constituted of a "view of existence" and this "view of existence" is buried in (is the meaning of) the message.

Consequently, Robinson is able to turn the existentialism of "Jesus' Understanding of History" into an existentialist historiography. He is able to set aside the objectivism of "The Historical Jesus and the Church's Kerygma" and to develop the "existential thinking" of Jesus (only mentioned in this article) into being Jesus' person (= selfhood = view of existence). He remains the Bultmannian of the 1956 Review of Bultmann's Theology of the New Testament by working on the scraps of authentic Jesus material, but goes beyond Bultmann by reasserting the continuity between Jesus and the kerygma.
But at this point a problem arises: just what sort of continuity is Robinson trying to reestablish between Jesus and the kerygma? Is it simply a "material" one? --- that is, is one to take the two objective messages (Jesus' message and the kerygma) and compare them to see if they are the same? It is hard to see how Robinson can reject this, otherwise how could one talk of a historical (i.e. past) continuity between Jesus' message and the church's kerygma? But Robinson does want to reject this. He wants to get beyond this "objectivistic" approach to the past by saying that one is to compare the two encounters that one has experienced (the encounter with Jesus and the encounter with the kerygma) and see if they can provide the continuity that is needed. But how can the comparison of two subjective states tell one anything about the past? Does not this Daseinsanalyse resolve itself into a fundamental subjectivism?

However that may be, this is the situation that now confronted Robinson and he must now show the world how to carry out this new quest of the historical Jesus.

Negative factors were also at work helping Robinson to develop his thought. In September of 1957 he attended the First International Congress on New Testament Studies ("The Four Gospels in 1957"), which was held at Christ Church, Oxford. There he heard Harald Riesenfeld deliver the opening address to the congress which was entitled "The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings: A Study in the Limits of 'Formgeschichte'." Riesenfeld tried to establish the point that "Formgeschichte" had seen its day and that a new approach
to the study of the Gospels must be found. When this lecture appeared in print early in 1958, Robinson lost no time in severely criticizing it in a review for the Journal of Biblical Literature.²⁶ The reason why Robinson protested so vehemently against Riesenfeld was that there was the suggestion of a non-Bultmannian re-establishment of the quest of the historical Jesus. If it were taken seriously, Robinson's "Bultmannian" new quest would never even get off the ground. Consequently, Robinson says that Riesenfeld has misunderstood Bultmann (i.e. is not sufficiently Bultmannian to suit Robinson), "nor is the reasoning sufficiently cogent, nor the documentation sufficiently indicative, to warrant the assumption that we have here the Magna Carta of the post-Bultmannian era."²⁷ In a word, Riesenfeld is too objective in his approach and is not sufficiently existentialist.

This encounter was important for Robinson however, because it helped to narrow down the options. Whatever the new quest was to be, it would have to avoid the objectivism of Riesenfeld and be truly Bultmannian and existentialist.

C. The First Formulation

In July of 1958, Robinson was able to make the attempt. In an article entitled "The Quest of the Historical Jesus Today,"²⁸ Robinson carried through the insights of his Review of Bornkamm and drew up his first comprehensive attempt at a new quest of the

²⁷Ibid., p. 170.
historical Jesus.\textsuperscript{29}

In part I, Robinson says that the original quest was seen to be both impossible and illegitimate. It was impossible because Form criticism (in spite of what Riesenfeld had said) showed that the sources are not primarily historical. Also, the discovery of the kerygma called in question whether one ought to look for a "positivistic" Jesus. And, a new view of history changed the nature of the historical task. "[Instead], the historian's task is primarily to understand those deep-lying intentions of the past, by involving one's own subjectivity in an encounter in which one's own intentions and views of existence are put in question. . . Now this view of history and historiography recognized in the kerygma an initial understanding of the deeper meaning of Jesus and therefore identified the kerygma, rather than the brute facts of Jesus' biography, as our primary historical source for understanding Jesus' meaning."\textsuperscript{30}

In part II, Robinson answers the question, Can the quest be renewed?, by saying Indeed, it can, because of

"the radically different understanding of history and of human existence distinguishing the present quest from the one which ended in failure. . . Today history is understood as essentially the unique and creative, whose reality could not be apart from the event in which it becomes, and whose truth could

\textsuperscript{29} Robinson's book, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus (abbreviated NQHJ) is basically an expansion of this article. The first two paragraphs of QHJT become the Introduction of NQHJ. Part I of QHJT becomes chapter II of NQHJ. Part II of QHJT becomes chapter III of NQHJ. Parts III and IV of QHJT become chapter IV of NQHJ. Only chapter V of NQHJ has no equivalent in QHJT.

\textsuperscript{30} QHJT, pp. 185-86.
not be known by Platonic recollection or inference from a rational principle, but only through historical encounter. History is the act of intention, the commitment, the meaning for the participants, behind the external occurrence, and in such intention and commitment the self of the participant actualizes itself and is revealed. For the intention or commitment reflects an understanding of existence, upon which the person's selfhood is built. To grasp such historical event and such actualized selfhood is the task of modern historiography and biography."

The kerygma kerygmatized the episodes of Jesus' life, but it left unaltered those episodes that were, so to speak, already kerygmatic, i.e. those episodes where Jesus' intention and his understanding of existence were most apparent to the Church. They are difficult to find, but when found they make possible a historical encounter with Jesus' history and person. "We have in the eschatological parables, in beatitudes and woes, and in the sayings on the kingdom, on exorcism, on John the Baptist, and on the law, sufficient insight into Jesus' intention to encounter his historical action, and enough insight into the understanding of existence presupposed in his intention to encounter his selfhood. Jesus' history and selfhood are accessible to historiography and biography. . . Jesus' understanding of his existence, his selfhood, and thus in the higher sense his life, is a possible subject of historical research."32

In part III, Robinson contends that the quest ought to be reopened because modern historiography allows it. "For the objectivity of modern historiography consists precisely in openness for the

31Ibid., pp. 187-88.
32Ibid., pp. 188-89.
encounter, willingness to place one's intentions and views of existence in question, that is, to learn something basically new about existence and thus to have one's own existence modified or radically altered." We do not have a proven fact that Jesus is the Saviour, only that Jesus said to repent, and intended an encounter with himself to be an eschatological encounter with God, and that he understood his existence as the bringer of that eschatological salvation. Thus "the historical Jesus returns us to the existential decision posed by the kerygma." So modern historiography allows a new quest of the historical Jesus.

In part IV, Robinson says that the necessity of the new quest comes from the fact that there now exist two avenues to God's saving event: The kerygma and modern historiography. It is the givenness of this situation that demands it. The kerygma, for all the mythological concepts it might contain, is talking about the existential meaningfulness of a historical person and the cross is not just a natural occurrence that is distinct from Jesus' existential selfhood. "Only Jesus' death as his own existential act of accepting his death and living out of transcendence is really a historical event, and only such a specifically historical event can bear the significance of eschatological event without becoming purely mythological... The cross is Jesus' climactic actualization of his message 'Repent for God's reign is near.' Here his break with the 'present evil aeon' and the eschatological selfhood latent therein

33 Ibid., p. 190.
34 Ibid., p. 191.
are so decisively involved that from Easter on his previous message can only be heard in terms of this revelation of his transcendent selfhood."\textsuperscript{35} The important thing about the kerygma is not its details but that it points to a historical person and that it is interested in the meaning of that person. Modern historiography is also interested in Jesus as a historical person and in the meaning of his person, hence the goals of each coincide. Both the kerygma and modern historiography mediate an encounter with the historical Jesus. Now it is in Jesus' message that one encounters existentially the intention, the understanding of existence constituting the self, and thus the person. Thus Bultmann is wrong in making Jesus' message simply "Judaism" -- "when in the encounter with Jesus one is confronted with the 'skandalon' of recognizing in this all-too-human Jewish eschatological message the eternal word of God, and consequently of breaking with the present evil aeon so as to live now out of the grace of God; that is, when in encountering Jesus one is confronted with the same existential decision as that posed by the kerygma, one has proved all that can be proved by a new quest of the historical Jesus: not that the kerygma is true, but rather that the existential decision with regard to the kerygma is an existential decision with regard to Jesus."\textsuperscript{36}

In this article Robinson has succeeded in tying together all of the earlier elements into a comprehensive structure. He feels

\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., pp. 194-95.
\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., p. 197.
justified in calling it a new quest of the historical Jesus because he uses what he believes to be modern historiography, based on a new definition of history. This new view is that history is the act of intention of a person that actualizes the selfhood of that person. The grasping of such actualized selfhoods is then taken to be the task of modern historiography. Robinson feels justified in claiming Bultmann for his own (as a post-Bultmannian, of course) because he builds upon Bultmann's analysis of the synoptic tradition, but also because Robinson's existentialistic approach is the same as Bultmann's. Also, he has rejected, like Bultmann, the notion that worldly proof can be provided for the existential encounter with Jesus. He concludes by saying that when one has shown that in encountering Jesus this is the same existential decision as that posed by the kerygma he has proved all that the new quest can prove. So far so good. But what Robinson does not do in this article is to show how this theory is to be put into practice. Just how does one show, on the basis of the "modern historiography", that when one encounters Jesus this is the same existential decision as that posed by the kerygma? Robinson does not say. He simply says that it must be done because of the situation in which we find ourselves, and that it must be done in the authentic Jesus material. That is the first problem, but there is another. How does one find this "authentic" material without at the same time being a "positivistic" historian? Robinson says that the historical Jesus is to be found there; in fact, if there were no authentic material there could be no quest at all, old or new, for the historical Jesus. But Robinson
scorns the "positivists" who try to deal with bruta facta and calls this whole approach impossible and illegitimate. Nevertheless it is hard to see how Robinson can get along without it. At the same time, however, it is hard to see how his new definition of history can allow him to get along with it.

Thus two problems remain to be faced. First, Robinson must analyze the structure of the modern historiographer's concept of "encounter" which is the way one must reach the past --- so that the encounters can be compared, and second, he must attempt somehow meaningfully to relate the objective finding of the authentic Jesus material with the subjective "encounter" that one is to have with Jesus' selfhood on the basis of it.

Robinson attempted to grapple with the first problem to a certain extent in the next article that he wrote. In "New Testament Faith Today", which was a paper read at the national meeting of the National Association of Biblical Instructors, held in New York City, December 28-29, 1958, Robinson says that New Testament faith is faith in the kerygma. But this faith in the kerygma does not mean acceptance of a set of propositions --- "Rather, New Testament faith consisted in an existential relationship to the reality variously proclaimed by the kerygma... In faith a new selfhood is affirmed, based on the aeon to come which in the saving event has already broken in upon our world, providing a transcendent context of existence." This transcendent context of existence is

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38 Ibid., p. 235.
eschatological. It is achieved by the enthroned Christ, so one is to believe "in Christ." But this eschatological reality (i.e. Christ) is affirmed by faith to be Jesus, so the question must be asked, Does this idea of faith as living transcendently have anything to do with Jesus? Robinson says, yes, because "Jesus' faith did have much the same eschatological content as did the church's faith, an eschatological content which was only restated, not replaced, in the church's christological formulations." Jesus summoned men to break with the present evil aeon and enter the kingdom, just as the Church later pointed back to the cross and resurrection as the saving event. But the church did not try to imitate Jesus' piety; "rather, the primitive church continued Jesus' eschatological message, and only through this mediation was their call for faith parallel to Jesus' own call for response. Yet through this mediation the existence built upon faith in the church's message did correspond to Jesus' own existence built in response to his own message. Thus Christian selfhood is one with Jesus' selfhood. In the deepest sense this is the justification for the christological statement of faith's content, and for such mystical language as "Christ is my life." This faith cannot be

39Ibid., p. 236. Robinson's answer here is in terms of "eschatological content", but there is another dimension to the answer as he explains elsewhere. "The kerygma's identification of the Lord of the universe with the humbled Jesus means -- on the demythologized level -- that in suffering lies transcendence, in endurance of hardship is revealed strength, in going beyond oneself to one's neighbor (love) one comes to oneself. . . It is in transcending the power structure of an evil society that man not only becomes a new creature but also participates in the new creation." Encounter, Vol. 20 (1959) p. 482. Here Robinson's answer is not in terms of "eschatological content" but in terms of eschatological existence today.

40Ibid., p. 236.
proved by reference to this present evil aeon since it transcends it and its legitimation is future. Thus the reality of faith is paradoxical and its "legitimation" is also paradoxical when related to the present, as is seen in II Cor. 6:8b-10; 4:8-10 (dying, we live, etc.). "Thus Christian existence actually taking place is the only "legitimation" of faith. The name for this legitimation is the Christian "witness.""^41

Now the church must talk to its contemporaries. "Hence our conceptual understanding of the transcendence of our existence can be in no other conceptualizations than those of our day and age."^42 But what is Christian faith?

"A normative definition of Christian faith can only be derived from faith's content... Life in Christ is an appropriation of the new man who is Christ as one's own selfhood. Hence this 'Christ', who is both Jesus of Nazareth and the Christian's transcendent selfhood, needs further clarification. 'Christ' is the transcendent reality of Jesus' existence, witnessed to in formulations originating with the disciples (the kerygma). Christ is encountered in a symbol created by Jesus' existence and arising in the disciples' encounter with him, as the objectification of their understanding of existence appropriated from him. Put otherwise: The content of faith is itself the act of faith --- that of Jesus and the apostles --- which consequently confronts me as a possible act for me, which I am to carry through or not to carry through, so that 'believing' that content means carrying through in my case the act of faith."^43

This faith can only be believed.

Here Robinson is analyzing the structure of response to the

^41 Ibid., p. 237.

^42 loc. cit.

^43 Ibid., p. 239.
kerygma, or encounter with the kerygma. It is very important to do this because it is this "encounter" which must ultimately be the same as the historiographer's "encounter" with Jesus, if the new quest is to prove what Robinson says it can prove --- namely, that when one encounters Jesus he is confronted with the same existential decision as that posed by the kerygma. In this article, Robinson says that response to the kerygma is an existential action in which a new selfhood is affirmed. What makes it "Christian" is that one is making Jesus' selfhood his own. But how is one to do this? At this point Robinson is very unclear. Apparently, it is not by imitating Jesus or by taking him into oneself metaphysically; it is by taking Jesus' selfhood to be one with one's own selfhood existentially. Simply doing it, does it, whatever that may mean. How all this relates to Jesus is that since faith is not faith in propositions (this would make the "content" of faith non-existential) but is an act in which the content is identical with the act (indeed, is the act of faith), and since it is Jesus' selfhood that is made one's own (the act), it follows that the content of faith is Jesus because a person is constituted of his selfhood. Thus in making Jesus' selfhood one's own, one encounters "Jesus". Put another way: Jesus lived out of transcendent reality and that was his selfhood. The kerygma symbolized this as "Christ". The Christian makes the same selfhood his own when he has faith. Thus the "Christ" is both Jesus' and the Christian's transcendent selfhood because the act of faith is also the content of faith. From this it follows that by means of one's own transcendent existence
(selfhood) one has found Jesus, because he was constituted of his transcendent selfhood and that selfhood is held in common by the believer and Jesus.

This is the experience that must be the same as the historiographer's, if the new quest is to succeed. But one must here ask this question --- if the content of one's encounter (Jesus) is the same as the act of encounter itself (faith), and if this is to be the same experience as that of a "modern historiographer", does this not also make the object of historical enquiry the same thing as the act of enquiry (i.e. the "encounter" of the historian with Jesus as a possibility of existence)? And if this is true, does not this virtually dissolve the Jesus of history into the existential experience of the historian? It is this problem that Robinson must try to solve, because it is quite obvious that as stated it is a highly subjectivistic view of response to Jesus.

D. A New Quest of the Historical Jesus

In the Spring of 1959, Robinson expanded QHJT, picking up insights from "New Testament Faith Today", into a full-length treatise that he entitled A New Quest of the Historical Jesus.44 It was, in his own words "a programmatic essay... a contribution to basic thought about the unfulfilled task of New Testament scholarship."45 The book falls into three parts. There is, first, an introduction (Chapter I) that deals with the state of the problem historically.

44 Hereafter abbreviated NQHJ.

45 NQHJ, p. 9.
Second, there is a speculative or theoretical section (Chapter II, III, IV) dealing with the philosophical and historical rationale of the new quest. Here Robinson explains why the "original quest" was impossible and illegitimate, why the new quest is possible, and why the new quest is legitimate. Third, there is a practical section (Chapter V) that tries to show how the theory of Chapters II - IV can be put into practice.

There are basically three things that Robinson is attempting to do in this book. First, he is trying to be more explicit as to what the new quest is all about. He had already brought together all of the elements of the new quest into a comprehensive system (in QHJT), but now he wishes to turn this proposal into a theological movement. In order to do this however, he must first explain exactly what this new movement is all about, and what he intends it to do. Second, Robinson tries to explain in more detail what he conceives "modern historiography" to be and how it relates to the new quest. Since the new quest is an existentialist quest for the historical Jesus, Robinson must show how modern historiography can be used existentially to get back to Jesus. This involves an analysis of the categories that comprise this existentialist-historical experience in an attempt to show that it is, in fact, a historical experience. Because if it were not, one could not talk of a new quest of the historical Jesus. Third, Robinson wishes to show how the principles of the new quest are to be put into practice. It is not enough simply to explain what the new quest is. He must also show how it can actually be applied to the text of Scripture.
This point was completely overlooked in QHJT, but is now attempted.

In other words Robinson is trying to solve the two problems that were left unsolved by QHJT concerning the nature of historical "encounter" and the practical blending together of existentialistic subjectivity and historical objectivism, and having solved them, turn New Testament studies in the direction of a new quest of the historical Jesus.

In part one, the Introduction, Robinson begins with a description of the Bultmannian epoch in German theology. Germany, he says, "is just as nearly 'Bultmannian' today as it was 'Barthian' a generation ago." But Bultmann's pupils have initiated a post-Bultmannian quest of the historical Jesus, in spite of the master's hesitations in that regard. Robinson then briefly treats the views of Käsemann, Fuchs, Bornkamm, and Conzelmann. And how has Bultmann reacted to this movement away from his views? Robinson sees a "shift in position" as far as Bultmann is concerned. "Bultmann himself seems to have adjusted to the 'post-Bultmannian' move of his pupils at least with regard to grace in the historical Jesus and the kerygma." The Barthians too are seeking rapprochement with this new desire to know Jesus historically. All this suggests to Robinson that great things are under way. "A concentration of force seems to be in the making, which may well provide enough impetus to move beyond a mere proposal to a distinctive

\[^46\]Ibid., p. 11.

\[^47\]Ibid., p. 21.
trait of theology during the coming generation.\textsuperscript{48} This is because Robinson's work is not simply a re-doing of something old, rather it "...has to do with a quite different kind of quest based upon new premises, procedures, and objectives, [and it is] a quest which may well succeed in a way the other did not."\textsuperscript{49}

The second section deals with the philosophical and historical structure of the new quest, attempting to show that it is, in fact, a legitimate enterprise. He begins Chapter II (which is on the impossibility and illegitimacy of the original quest) by saying that the most recent view of history has moved beyond the position that underlay the original quest. Today, he says,

"We have come to recognize that the objective factual level upon which the nineteenth century operated is only one dimension of history, and that a whole new dimension in the facts, a deeper and more central plane of meaning, had been largely bypassed. The nineteenth century saw the reality of the 'historical facts' as consisting largely in names, places, dates, occurrences, sequences, causes, effects --- things which fall far short of being the actuality of history, if one understands by history the distinctively human, creative, unique, purposeful, which distinguishes man from nature. The dimension in which man actually exists, his 'world', the stance or outlook from which he acts, his understanding of existence behind what he does, the way he meets his basic problems and the answer his life implies to the human dilemma, the significance he had as the environment of those who knew him, the continuing history his life produces, the possibility of existence his life presents to me as an alternative --- such matters as these have become central in an attempt to understand

\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 24-25.
\textsuperscript{49}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 9-10.
history. It is this deeper level of the reality of 'Jesus of Nazareth as he actually was' which was not reached by 'the reconstruction of his biography by means of objective historical method'.'50

The older method failed to penetrate to the depths where the reality of history lies, but now access has been gained to this deeper level of historical reality.

The trouble with the older historians is that they believed history could be an objective study, when, in fact, it cannot. Historical study is inevitably subjective. "Thus Lessing's old problem as to how 'accidental historical truths can serve as proofs for eternal rational truths' was deepened by the awareness that even our reconstruction of the 'historical truths' is 'accidental', i.e. historically relative. All this was only augmented by the growing awareness in psychology, cultural anthropology, and existentialism of the basic historicity of the self, so that one no longer assumed that the historical and relative could be readily removed as a surface defect on an essentially natural or changelessly rational selfhood. The problem of the historian's own historicity has become a fundamental problem."51 Thus any attempt to revive the study of Jesus along objectivist lines is incredibly naive.

Robinson concludes Chapter II by reiterating (although in more detail) what he said earlier in QHTJ about the impossibility and illegitimacy of the original quest. It is impossible because the available sources are not historical. They are kerygmatic,

50Ibid., pp. 28-29.
51Ibid., pp. 29-30.
and the kerygma is not historical, nor is it interested in history. It is illegitimate for two reasons. First, modern historiography is not primarily interested in facts. The old "factual" point of view has given way "... to an understanding of history centering in the profound intentions, stances, and concepts of existence held by persons in the past, as the well-springs of their outward actions."52 With the shift from interest in the past "as it really was" to interest in "profound intentions", etc., the historian's task also shifted. Now "the historian's task [is] seen to consist in understanding those deep-lying intentions of the past, by involvint one's selfhood in an encounter in which one's own intentions and views of existence are put in question, and perhaps altered, or even radically reversed."53 This new view makes the original quest, which is concerned with "facts" alone, quite illegitimate. The second reason why the original quest is illegitimate is that it tried to "prove" Jesus' authority in the past as a basis for faith. Today however "man must build his existence upon that which is beyond his control and available only as God's gift... upon a world which is transcendent by being basically future, and present only as the eschatological miracle, the gift of transcendence."54 To prove Jesus' authority would be to provide worldly security that is under man's control, but "... by definition 'faith' is the life given in death, and consequently has its basis beyond our control, is

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52 Ibid., p. 39.
53 loc. cit.
54 Ibid., p. 44.
lived out of the future, is 'an act of faith'." Consequently, the original quest was basically an act of unbelief. "The historical Jesus as a proven divine fact is a worldly security with which the homo religiosus arms himself in his effort to become self-sufficient before God, just as did the Jew in Paul's day by appeal to the law. . . to require an objective legitimization of the saving event prior to faith is to take offence at the offence of Christianity and to perpetuate the unbelieving flight to security, i.e. the reverse of faith." This sort of thing "... becomes a this-worldly Christendom at ease in Zion, a dead orthodoxy, a white-washed tomb, a tinkling cymbal, and ceases really to be. . . Christian." "Thus one has come to recognize the worldliness of the 'historicism' and 'psychologism' upon which the original quest was built. To this extent the original quest came to be regarded as theologically illegitimate." 

So the original quest is impossible and illegitimate, but is that the end of the matter? No, because a new quest is possible now, thanks to a radically new concept of history and the self. At this point (Chapter III), Robinson develops what he believes to be the views of Dilthey, Collingwood, and Heidegger into an existentialist historiography and Dasein-analysis.

55 loc. cit.
56 loc. cit.
57 Ibid., p. 47.
58 Ibid., p. 44.
"Today history," says Robinson, repeating almost word for word what he said earlier in QHJT, "is increasingly understood as essentially the unique and creative, whose reality would not be apart from the event in which it becomes, and whose truth could not be known by Platonic recollection or inference from a rational principle, but only through historical encounter. History is the act of intention, the commitment, the meaning for the participants behind the external occurrence. In such intention and commitment the self of the participant actualizes itself, and in this act of self-actualization the self is revealed. Hence it is the task of modern historiography to grasp such acts of intention, such commitments, such meaning, such self-actualization; and it is the task of modern biography to lay hold of the selfhood which is therein revealed."

That is Robinson's radically new understanding of history. Closely allied to it is his radically new understanding of the self. The self is not one's personality, "Rather, selfhood is constituted by commitment to a context, from which commitment one's existence arises... Selfhood results from implicit or explicit commitment to a kind of existence, and is to be understood only in terms of that commitment, i.e. by laying hold of the understanding of existence in terms of which the self is constituted." Armed with these radical new insights into history and the self, one can then proceed to the authentic Jesus material and there attempt to encounter Jesus' history and his existential selfhood.

When one does this he recognizes that he has done something that is formally analogous to the kerygma. The kerygma too speaks

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59 Ibid., pp. 67-68.
60 Ibid., p. 68.
61 Ibid., p. 39.
of the meaningfulness of a historical person as a call to encounter. One then has two avenues to the historical Jesus: the kerygma and modern historiography, and the new quest consists of comparing the two to see if they both provide the same thing — an encounter with Jesus; and "if in encountering Jesus one is confronted by the same existential decision as that posed by the kerygma, one has proved all that can be proved by a new quest of the historical Jesus: not that the kerygma is true, but rather that the existential decision with regard to the kerygma is an existential decision with regard to Jesus. See figure 1, page 204.

Robinson proceeds in Chapter IV to discuss the legitimacy of the new quest. Granted that it is now possible due to the radical new views of history and the self that exist today, ought a new quest to be undertaken? Robinson replies affirmatively because the new quest is not trying to prove anything. It is simply showing that "the historical Jesus confronts us with existential decision just as the kerygma does." [The new] quest of the historical Jesus involves an attempt to disengage information about the historical Jesus from its kerygmatic colouring, and thus to mediate an encounter with the historical Jesus distinct from the encounter with the kerygma. This does not authenticate Jesus as Lord as the original quest tried to do. But Robinson admits that this observation does not necessarily justify the new quest, it only shows

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62 Ibid., p. 86.
63 Ibid., p. 92.
64 Ibid., p. 77.
65 Ibid., pp. 79-80.
The authentic Jesus material is not "real history" or "the depth at which history resides", but is only the "event" in which history becomes. Real history is encountered as a call to decision to radically alter one's own history (selfhood). It is the encounter with Jesus' actualized existence (Jesus' selfhood) as a possibility of existence for oneself. Thus it is formally analogous to the kerygma because the kerygma offers the same call to decision. The new quest is the comparison of these two encounters to see if "the existential decision with regard to the kerygma is an existential decision with regard to Jesus."

Simultaneous with the comparison of the two encounters, one is also comparing the meaning of the authentic Jesus material with the kerygma to see if they are the same.
that the new quest is not illegitimate like the original quest was. The theological necessity of the new quest resides elsewhere. It lies in the fact that the kerygma is committed to a historical person and that modern historiography has opened a second avenue to that person. "It is this concern of the kerygma for the historicity of Jesus which necessitates a new quest. For how can the indispensable historicity of Jesus be affirmed, while at the same time maintaining the irrelevance of what a historical encounter with him would mean, once this has become a real possibility due to the rise of modern historiography?" It is true that "the kerygma is largely uninterested in historiography of the nineteenth century kind, for the kerygma does not lie on the level of objectively verifiable fact. But it is decisively interested in historiography of the twentieth-century kind, for the kerygma consists in the meaning of a certain historical event, and thus coincides with the goal of modern historiography." So then a new quest must be undertaken today, lest the historical Jesus be lost in the mythology of the kerygma.

But how is this to be done? Robinson did not answer this in QHJT, but in NQHJ, he devotes a whole chapter to it, Chapter V. He says that "a new quest of the historical Jesus cannot be simply a continuation of the original quest;" that would be to "prove"

66 Ibid., p. 88.
67 Ibid., p. 90.
68 Ibid., p. 93.
Jesus. Indeed, "we recognize as basic that historiography cannot and should not prove a kerygma which proclaims Jesus as eschatological event calling for existential commitment." Robinson then summarizes what the new quest should be.

"A new quest must be undertaken because the kerygma claims to mediate an existential encounter with a historical person, Jesus, who can also be encountered through the mediation of modern historiography. A new quest cannot verify the truth of the kerygma, that this person actually lived out of transcendence and actually makes transcendence available to me in my historical existence. But it can test whether this kerygmatological understanding of Jesus' existence corresponds to the understanding of existence implicit in Jesus' history as encountered through modern historiography. If the kerygma's identification of its understanding of existence with Jesus' existence is valid, then this kerygmatological understanding of existence should become apparent as the result of modern historical research upon Jesus. For such research has as a legitimate goal the clarification of an understanding of existence occurring in history, as a possible understanding of my existence. Hence the purpose of a new quest of the historical Jesus would be to test the validity of the kerygma's identification of its understanding of existence with Jesus' existence.

"As a purposeful undertaking, a new quest of the historical Jesus would revolve around a central problem area determined by its purpose... In the case of a new quest, this focal problem would consist in using the available source material and current historical method in such a way as to arrive at an understanding of Jesus' historical action and existential selfhood, in terms which can be compared with the kerygma." 70

In order to get the material where the comparison can be made,

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69 Ibid., p. 94.
70 loc. cit.
Robinson says that the standard, objective historical-critical method must be used. This will provide the historian with authentic Jesus material.\textsuperscript{71} Standard historical procedure is to be used, as has always been done.\textsuperscript{72} Stated in this way, it appears as though Robinson is making allowance for the discredited position of the nineteenth century, but Robinson offers his assurance that he is not. He is not interested simply in objectivity. Rather, "contemporary methodology consists precisely in the combination and interaction of objective analysis and existential openness, i.e. it seeks historical understanding precisely in the simultaneous interaction of phenomenological objectivity and existential 'objectivity'."\textsuperscript{73}

How Robinson proposes to be both objective and detached from one's sources, as demanded by the historical-critical method, and subjective and existentially involved in one's sources, as demanded by existential "objectivity", at one and the same time, is a point he never stops to consider. This is, in fact, the major place where Robinson's method, as a method, breaks down. He has rejected all objective historical research as being subjective, and all historical truth as being ". . . accidental, i.e. historically relative,"\textsuperscript{74} but now in order to find something factual to compare, lest he be building his system in the air, he needs to re-habilitate

\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., p. 104.  
\textsuperscript{72}Ibid., pp. 95, 96, 99.  
\textsuperscript{73}Ibid., p. 96.  
\textsuperscript{74}Ibid., pp. 29-30.
the objective historical-critical method. But his subjectivist
theory of history cannot allow it to operate as such (although in
practice he does just this), so he says that it is to be a simul-
taneously objective and subjective procedure. It is, of course,
nonsense to talk of a subjective objectivity or an objective sub-
jectivity, as the case may be, but this is Robinson's fundamental
problem. He has tried to blend together two incompatible methods
and has succeeded only to the extent that ambiguity and imprecision
on his part have hidden the problem from view.

However that may be, Robinson proceeds by saying that the
world cannot wait for all the problems of New Testament scholarship
to be solved before looking for the historical Jesus, consequently
one "...must seek for completely new ways of bringing Jesus and
the kerygma into comparison." This new way is to find Jesus'
transcendent selfhood in the material whose historicity is generally
accepted as authentic. One then compares this with the kerygma to
see if the two are the same. This comparison is not to be made
on the surface level however. "It has been an integral part of the
method employed in all these comparisons of Jesus and the kerygma,
that we operate below the terminological level, within the deeper
level of meaning." If one finds that on the deeper level of
meaning Jesus and the kerygma are the same, one has achieved all
that the new quest set out to achieve.

75 Ibid., p. 104.
76 Ibid., p. 120.
But what has actually been achieved? At this crucial point, Robinson is very unclear, and the unclarity goes back to the fundamental ambiguity of his historical method which tries to have subjectivity and objectivity operating simultaneously. Robinson would like his answer to be objective, that is, to talk about history, but he would like to arrive at this by means of subjective categories, comparing the encounters one has with Jesus and the kerygma. The result is only confusion. Consider, for example, the following statements:

"Methodologically speaking, the historical Jesus I encounter via historiography is just as really a possible understanding of my present existence as is the kerygma of the New Testament."\(^77\)

"[A survey of the basic problems] has tended to reaffirm the working hypothesis of the new quest: If an encounter with the kerygma is an encounter with the meaning of Jesus, then an encounter with Jesus should be an encounter with the meaning of the kerygma."\(^78\)

"If the existential decision originally called for by the kerygma corresponds to the existential decision called for by Jesus, then it is apparent that the kerygma continues Jesus’ message."\(^79\)

"Once we have grasped the decision in terms of which Jesus’ selfhood is constituted, the repetition of his decision involves the accepting of his selfhood as one’s own."\(^80\)

\(^77\)Ibid., p. 105.
\(^78\)Ibid., p. 111.
\(^79\)Ibid., p. 112.
\(^80\)Ibid., p. 114.
"Although we today no longer use these speculative categories [Pauline speculation], the selfhood of Jesus is equally available to us --- apparently both via historical research and via the kerygma --- as a possible understanding of our existence."\(^{81}\)

"If such encounter [with Jesus] is not (like the encounter with the kerygma) the eschatological event, i.e. 'Christian', then one must conclude that the message, intention, self, i.e. person, of the historical Jesus is different from what the kerygma says his reality is."\(^{82}\)

What is Robinson asking the historian to compare in all this? Is one objectively comparing Jesus and the kerygma, or is one subjectively comparing one's own encounter with Jesus with one's own encounter with the kerygma? It is hard to say. In the light of Robinson's theory of history he can hardly allow it to be simply the former because that would put the kerygma on "the level of objectively verifiable fact" and would thus make the new quest "historiography of the nineteenth century kind." At the same time however, without some sort of objective comparison Robinson's theory would dissolve into thin air. What Robinson would like to say is that when one compares one's own encounter with Jesus and one's own encounter with the kerygma, he can at the same time compare Jesus' understanding of existence as found in the authentic Jesus material with Jesus' understanding of existence as found in

\(^{81}\)Ibid., p. 125.

\(^{82}\)Ibid., p. 91.
the kerygma. But it is extremely doubtful if this can be done. How can one effectively compare two subjective experiences ("encounters") and derive from them two past objective data (Jesus' understanding of existence and the kerygma) for comparison? And, in as much as Robinson lays virtually all the stress upon the two subjective encounters --- otherwise his new quest would not be "new", i.e. based on his radical existentialist view of history and the self --- one wonders why he bothers to talk about Jesus as a past fact, at all; after all "the kerygma does not lie on the level of objectively verifiable fact." But if the kerygma is not interested in any kind of objectively verifiable fact, how can Robinson continue to talk about Jesus as a historical person or about his understanding of existence as a past fact? However, and this is the important point, Robinson must talk in such terms, no matter how inconsistent it is with his radical new theory of history and the self, lest his new quest turn out to be nothing more than a new quest for the historicity of the historian.

Robinson concludes NQHJ with an analysis of some typical problems of the new quest. Here he tries to put his theory into practice. He finds in Jesus' message (drawing on his earlier interest in patterns and structures of thought) "something approaching a formal pattern...[and] this pattern permeates Jesus' whole message and provides the norm for interpreting it." The pattern

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83 Ibid., p. 90.
84 Ibid., p. 121.
is the paradoxical juxtaposition of the disparate elements, death: life, suffering: glory, etc. This also appears in the kerygma, making Jesus and the kerygma the same. "Thus the deeper meaning of Jesus' message is: in accepting one's death there is life for others; in suffering, there is glory; in submitting to judgment, one finds grace; in accepting one's finitude resides the only transcendence. It is this existential meaning latent in Jesus' message which is constitutive of his selfhood, expresses itself in his action, and is finally codified in the Church's kerygma."85 When one then encounters Jesus via modern historiography and Jesus via the kerygma, he sees that the two are the same; thus "the selfhood of Jesus is equally available to us --- apparently both via historical research and via the kerygma --- as a possible understanding of our own existence."86

This then is Robinson's new quest as it appeared in NQHJ. In it he has remained a true Bultmannian to the end (even if he does accuse his master of changing his mind), by using, unchallenged, Bultmann's form-critical analysis of the Synoptic material; by allowing existentialistic categories to override all others; and by structuring his existentialism along Heideggerian lines. But he has gone beyond Bultmann by turning these existentialistic categories into a historical theory (and method) and making the results of that method parallel to --- and hence comparable to --- the kerygma.

85Ibid., p. 123.
86Ibid., p. 125.
In spite of the difficulties inherent in the first formulation of his new quest, Robinson felt that in essence it was correct. Thus in the Summer of 1959, just after NQHJ appeared in English, Robinson gave a series of lectures at Göttingen on the theme of a new quest and based his lectures on that book. The request was made at that time that the book be translated into German and after some revision was made by Robinson, Heinz-Dieter Knigge, his assistant at Göttingen translated the revised NQHJ into German for him. It appeared in 1960 as Kerygma und historischer Jesus.\(^{87}\)

Robinson says in the Vorwort to KhJ\(^1\) that "Für die vorliegende deutsche Ausgabe wurde der ursprüngliche englische text völlig neu bearbeitet und verschiedentlich erweitert,"\(^{38}\) But this applies only to the beginning and the ending of the book. It is true that a good deal of work has been done, but the central section dealing with the rationale of the new quest, remained virtually unchanged.

The Introduction of NQHJ became the Einleitung of KhJ. It was completely re-written and lengthened to bring the discussion up to

\(^{87}\)Hereafter abbreviated as KhJ. A second, enlarged edition of KhJ appeared in 1967, which, although it does include some new material — basically the response of Robinson to his critics, — is virtually identical with KhJ\(^1\). Since they are the same it was thought best when referring to KhJ to confine the references to one edition of KhJ, rather than shuffling back and forth from KhJ\(^1\) to KhJ\(^2\). KhJ\(^2\) was chosen as the reference volume because it is the one that is currently available and it represents Robinson's latest thoughts. If for some reason specific reference needs to be made to KhJ\(^1\), a note will be made to that effect.\(^{88}\)  

\(^{38}\)KhJ, p. 5.
In it Robinson discusses in much more detail the views of Kasemann, Fuchs, Bornkamm, and Conzelmann and adds to this a discussion of Braun and Ebeling. Robinson also backs down on his contention that Bultmann has changed his mind by leaving out the section entitled "Bultmann's Shift in Position" and by toning down his other remarks about Bultmann.

Chapter II of NQHJ "The Impossibility and Illegitimacy of the Original Quest" became Chapter I of KhJ "Die Unmöglicherkeit und die Illegitimität der Leben - Jesu - Forschung." Except for some very minor changes the German is identical with the English.

Chapter III of NQHJ "The Possibility of a New Quest" became Chapter 2 of KhJ "Die Möglichkeit einer neuen Frage nach dem historischen Jesus." Except for some very minor changes, it too is identical with the English.

Chapter IV of NQHJ "The Legitimacy of a New Quest" became Chapter 3 of KhJ "Die Legitimität einer neuen Frage nach dem historischen Jesus". It too is almost identical with the English.

Chapter V of NQHJ "The Procedure of a New Quest", parts A-C, became Chapter 4 of KhJ "Die Methode der neuen Forschung nach dem historischen Jesus." Although there are some changes made, the two are virtually the same.

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89 This applies also to KhJ² where the Einleitung was also lengthened to include a discussion of the most recent developments in New Testament studies relative to the new quest of the historical Jesus.

90 He does this all through KhJ. Compare, e.g. NQHJ p. 116 with KhJ p. 207.
Chapter V of NQHJ, parts D and E were re-done however. Robinson expanded these into two chapters in KhJ (Chapters 5 and 6), entitled "Einzelprobleme der neuen Forschung nach dem historischen Jesus" and "Existenzverständnis beim historischen Jesus und im Kerygma." Robinson did not undertake a total re-writing of these chapters however. His work of revision consisted mainly in patching together material out of NQHJ, sometimes re-written, often not, and material that later appeared as "The Formal Structure of Jesus' Message."91


Chapter 6 of KhJ "Existenzverständnis beim historischen Jesus und im Kerygma" consists of three new pages, FSJM pp. 96-108 (un-altered), and FSJM pp. 108-110 (re-written but in essence the same). The two re-written parts use the same material, but it is re-arranged and re-worded.

In 1961, KhJ was translated very literally (and not very well) into French by E. de Peyer under the title Le Kérygme de l'Eglise et le Jésus de l'histoire. However, it makes no changes from the

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91Robinson had already written this article when he wrote NQHJ, because he refers his readers to it as "a forthcoming article, 'The Formal Pattern of Jesus' Message'," NQHJ, p. 121, note 1. It appeared in Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation, eds. W. Klassen and G.F. Snyder, in 1962, as "The Formal Structure of Jesus' Message." Hereafter it will be abbreviated FSJM.
German. Also in 1961, NQHJ was re-printed. The only difference between the second printing and the first is the addition to note 1, p. 121 of "cf. Ch. IV of my Kerygma und historischer Jesus, 1960." Except for that the English printings remained the same (that is, none of the material from the re-worked KhJ made its way back into NQHJ).

The first German edition does mark something of an advance over the English and that needs to be considered here, although the change is not one of major importance. It has already been seen that the major part of NQHJ remained virtually unchanged when it was rendered into German, especially the material dealing with the radical new theories of history and the self that make the new quest new. Actually, Robinson does not really change even Chapter V of NQHJ; most of it is in KhJ. What he does is to expand it and change the emphasis somewhat by stressing the centrality of Jesus' understanding of existence.

In this new material Robinson expresses his fear that by a concentration on anthropology and anthropological theology the New Testament message might be worked out as a gnostic repudiation of the world. Indeed, this fear is justified in Robinson because his existentialistic subjectivism points in that direction. But Robinson wants to avoid such a thing by broadening his concept of "existence" to be that which "takes place in historical decision, which always implies an understanding of the world or history."92

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92KhJ p. 196; FSJM p. 94.
Now one's understanding of existence is constitutive of his person and when one analyzes Jesus' understanding of existence which is constitutive of his person, "the term 'understanding of existence' should not be understood anthropologically but rather as the meeting point of an understanding of man with a correlative understanding of God, history and the world."\(^93\) In this way Jesus is brought back to history and the world by means of his understanding of existence as constitutive of his person.

In order to find Jesus' understanding of existence one must look in the authentic logia and in the parables. In the parables one may find a structuring tendency that plays off "the present evil aeon" against "the aeon to come."\(^94\) The detection of this structure allows one to trace the schatological thread through Jesus' teaching and thus get back to Jesus' understanding of existence.\(^95\) Robinson does not see in this structure a temporal distinction between present and future however, rather "The temporal distinction tends to lose importance in favor of a material antithesis, so that a dialectic relation of tension between the two members results, just as in general Jesus' eschatology reflects an overlapping of present and future due to the inbreaking of God's reign into the present. The decisive scope of Jesus' eschatology reveals its positive content in terms of an understanding of existence, when this moment is

\(^{93}\text{KhJ p. 197; FSJM p. 95.}\)

\(^{94}\text{KhJ p. 220; FSJM p. 97.}\)

\(^{95}\text{KhJ p. 222; FSJM p. 98.}\)
followed through within the formal structure of the logia." 96

"The eschatological coming of God in his action is the act in which
his [Jesus'] existence consists." 97 But is not this mythological
talk, this talking about God at work in Jesus, now that Jesus is
gone? No, "That God does not even fail him at his death is attest-
ed by the Easter faith that the act in which his existence consists
still takes place. Thus one can speak nonmythologically of the
presence of the resurrected Lord. Here is provided the critical
norm for evaluating the kerygma, whose reference to the person of
Jesus is only then legitimate when this understanding of existence
constitutive of Jesus' person is retained, i.e. only when the act
of faith in the kerygma is understood as the act of God in human
life in which Jesus' existence consists, and hence as union with
Christ." 98 In this way Robinson ties together Jesus' history (and
person) with his understanding of existence, and opens that under-
standing of existence to the church by allowing it still to take
place in the Easter faith. One may then go through his own under-
standing of existence, which constitutes his own selfhood, and en-
counter there Jesus' person, i.e. his history. Herein lies the
new quest of the historical Jesus.

Robinson then goes on to analyze some material where this

96FSJM pp. 98-99. KhJ2 p. 223 alters the second sentence some-
what to "Man wird nun aber positiv des existentinalen Gehalts dieses
entscheidenden Skopus der Eschatologie Jesu gewahr, wenn man auf
diese Bewegung innerhalb der formalen Struktur der logien achtet."


98FSJM p. 99; KhJ2 p. 225 omits the last section (from "i.e.
only. . ." on).
eschatological polarity of present and future is to be found -- e.g. Matt. 18:3; Luke 22:16, 18; Luke 11:20; 6:20-21, 24-25. In all of these passages the formal structure of Jesus' message reveals an existential dialectic which "gave expression to Jesus' understanding of the present and thus became the content of Jesus' understanding of existence. For this eschatologically qualified present, this coming of God, is the context, the source, the constitutive ingredient of believing existence. Jesus' action consists in the actualization of this existence. His message consists in bringing the understanding of existence to expression." 99

The church is to preach Jesus, i.e. Jesus' understanding of existence. "The question as to whether Christian preaching and believing correspond to this reality of Jesus' person or only bear his name -- i.e., the normative theological question -- cannot be pursued simply by inquiring whether the message of Jesus has been accurately transmitted even to the ipsissima verba themselves, or by inquiring whether the primitive Christian kerygma has been preserved without subsequent doctrinal contamination -- neither of which is, of course, the case. Rather the critical question is whether, in each transformation of the sayings of Jesus and in each subsequent development of Christological conceptualizations, Jesus' understanding of existence, and hence, that which constitutes his person, has been faithfully proclaimed and believed." 100

99 KhJ p. 231; FSJM p. 104.

100 KhJ pp. 232-33; FSJM pp. 105-106.
church preaches Jesus as an understanding of existence and when one encounters Jesus' understanding of existence through his own understanding of existence, he has found the historical Jesus. The kerygma is tested as to whether it preserves the same possibility of existence --- i.e. whether it preaches "Jesus."

This is the new emphasis that Robinson adds in KhJ (and in FSJM), but it can hardly he said that it helps Robinson to break free from his basic subjectivism. If anything, it plunges him more deeply into it by turning Jesus into being simply an understanding of existence and by making the believer's relationship to Jesus to be an existential "participation" in Jesus' understanding of existence by means of his own understanding of existence, and by making that understanding of existence only open to Dasein-Analysis and not to any kind of objective scrutiny. It also makes Robinson's new quest much more confusing.

II. An Analysis of Robinson's New Concept of History and the Self

A. Robinson's New Concept of History

For Robinson, the new quest of the historical Jesus is not to be seen as a revival of the old "historicism" or "psychologism" that characterized the "objectivist" quest of the nineteenth century. That quest ended in dismal failure. So have all attempts to find Jesus in other "objectivist" ways, such as the attempt to find Jesus in the historical material in the kerygma, or in Stauffer's "new"
sources, or in any new view of the Gospels. Rather, the new quest is possible only because of the new views of history and the self that exist today. Thus Robinson says "If the possibility of resuming the quest lies neither in the kerygma, nor in new sources, nor in a new view of the Gospels, such a possibility has been latent in the radically different understanding of history and of human existence which distinguishes the present from the quest which ended in failure." Robinson then goes on to outline what his radical new theory is and how it is different from the rejected nineteenth century view.

Nineteenth-century historiography and biography were modelled after the natural sciences, e.g. in their effort to establish causal relationships and to classify the particular in terms of the general. Today it is widely recognized that this method placed a premium upon the admixture of nature in history and man, while largely bypassing the distinctively historical and human, where transcendence, if at all, is to be found. It was primarily Wilhelm Dilthey who introduced the modern period by posing for historiography the 'question about the scientific knowledge of individual persons, the great forms of singular human existence'. Today history is increasingly understood as essentially the unique and creative, whose reality would not be apart from the event in which it becomes, and whose truth could not be known by Platonic recollection or inference from a rational principle, but only through historical encounter. History is the act of intention, the commitment, the meaning for the participants, behind the external occurrence. In such intention and commitment the self of the participant actualizes itself, and in this act of self-actualization the self is revealed. Hence it is the task of modern historiography to grasp such acts of intention.

102 NQHJ p. 66; KhJ p. 135.
such commitments, such meaning, such self-actuation; and it is the task of modern biography to lay hold of the selfhood which is therein revealed.\textsuperscript{103}

Here Robinson asserts three things about history. First, history is "essentially the unique and creative," being the "act of intention, the commitment, the meaning for the participants behind the external occurrence." Second, the reality of history "would not be apart from the event in which it becomes," i.e., its reality depends upon "becoming" in the event and would not exist apart from that. Third, the truth of history could not be known from inference or recollection, "but only through historical encounter." The task of modern historiography then becomes "to grasp" the acts of intention that are "history", and the task of modern biography becomes "to lay hold of" the selfhood revealed in "history." By way of formal definition Robinson says "History is the act of intention, the commitment, the meaning for the participants behind the external occurrence" and these constitute "the depths at which the reality of history lies."\textsuperscript{104}

Robinson's radical new theory of history is an extremely difficult one to accept however. First, at the point where one would expect to find absolute clarity --- in his definition of history --- one finds instead an apparent ambiguity. He says both that it is essentially the unique and creative and that it is the act of


\textsuperscript{104}NQHJ p. 29; KhJ p. 90. See also Theol Tod Vol. 15 (1958-59) p. 184.
intention, commitment and meaning. One wonders why Robinson adds the adverb "essentially" to his description of history as unique and creative. To say this seems to imply that history is more than the unique and creative — being "essentially" that, of course — but that and more. In this case history would be a broader term than the unique and creative. However, if this is true, it contradicts Robinson's formal definition of history as the act of intention, etc. Here history is not "essentially" the act of intention, etc., but only the act of intention. Thus the question becomes, is history only "essentially" the act of intention (the unique and creative) or is it the act of intention (the unique and creative)? It cannot really be both. One suspects that Robinson inserted the word "essentially" to keep his definition of history from dissolving into a total skepticism that would define history strictly in terms of existentialist "inner" categories. But whatever the reason for his insertion of the word "essentially" at this point, his formal definition of history rules out the application of the word "historical" to anything other than acts of intention, commitment or meaning.

Taking this then to be what Robinson intends (as one surely must, since this is, after all, his formal definition of history), the problem immediately arises, If this is true, what becomes of the "event" — that "event" in which history becomes, that "external occurrence" behind which the act of intention is grasped by the historian as history? Manifestly, it becomes unhistorical. Now it certainly must come as something of a surprise to be told by a historian that past events are unhistorical, whereas past intentions
and commitments are not, but Robinson did say his view was a "radical" one, so one should be prepared for some surprises. Actually, however, when one considers Robinson's position in its proper context, it is less of a surprise than one might at first have suspected. Robinson considers his view to be "Heideggerian," and Heidegger long ago said that the past is not historical as such, but only "possible material for the concrete disclosure of Dasein which has BEEN THERE." Following this up, Robinson too says that the reality of history lies only in the acts of intentions of persons (i.e. in Dasein), rather than in "bare events" or pastness, as such. But if this is true, has not Robinson succumbed to a total subjectivism after all, in spite of all he might say to the contrary?

Second, what can Robinson mean when he says that the reality of history does not exist apart from the event in which it "becomes"? He has just defined away the event as being non-historical, but now it becomes the sole ground of the reality of history. What is this non-historical ground of all historical reality which supports that which does not simply exist, but "becomes"? It is hard to imagine what it is.

Third, what sort of existence does historical reality have? Robinson is very explicit on this point. He says that historical reality has no existence apart from the event in which it becomes.

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105 Heidegger is the most frequently mentioned philosopher in NQHJ. See pp. 11, 42, 46, 71, 96, 98, 113; KHJ pp. 14, 29, 107, 111, 182, 204-5, 216.

106 Being and Time, p. 446. See further pp. 446, 432.
But what sort of reality is this? The only conceivable way this question could be answered would be if one were willing to drop all subject-object categories and substitute for them some comprehensive metaphysical category of Becoming in order to explain it. However, if one does this, he must be willing to pay the price of being a historical relativist. But this Robinson does not want to do. Consequently, he finds himself in the awkward position of needing for the sake of his theory to abandon all subject-object categories on the one hand, but of needing to retain them, on the other hand, in order to avoid becoming a historical relativist. The result is an unconvincing tangle of objectivity and subjectivity. The best he can do in this regard is to make the bold assertion that subjectivity is not subjectivity at all, but is actually objectivity—hoping that, presumably, this bit of semantic prestidigitation will save the day. Thus, quoting Heidegger, Robinson says "The historical opening up of the "past" through fateful repetition is so little "subjective" that it alone assures the "objectivity" of

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107 F. Gogarten attempts to work out just such a proposal in The Reality of Faith (1959), pp. 94-97 and passim. See also De-mythologizing and History (1955), a book that Robinson considers to be required reading, Encounter Vol. 20 (1959) p. 483.

108 This is in fact Heidegger's fundamental problem, and the one that, apparently, brought about the abandonment of his project Being and Time. He could not move beyond an essentially subjectivist and nihilistic point of view on the basis of his analysis of Dasein. There is also some question as to whether the "later" Heidegger (to the extent that such an one exists) has advanced much beyond his earlier position. Thus Laszlo Versenyi says, "In the last stages he succeeds [in overcoming nihilism and subjectivism], but in doing so he fails as a philosopher. For there is no such thing as an "overcoming of metaphysics" in philosophy." Heidegger, Being and Truth (1965), p. 168.
This is hardly convincing however, and even Robinson recognizes that this does not provide objectivity, but only "objectivity."

Fourth, Robinson has said that because history is a personal affair --- being the act of intention, etc. --- it can only be known by means of "encounter," and not by means of "Platonic recollection or inference from a rational principle." If this is true, however, Robinson must fact the fact that "history", as one ordinarily understands that word, can never be written, and ninety-five per cent of what has passed for "history" in the past is not history at all. All the attempts of good-willed men to describe the past (and incidentally, to describe the "intentions" of the past, as well) must be marked off as illegitimate, being based, as they are, upon "inference and recollection" and not upon "encounter." But by the same token, Robinson too must stop talking about the past as though he could stand over against it --- subject to object --- and describe it in a clear objective way. All of his attempts to reconstruct the kerygma and the theology of the early church, his attempts to show that Jesus actually lived and said the things that he did --- this establishment of the authentic Jesus material (a necessary component of the new quest, it will be remembered), --- all of this must be classed as non-history, along with the efforts of all the other non-historical historians who were not trying to "encounter"

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108 NQHJ, p. 96, note 1; KhJ pp. 179-180, note 3. See the whole footnote.
the past, but to describe it. But clearly, Robinson does talk about the past as such, and because he does so, it is unlikely that anyone will take his historical theory too seriously --- since he himself obviously does not do so.

B. Robinson's New Concept of the Self and the Equation of History with Selfhood

According to Robinson, the possibility of a new quest of the historical Jesus is not just dependent upon a new concept of history, it is also dependent upon a new concept of the self. As was noted above, Robinson said that in the act of intention and commitment (which is "history") "the self of the participant actualizes itself, and in this act of self-actualization the self is revealed." Robinson then goes on to define what this "self" is.

"The self is not simply one's personality, resultant upon (and to be explained by) the various influences and ingredients present in one's heritage and development. Rather selfhood is constituted by commitment to a context, from which commitment one's existence arises. One's empirical habitus is the inescapable medium through which the self expresses itself, but is not identical with the self, even when one seems to make it so. For even if one avoids commitment and merely drifts with life's tide, or even if the commitment is merely to hold to one's own past or absolutize one's personality, the resultant selfhood is decisively qualified by the mood of inauthenticity in the one case, or by one or the other form of doctrinaire self-assertion in the other. Consequently it would be a basic misunderstanding of selfhood, to describe the causal

\[110\text{NQHJ pp. 67-68; KhJ pp. 136-137.}\]
relationships and cultural ingredients composing the personality, and assume one had understood the self. Selfhood results from implicit or explicit commitment to a kind of existence, and is to be understood only in terms of that commitment, i.e. by laying hold of the understanding of existence in terms of which the self is constituted.\footnote{111}{NQHJ p. 68; KhJ pp. 137-138. See also NQHJ pp. 70, 90, 112, 115; KhJ pp. 139, 171, 202-203, 206; FSJM p. 105; Theol Tod Vol. 15 (1958-59) pp. 188, 189, 195-96; Rel. L. Vol. 26 (1958-59) pp. 409, 411.}

Here Robinson defines the self and the relation this self bears to history. The self is not just one's personality, but is "constituted by commitment to a context, from which commitment one's existence arises", and history (being the act of intention and commitment) is the revelation of these acts of self-actualization. Here one may see the relation of history to the self. History is the revelation of the self's intentions and commitments, and, these intentions and commitments are the actualization of the self and constitute the existence of the self. Now, if the self is actualized and constituted by commitment and intention, and if history is the act of intention and commitment, it follows that the self-actualized self is history; and in this way Robinson effects the conjunction of history and the self. The result is that the self, being self-actualized commitment, may open itself up in time and offer itself as a possibility of existence (history) to anyone who would encounter it --- encounter being the only way this "history" is known. Thus the new idea of history and the new idea of the self become one and the same thing.
Upon examination then there are two aspects to Robinson's new concept of the self. First, there is the new definition of the self as such, and second, there is the equation of history with the self. Both of these will now be examined.

Dealing with Robinson's new concept of the self first, we observe that he says that the self is constituted of "commitment to a context" and that this self-actualization (which is "commitment") is the "existence" of the self. However, this is open to serious question. First, Robinson's definition of the self leaves unexplained what it is that does the committing. If the self arises only with the act of commitment, what existed before the act to perform the act? Something, obviously. But if there is something there prior to the act of commitment, that chooses to act (or not to act), and is responsible for the act, would that not qualify it for being called a "self"? Indeed, if the self only arises as the act of this "something-that-acts", the self becomes a rather accidental and insubstantial epiphenomenon dependent upon this more fundamental "something". Would it not be better in these circumstances to call the "something-that-acts" the "self", rather than the accidental stance that arises from the act of the "something"? Surely that which acts and bears responsibility for the act is the self of a person. But if this is so, Robinson's definition of the self as arising only as the result of an act of commitment falls to pieces, for here is a self that exists antecedently to any act of commitment and is in fact the ground of all acts of the person.

Second, the relation between the self and one's personality is
far from clear in Robinson's discussion. Robinson says that the self "is not simply one's personality", the personality is only the "empirical habitus, the inescapable medium through which the self expresses itself." One wonders what the personality, then, is. Robinson's theory makes the personality almost superfluous to the selfhood of a person. Indeed, for Robinson, the dichotomy between the self and one's personality is so deep that one cannot even commit himself to his personality in order to become a "real" self. This would be, according to Robinson, absolutizing one's personality and hence would be "doctrinaire self-assertion." But one must ask Robinson, Why would this be so? He has said that the self is constituted of its intention and commitment. Suppose the self chooses to commit itself to the personality --- or to its past for that matter, which is also disqualified for some unspecified reason by Robinson as being "committable-to" --- why would not this constitute it a "real" self? Obviously, according to Robinson's definition, it would. There is nothing more "doctrinaire" about this than commitment to something else. Nor will it do to stigmatize this as "self-assertion" and to laud anything else as "commitment." Sticks and stones will not remove the fact that existentially speaking the two acts — commitment to personality (or past) and commitment to anything else --- are identical. In either case the self is committed and hence should be constituted a "real" self on Robinson's terms.

But why Robinson should make such a sharp distinction between the self and the personality is far from clear in the first place.
In all probability it is because the older liberals talked about the "self-consciousness" of Jesus and Robinson is terrified of anything that looks like the old "psychologism" of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, he must talk about some personal category, otherwise he could not be an existentialist. As a result, he creates an artificial distinction between self-consciousness [= personality] and self-understanding [= self].

In this way he can locate all of history in the self and discuss it at length without falling into "psychologism", i.e. talking about Jesus' personality or self-consciousness. But notice the lengths to which Robinson must go because of his artificial distinction between the self and the personality. The wedge is driven so deeply that Robinson even goes on to say that one's existential selfhood does not necessarily even come into one's consciousness, and in fact, it can even be contradicted by one's self-consciousness.

Here one is forced to ask, If one's selfhood is so cut off from one's self-consciousness (personality) that one does not necessarily even know what it is and in fact one's consciousness of one's self can even be contradicted by it, then how can one ever say anything about the self? It would appear to be so unknowable that it could never be described, even to the extent of defining it as "commitment to a context." As for ever knowing someone else's "self", e.g. Jesus', that would be out of the question. If one cannot even know oneself, how can one ever

presume to know someone else?

Third, Robinson's whole program of equating selfhood with commitment is bound to fail because it is so obviously one-sided. It overlooks the fact that non-commitment can be just as constitutive of a self as commitment can. Why must it be assumed that the self is only what it does? The self is also what it does not do. Non-intention and lack of commitment are just as actual as intention and commitment. Robinson would like to say that this is just drifting along with life's tide, and hence is inauthentic. But one is forced to ask, Why is this so? Suppose one chooses to drift along with life's tide. Why should that not constitute that self a self and hence be authentic? After all, Robinson did say that the self is constituted of intention and commitment. Here a person intends to be uncommitted. Certainly that qualifies for authenticity. But even more fundamentally, suppose a person does just drift along with life's tide, is not that also constitutive of him? Robinson might not like it, and might want to call it inauthentic --- and so it might well be --- but it is still constitutive of that person's selfhood.

Robinson's analysis of the self must then be marked down as highly unconvincing. But what of the second aspect of this study of selfhood, that is, Robinson's equation of history with this new understanding of the self? Unfortunately, it too must be marked down as most unlikely. Robinson has defined history as the intention and commitment of the self, thus making the self-actualized self history. All this is simply a matter of definitions. But when one goes on to inquire what Robinson means by these statements, his
position is far from clear. It is obvious that since Robinson has said that this self-actualization cannot *be* apart from the event in which it becomes (an unhistorical event, at that), that after the momentary event of self-actualization by a self, that that particular bit of history is gone forever. So how could it be encountered (and "encounter", it will be remembered, is the *only* way one can know history) by someone who was not there to encounter it when it "was"? It would appear that one could only know history if he saw the self-revelation of a self-actualizing self at the moment of self-actualization. There is a real problem here, and the only conceivable way out of it would be to shift the locus of self-actualization on to someone else, thus creating, as it were, a primary self-actualization (the person in history) and a secondary self-actualization (the observer). This would then allow the moment of self-actualization to continue in time beyond the momentary act of self-actualization of "the person in history." But this would only be a temporary expedient at best, for if one were to shift the locus of "reality" from the person who is actualizing himself on to some second party who sees the primary self-actualization and then actualizes himself, the problem would remain virtually the same. It would still be *a priori* impossible for someone after that secondary self-actualization to encounter the no-longer-existent secondary event. Nor can the locus be shifted to the sources that describe someone's revelatory self-actualization, for this would be a denial that history is the act of intention and commitment. Besides, Robinson has called such a procedure
"positivistic" and has utterly rejected it because then one would only be seeing that someone in the past possessed such-and-such an understanding of existence, rather than encountering it. Nor can it be shifted on to the reader of the source because then all one would be encountering would be his own present possibility, not a past occurrence, and Robinson has rejected this also. One can only remark that it makes no sense to define history as the intention and commitment of the self. But if this is true, Robinson must give up his radical new understanding of history and the self --- and along with it his version of the new quest.

C. The New Theory as a New Quest of the Historical Jesus

After having defined his new understanding of history and the self, Robinson then goes on to develop a new historiography based upon these new definitions, which then becomes the new quest. He says, "Hence it is the task of modern historiography to grasp such acts of intention, such commitments, such meaning, such self-actualization; and it is the task of modern biography to lay hold of the selfhood which is therein revealed." "Modern research", he says, "[is] concerned with encountering the meaning of history and the existential selfhood of persons." Taking as a key to this new method the concept of "encounter" through which alone the truth

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113 NQHJ p. 79; KhJ p. 156.

114 NQHJ p. 68; KhJ p. 137. See also Theol Tod Vol. 15 (1958-59), p. 188.

of history may be known and which is the basic concern of modern research, the resultant method would be as follows:

First: The historian examines the Gospels to determine which logia and episodes are in fact authentic. He does this by removing anything that has a kerygmatic ring to it, anything that looks like the theology of the Church, or anything that could have come from the Judaism of that day.

Second: The historian must realize that history is not primarily a matter of past facts, i.e. is not a matter of past external events but is concerned with the inside of the past facts, with transcendent self-hoods, encounters, meanings, commitments, intentions, and self-actualizations.

Third: The historian must encounter (grasp, lay hold of) the selfhood of Jesus as a possibility of existence for himself by encountering Jesus in the authentic Jesus material in the Gospels.

Fourth: The historian must encounter the kerygma as a possibility of existence.

Fifth: The historian must compare the Jesus that he finds by means of historical encounter with the Jesus that he finds by means of encounter with the kerygma to see if the two are the same, and "if in encountering Jesus one is confronted with the same existential decision as that posed by the kerygma, one has proved all that can be proved by a new quest of the historical Jesus: not that the kerygma is true but that the existential decision with regard to the kerygma is an existential decision with regard to Jesus." 116

116 NQHJ p. 92; KhJ p. 173.
What is one to make of Robinson's proposal? First, it must be pointed out that the chief difficulty with it is that it is impossible to find in it any valid source of historical information. All the historian really has is two subjective states within himself. He is told to compare the Jesus encountered historically with the Jesus encountered kerygmatically and see if they are the same. If they are, that is all that can be proved by a new quest of the historical Jesus. But what does it prove? It only proves, if anything, that the historian has responded to two sets of information in exactly the same way. It proves nothing about the two sets of information. Nor could it be otherwise, for an encounter is a wholly personal affair. If someone wanted to know about the source of the encounter, or better that which is encountered, the only thing to do would be to talk about the object encountered and not about the encounter itself. But if this is done, then another dimension of truth is introduced, a dimension of historical objectivity existing independently of being encountered and capable of being known.

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117 Peter Biehl makes this same criticism of Ernst Fuchs: "Worinso werden wir F weiter zu fragen haben --- ist die hermeneutische Einsicht, dass man aus dem, was Jesus verlangt, auf des schliessen kann, was er selbst tat, existential begründet?" Theol Rund (NF) Vol. 24 (1957-58), p. 76. Robinson tries to defend Fuchs (and himself) by saying "once this point has been clarified, i.e. once it has become permissible to deduce Jesus' decision from the decision for which he called, then it is possible to arrive at his historical factuality in terms of existentialistic analysis." NQHJ p. 113, note 2, but this hardly answers Biehl's question. Robinson nowhere says why it is "possible" to do this. Merely to assert that it can be done is to beg the question, because that is the point at issue. It is significant that Robinson dropped this note from KhJ. See further, Kerygma and History (1962) eds. Carl E. Braaten and Roy A. Harrisville, p. 17, note 5.
independently of encounter. And this would be a denial of Robinson's assertion that the truth of history can only be known by encounter.

But Robinson must insist that he can turn the concept of encounter into a source of historical information (lest his whole new quest collapse) and this forces him to make some rather extreme statements. He is forced to make the act of encounter and the object encountered the same thing, so that when one thus analyzes the inner structure of his experience of encounter, he is at the same time analyzing the object encountered. Robinson puts it this way. "Christ is encountered in a symbol created by Jesus' existence and arising in the disciples' encounter with him, as the objectification of their understanding of existence appropriated from him. Put otherwise: the content of faith is itself the act of faith." In this way Robinson hopes to find a historical "object" by means of existentialistic analysis. But one wonders what sort of objectivity this is. In as much as the "object" (the content of faith) is identical with the structure of encounter (the act of faith), does not this wholly internalize the object? Does not this make Christ simply the "understanding of existence appropriated from him"? Clearly it does and if Robinson were consistent, he would become a thorough-going historical relativist, since all historical truth would be dependent upon (indeed, identical with) the "act" of the historian. One can only say that Robinson's

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118 JBR Vol. 27 (1959) p. 239.
concept of encounter is forcing him to skate on some rather thin ice.

Second, Robinson nowhere says how the historian is to "encounter", "grasp", "lay-hold of" these acts of commitment and intention that constitute history, nor how it can even be theoretically possible since they do not exist after the momentary act of self-actualization. But even if the historian could figure out how to encounter or grasp Jesus' commitment that is constitutive of his self, how the historian is then to compare that with another encounter --- the encounter with the kerygma which is also supposed to lay bare Jesus' selfhood --- is a mystery indeed. How does one go about comparing encounters? What criteria are used to show that they are in fact similar or the same? Do they "feel" the same, or "look" the same, or have the same results? Robinson nowhere says how this is to be done, and it is doubtful if he can. How indeed can one compare so elusive and personal a thing as an "encounter" with another "encounter" to see if they are the same?

Third, if Robinson's definition of history as self-actualized self be accepted, and if it also be accepted that one may only know history through encounter, this would make the historian's task one of the most dangerous of all human occupations and very nearly be the end of it. In all of Robinson's discussions on the subject of selfhood and self-actualization he selects for possible encounter individuals who have universally been held to be noble men, e.g.

119 In Rel L Vol. 28 (1958-59), p. 407, Robinson says that the call of Jesus "lays-hold" of us.
Jesus or Paul. Hence when he talks of a later person knowing the "history" [= the selfhood] of these individuals, he discusses it in terms of encountering their selfhood, i.e. taking up their selfhood into oneself and actualizing it. All this sounds fine so long as one is talking about the noble characters of the past, but suppose one were to substitute an evil character of the past for one of these acknowledged decent men and then apply Robinson's "existentialistic analysis" to him? What would be the result? Since Robinson says the only way to know the "history" of these men is to encounter it, does he mean to say that the historian must actualize Hitler's selfhood in order to know it? It would seem so, for there is no other way to know Hitler's selfhood according to Robinson except to encounter it as a possibility of existence for oneself. But surely he cannot mean that one must encounter all the evil intentions in the world in order to be a historian. That would turn the historians into the worst of the world's renegades, and only because they were trying to be good "modern historiographers!

Robinson could of course say that that was not what he meant. He could say that the historian is simply to look at the "intentions" of these evil men, and realizing that they are evil, actualize the opposite intention. But this would hardly solve Robinson's problem. For one thing, it would be a very "positivistic" procedure --- simply looking at a series of past intentions in order to see if one wanted to encounter them or not. But more fundamentally, it would be a denial of Robinson's definition of history --- that in encounter one knows the intentions or self-actualizations of past
persons; because here he is saying that the historian is to actualize a possibility of existence for himself precisely in not actualizing the possibility of existence that was the person's "history" about whom he read. In not encountering the selfhood of the past evil person, the historian would then be encountering an opposite possibility of existence for himself. This is obviously an impossible situation.

And what of historical study in the meantime? What is the historian to do? Since he cannot know whether a past person's selfhood is evil or not before he has encountered it, dare he take the chance? Manifestly, any past person's selfhood might be filled with hidden evil intentions, and the historian, if he is a moral man, would have to be extremely cautious about indiscriminately actualizing past selfhoods. He might be picking the worst possible one. So what can he do but stop actualizing any past selfhoods in order to be on the safe side --- and this, of course, would be the end of historical study, "modern" style.

D. The "Old Quest" in Robinson's New Quest

When Robinson first began looking for a way out of the current methodological dilemma in "The Historical Jesus and the Church's Kerygma", he suggested it was by comparing the meaning latent in Jesus' message with the meaning of the kerygma. He later tried to implement this by looking through the existential call that each mediated and comparing these calls, with the intention of looking into Jesus and the kerygma through the call. In this way he hoped to see history by means of existentialistic analysis and at the same
time avoid the "objectivist" procedure of simply comparing Jesus' message and the kerygma in a strictly external (i.e. extra-personal) way --- as phenomena "out there." But if the above analysis of Robinson's new view of history and the self is correct, he has failed in this respect with his "internal" approach to external events. His existentialistic analysis if carried through would force him into a historical subjectivism that would be virtually the end of all historical study.

There is another side to Robinson's thought however. In spite of all that he says about history being the intention and commitment of past persons, he never abandons the old "positivistic" historical-critical method, rather he stoutly affirms that it must be used. This, on the face of it, is very peculiar. He has founded the whole of his new quest on the proposition that the old quest was illegitimate and impossible precisely because the "positivistic" historical-critical method that underlay it was fundamentally in error. But now he finds it necessary to re-habilitate that very method --- in all probability to provide a measure of fact for his new theory, lest it be simply building castles in the air. Of course Robinson could say that he is not really trying to be a "positivist"; they were trying to write a biography of Jesus, but he is not. This is certainly true, but it is only a difference of degree and not of kind. The older "positivists" were trying to prove too much by their method; Robinson, although he does not try to prove as much as the old questers, is still trying to prove something --- otherwise why use their method? Why not abandon it
altogether and avoid the ambiguity entirely?

But Robinson does not do that. He still uses the historical-critical method to find the authentic Jesus material, in just as "objectivist" a way as any old quester, only he superimposes upon this search for authentic material his own brand of existentialistic subjectivism. And according to Robinson, the two must operate simultaneously, that is, the objective and the subjective elements. If they did not, one would lapse into either pure subjectivity on the one hand or into the old quest on the other. That is, if the existentialist aspect of the new quest were to run ahead of the historical-critical method it would have nothing to operate on -- nothing to encounter, consequently it would be a pure (i.e. unhistorical) subjectivity, unfolding itself alone. On the other hand, if the historical-critical aspect of Robinson's new quest were to run ahead of the existentialistic analysis, this would mean that there exists the possibility of seeing the past as past fact, i.e. as an objective datum independent of encounter that could be sifted, analyzed, understood, and proved. This would be simply the old quest all over again. Consequently, Robinson says that the two methods -- historical-criticism and existentialistic analysis must operate absolutely together. "Contemporary methodology consists precisely in the combination and interaction of objective analysis and existential openness, i.e. it seeks understanding precisely in the simultaneous interaction of phenomenological objectivity and existential 'objectivity'."120 Thus Robinson hopes to avoid being

120 NQHJ p. 96; KhJ p. 179.
called an old quester because he has fused together objectivity and subjectivity into a supposedly single methodology.

However, much as one might like to find in this a way out of the traditional antitheses (here, subjectivity and objectivity), Robinson has not managed to overcome them by suggesting a really new synthesis. All he has done is to jam the two together, without changing the nature of either, and produce a very unconvincing Janus of a historical theory that is trying to look in two different directions at the same time. As a result there is a fundamental antinomy in his system. Rather than the two aspects complementing one another and thus producing a unified whole, they stand diametrically opposed to one another, cancelling each other out.

Second, because Robinson does not abandon the historical-critical method, in spite of the fact that it cannot be reconciled with his existentialistic subjectivism, to this extent Robinson has re-habilitated the old quest. Not that this is necessarily bad (although from Robinson's point of view it is because it cancels out his radical new theory of history), it is simply a fact; and it is this fact that has brought upon Robinson more criticism than anything else he has done. Thus Frank Balchin says that for all the differences that exist between the old quest and the new quest, "the conclusions reached are extraordinarily similar to those reached by Schweitzer. . ."121 Harvey and Ogden have pressed this criticism of Robinson with great force.

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"Die Frage bleibt also bestehen: Wie neu ist die neue Frage nach dem historischen Jesus im Verhältnis zu der alten, der Robinson so kritisch begegnet? Wenn die alte Fragestellung deshalb illegitam war, weil sie einem unchristlichen Sekuritätsverlangen entsprang, so gibt die neue Frage offensichtlich anlass zu der Befürchtung, Historiographie könnte das Kerygma in Frage stellen und daher besteht schwerlich ein grundsätzlichen Unterschied zwischen beiden Fragen hinsichtlich ihrer Motivation. Gleichfalls: Wenn die alte Fragestellung deshalb unmöglich war, weil die Quellen jene Art von chronologischem Wissen nicht hergeben, welches erforderlich ist, um ein Leben-Jesu zu schreiben, so scheint die neue Frage doch die gleiche Art von Wissen vorauszusetzen und insofern gleichermassen unmöglich zu sein.

"Auf diesem Hintergrund sehen wir uns vor die weiteren Hauptthesen Robinsons gestellt, welche die Legiti- mität und Möglichkeit der neuen Fragestellung zum Inhalt haben. Da uns die neue Frage aufs Ganze gesehen kaum neu erscheinen will, hegen wir begründete Zweifel, ob sie auch in anderer Hin- sicht so legitim und möglich ist, wie Robinson darzulegen wünscht."122

It is significant that even Bultmann, from whom Robinson had sought support for his new quest, felt constrained to point this out. He does this in the context of accusing all the "post-Bult- mannians" (i.e. Fuchs, Ebeling, Bornkamm, Käsemann and Robinson) of having slipped into a historical-psychological treatment of Jesus,123 and he goes on to say specifically of Robinson that if Robinson can find the true Christian message in Jesus by means of historical methodology, then the kerygma has become superfluous.


123 Das Verhältnis der unchristlichen Christusbotschaft zum historischen Jesus (1962) pp. 18-23.
"Wenn die Verkündigung (und das Wirken) Jesu den Hörer schon vor die Entscheidung stellt und ihm die Möglichkeit einer neuen Existenz erschliesst — warum kann sich die apostolische Predigt nicht darauf beschränken, die Verkündigung Jesu einfach zu wiederholen, wie andere Schüler die Lehre ihres Meisters wiederholen? . . . Ja Mehr! Wenn echte Geschichts-interpretation das damalige jetzt zum heutigen macht, wenn also der historiker aufgrund seine existentiellen Begegnung mit der Geschichte Jesu seine Hörer (oder Leser) in die Situation der Entscheidung gegenüber Jesus führen kann, --- hat dann das Christuskerygma nicht seinen Sinn verloren, ist es dann nicht überflüssig geworden?"\(^{124}\)

Bultmann also has two other criticisms to make of Robinson's historical method. He goes on to say that Robinson's attempt to find an existential dialectic of faith in the formal pattern of Jesus' message is highly questionable. "Das Bemühen Robinsons, aus der formalen Struktur der Herrenworte die „existentielle Dialektik“ der glaubenden Existenz (nämlich das dialektische Verhältnis von Gegenwart und Zukunft) zu erheben, ist allerdings nicht überzeugend. Wirkliche existentielle Dialektik liegt m. E. nur bei Paulus und Johannes vor.\(^{125}\) Finally, Bultmann says that since the eschatological event first became explicit in the kerygma, there is no need to look back in "history" for it. Jesus is present in the kerygma as the preached event --- Jesus rose into the kerygma,\(^{126}\) so there is no need to look anywhere else for him. Even when one


\(^{125}\)Ibid., p. 23, note 72. Hugh Anderson also criticises Robinson's dialectical use of a presumed "structure" of Jesus' message. Ibid., pp. 177-79.

\(^{126}\)Ibid., p. 27.
does, it is only a reading back of the kerygma into the "life" of Jesus, thus "wenn existentiale Interpretation der Sinn solcher Worte [that of II Cor. 5:17, John 12:31] in Wort und Tat des historischen Jesus wiederfinden kann, wie etwa Robinson und Braun es tun, so sind sie faktisch durch das Kerygma geleitet, in dem das Paradox „im Tode wohnt das Leben“ erst explizit geworden ist."\(^7\)

It is thus clear that to the extent that Robinson makes use of the historical-critical method, he has not moved beyond the old quest; he has simply moved up to it and superimposed his existentialistic subjectivism upon it, and proceeded from there as though the two were one historical methodology.

There is also a third criticism that can be made of Robinson’s use of the historical-critical method. When Robinson finally puts the historical-critical method into operation to find the authentic Jesus material, so far from being actually objective he uses as constricted an one as can be conceived, as though he were afraid he might actually prove something. The reason for this of course is that he is trying to be a party-line Bultmannian.\(^8\) As a result

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 26.

\(^8\)It is this fact that explains what might otherwise seem paradoxical, namely, that Robinson is accused both of not being a Bultmannian (i.e. reviving the old quest) and of being a Bultmannian. In fact, both of these allegations are true. He is not a Bultmannian in his allowance for the use of the historical-critical method to operate in the search for the historical Jesus, but he is a Bultmannian in his narrowly conceived form-critical approach to the Gospels and general orientation. For comments on Robinson's "Bultmannianism" see Pierre Bonnard, Revue de Theol et de Phil 3rd Series Vol. II (1961) p. 74; B.E. Benktson, Svensk Theol Kv Sk Vol. 38 (1962) pp. 119-120; P. Benoit, Revue Biblique Vol. 67 (1960) p. 447; J.M. Faux, Nouvelle Rev. Theol Vol. 54 (1962) p. 306; V.T. O'Keefe, Theol Studies Vol. 20 (1959) p. 457.
when he tries to find objective history in the Gospels, he can only produce the most meagre of results, because his narrow Bultmannian stance has already decreed in advance what will be allowed to be historical and what will not. It could well be that it was this that caused Robinson to think of a new quest in the first place, that is, because the historical-critical method (in the hands of a Bultmannian) produces so little history, and because Robinson earnestly wanted to find the historical Jesus, he felt it necessary to add a "new" dimension to the little bit of history he had been able to find, in order to open up that history to the modern historian. In this way Robinson could both be a Bultmannian (using Bultmann's form-critical method) and yet go beyond Bultmann back to the Jesus of history. If this observation is true however it also becomes the case that precisely here, where Robinson went wrong, the way to a genuine solution must lie. If Robinson were willing to abandon, or at least modify, his doctrinaire Bultmannianism and allow the historian to work unfettered from all of Bultmann's dogmatic presuppositions, it could well be that the Jesus of history would not be such a blank page from the past after all. And, if Jesus could be thus found in history, it would not be necessary to add the dubious category of "existential 'objectivity'" as Robinson has conceived it to the historical-critical method in order to find him. He would never have been lost in the first place. However, Robinson is not willing to do this and his approach remains a dogmatic Bultmannianism, saddled with all the problems that that system has. As Otto Betz says,
"The 'new quest of the historical Jesus' gives the impression of being constricted, both for dogmatic reasons and because it binds itself too exclusively to the methods of form criticism. The reserve in the face of historical and objective facts, which was inculcated by Bultmann, has by no means disappeared. . . The 'new quest' therefore leaves a divided impression: the wall between the proclaimed Christ and the historical Jesus has been broken down, but the field that lies behind the wall is being traversed with half-closed eyes."129

Finally, as a fourth criticism of Robinson's use of the historical-critical method, his attempt to have the subjective factor (as defined by him) and the objective factor operate simultaneously is an impossible one. How, indeed, can one be both objective and subjective at exactly the same time, with reference to exactly the same datum? Can one really be both detached and uncommitted, as is required by the historical-critical method, and involved and committed, as is required by Robinson's existentialistic analysis, "simultaneously"?

But even if one were to grant, for argument's sake, that a person could be both committed and uncommitted at the same time (which is, of course, impossible) that would not solve Robinson's problem, it only creates another one more difficult than the first. Robinson

129 What Do We Know about Jesus (1968) p. 18. See R.H. Fuller, Anglican Theological Review Vol. 41 (1959) pp. 233-35, where Fuller critically challenges Robinson with this question: "Does the minimal criterion for authenticity in the traditions about Jesus represent the maximum which can be used or alternatively are they being applied too mechanically?"
has said that one is to encounter Jesus' selfhood (which is his 'history') in the authentic Jesus material. This is the subjective side of his theory. Robinson also says that this "subjectivity" is to operate at all points parallel to the historical-critical method ("simultaneously"), so that one will not be reviving the old quest. Now the authentic Jesus material can only be established as the result of a long and arduous study of that material, which might take months; conceivably it could take years. Since this is true, it follows that all that time, during those months or years, --- and since Robinson's method is the "simultaneous interaction" of subjectivity and objectivity --- one would be attempting to encounter Jesus' selfhood in some not-yet-historical (i.e. not yet determined to be "authentic") historical material. But it is precisely this, i.e. Jesus' selfhood, that cannot be encountered because the ground of that selfhood --- the authentic material --- would not yet have been determined. But Robinson insists that the two factors --- the objective and the subjective --- must operate simultaneously. This means that the process of establishing the authentic Jesus material (and thus the ground for finding Jesus' selfhood) and the existential openness that is to encounter Jesus' selfhood are to run parallel to one another the whole way, from beginning to end. Does this mean then that one is to be committing himself to all the various undeveloped stages of Jesus' selfhood as it is being established by the long and arduous process that is the historical-critical method, only to commit oneself finally to the "complete" selfhood of Jesus, when and if it is ever made available in the
material? But what can it mean to commit oneself to a selfhood before there is a selfhood that one can commit himself to? --- i.e. since the finished selfhood of Jesus can only be the complete selfhood as disclosed by the authentic material, how can one commit himself to that when it does not yet exist --- has not yet been made available in the authentic material? Robinson's theorizing can create some extremely difficult problems.

The only conclusion that can be drawn from this entire analysis of Robinson's radical new view of history and the self, his attempt to turn that into a historical method, and the stubborn fact that Robinson has not abandoned the "positivism" that he speaks so strongly against, is that, however valiant the attempt, it must be marked down as a failure, because of the terms in which he chooses to state his case. He has attempted to blend together two fundamentally opposed points of view and has succeeded only in confusing the issue. Were he willing to abandon his subjectivism on the one hand and allow his objectivism to establish anything of significance on the other, he would be able to work his way out of the forest, but unfortunately he does not seem willing to do that. What he does do must now be considered.
III. The "New" Robinson

A. Robinson's Reappraisal of his Position

The flood of adverse criticism that Robinson's new quest occasioned --- no one spoke out in favor of it as a comprehensive program, not even Bultmann or the other "new questers" --- and the confusion that it caused forced Robinson to give some serious thought to what he was trying to accomplish by his new quest. By trying to blend together somehow the historical-critical method and existential "openness", Robinson had apparently gotten the worst of both worlds. As a result he was accused of either being a continuation of the old quest on the one hand, or a Bultmannian subjectivist on the other, when in fact it was his desire to be neither. Consequently, Robinson felt it necessary to respond in both directions in order to clarify what he was trying to do. Against those who

130 A typical response to Robinson's proposal in this regard is that Robinson is "needlessly obscure", A.E.J. Rawlinson, Theol Vol. 62 (1959) p. 429; or as Frank Balchin says, somewhat more picturesquely "Dr. Robinson seems to have imbibed a little Teutonic difficulty with his German scholarship." Southeast Asia Journ of Theol Vol. 2 (1960) p. 77. See also D.E.H. Whiteley JTS, NS Vol. 13 (1962) p. 395. It is interesting to recall at this point the remark of E.L. Mascall, "Existentialism is certainly a movement of great interest [but] it is one whose spokesmen are for the most part extremely verbose and obscure." (In a Review of James Brown, Subject and Object in Modern Theology; Philosophical Review, Cornell University). C.S. Lewis extends this observation. "Many writers on "religion"...have a positive love for the smudgy and the polysyllabic. They write as though they believed (in the words of the late George Gordon) that thought should be clothed in pure wool." Forward to Smoke on the Mountain by Joy Davidman, p. 9. A feeling similar to this moved J.M. Faux to call Robinson's work "un peu Hermétique" Nouvelle Revue Théol Vol. 84 (1962) p. 305. Robinson was particularly needled by this sort of thing and frequently complains that either his position or someone else's position relative to his own has been "misunderstood". KhJ p. 8, 141, 230, 232, 239.
accused him of continuing the old quest, he re-affirmed his earlier contention that this was not his desire, and he resolutely disassociated himself from anyone whose position even looked like the old quest. Thus when John Macquarrie tried to line his position up with that of Robinson, he received this severe rebuff from him.

"John Macquarrie welcomes the new quest as support for his insistence that the historian should provide the kerygma with an "empirical anchor", a "minimal core of factuality." What Macquarrie has in mind is suggested by his criticism that a demythologizing interpretation of the stilling of the storm denies "any objective reference in the story," i.e., it denies "that Christ had in fact stilled a storm on the lake." Over against this Macquarrie affirms, "the minimal assertion is that "the word became flesh and dwelt among us"." But anyone who expects such a statement as this last from a historian simply does not understand the limits set on the historian's trade. And, indeed, Macquarrie's contention is more reminiscent of the positivistic program of Ethelbert Stauffer, roundly rejected by all involved in the new quest, than of the new quest itself. To be sure, Macquarrie states his "minimal core" in language much like that of the new quest: Simply that there was someone who once exhibited in history the possibility of existence that the kerygma proclaims. He apparently means by this that the reality proclaimed by the kerygma is to be proven historically to have taken place in the case of Jesus. But again, this reality is God's eschatological, saving action, and, as such, it simply cannot be proven historically. This act of God is faith's "fact" and that is why no "minimal core" of this kind of "factuality" can ever be provided by the historian. To be sure, Bultmann rightly identifies

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132 One wonders if this means Robinson does understand the "historian's trade." It is Dwight Beck's opinion that Robinson's basic problem is precisely that he does not. He says that Robinson's existential interpretation of history may well appeal to New Testament scholars, but it carries no conviction to secular scientific historians. JBR Vol. 27 (1959) p. 359.
the gospel as consisting for Paul in the having-happenedness of the eschatological event once and for all, and it is that message which is directed to me as the proclamation that it is happening in my life. But this does not mean that the gospel is to be proved in the one case and believed in the other, but rather that I believe it to have happened once and for all when I believe that it happens now to me. . . Hence Carl Michelson is correct in his criticisms of Macquarrie: "This positivistic drive leads Macquarrie to misinterpret the purpose of the current revival of the question of the historical Jesus."\textsuperscript{133}

But for all his protestations to the contrary, Robinson added nothing new to his argument at this point and continued to affirm --- more grudgingly, it is true --- that the historical-critical method must be used by the historian. Thus Hugh Anderson's observation is still a valid one.

"Their [the new questers] set purpose therefore has been not to establish this or that word or deed of Jesus, this or that miracle, this or that sequence of events in his life, but rather to demonstrate the correspondence between Jesus' own understanding of his existence and the claim he lays upon us, and the kerygma's witness and the claim it lays upon our existence. But precisely here is the problem. With the best will in the world to avoid speaking objectively about Jesus or laying a concrete historical ground for faith, are we not on the verge of reviving the old biographical interest by holding up Jesus "existence" as an objectively observable phenomenon the moment we give the impression that, by a somewhat strange amalgam of objective historical analysis and "existential openness", the historian qua historian can lay hold of the selfhood of Jesus?"\textsuperscript{134}


\textsuperscript{134} op.cit. pp. 175-76.
However, because Robinson is struggling against just such an impression (true though it is) this forces him to state his case in such a way that virtually all real historical knowledge disappears --- even if it be just a "minimal core of factuality" --- as has just been shown in the analysis of his treatment of history and the self and as is evident in his remarks concerning Macquarrie; and this creates another problem for Robinson --- how to show that he is not actually a subjectivist. Consequently, Robinson speaks out to those who accuse him of being a subjectivist by saying that he never intended to evaporate Jesus into purely existentialistic categories; what he intended to do was to find Jesus by using these existentialistic categories. But it is extremely difficult to see how this can be done and how Robinson can in fact avoid falling into the subjectivist trap. Robinson himself is aware of this. He can see the way his theory is taking him and is not satisfied with it. As a result he found it necessary to reappraise his position and to attempt a restatement of his case in such a way that it would not logically land him in a total subjectivism.

The first attempt at this came as early as 1959, about six months after NQHJ was published. In an article in the Christian Century, entitled "The Historical Question: New Testament Scholars engage in a new quest for the historical Jesus," Robinson attempted to explain more clearly what he meant by "history" and tried to do it

in such a way as to overcome the subjectivism of his earlier approach, but also in such a way as still to be consistent with his basic existentialist orientation. His analysis of history comes up in the midst of a discussion of Heilsgeschichte in the Old Testament. Here he poses this question, "How can Heilsgeschichte, the Israelite construction of its own past, be related to Israel's factual history as it is reconstructed today? Such a relation is indispensable to Heilsgeschichte, which understands itself not as an abstract idea but as the meaning of history?"\(^{136}\), and answers it by saying that small pieces of real history ("vestiges") have been preserved in the legends of Israel and this shows an understanding of history on Israel's part. In this way Heilsgeschichte and factual history are related. The Israelites saw history in terms of God's purpose in time and some facts were retained in their construction of Heilsgeschichte. Robinson goes on to say that some of these facts were seen as the fulfillment of a past divine purpose and others were seen as the promise of some future fulfillment. This gave a two-fold directedness to Israel's understanding of history and "in this two-fold directedness of Israel's understanding of historical events one has real history: meaningful occurrence."\(^{137}\) Robinson continues the discussion by posing another question that, together with the former question, forms a "dialectic of two correlative problems." The second question is: "How can the modern

\(^{136}\)Ibid., p. 1208.

\(^{137}\)Ibid., p. 1209.
reconstruction of Israel's factual history be related to Israel's spiritual heritage, which we today know to have centered largely in its construction of history? Such a relation is indispensable to modern historical study, which understands itself not as a positivistic chronicle but as an attempt to understand the meaningfulness of events.138 He answers this by saying that the historian is to look at the growth of the Heilsgeschichte idea (Israel's "construction of history") by following it through J, E, D, and P to the Chronicles, and therein find the meaning of those events. "This union of the course of Israel's factual history as reconstructed by the modern historian with the course of the development of Israel's spiritual history as reconstructed by form and literary criticism, is real history: Interpreted fact."139 So real history is to be understood as meaningful occurrence and interpreted fact.

Robinson relates this to the New Testament by saying that New Testament scholarship has run largely parallel to that of the Old Testament and that "the scholarly problem of relating theological construction and historical fact finds its most acute New Testament expression in the problem of the Gospels and the historical Jesus."140 Bultmann had rendered a reconstruction of the historical Jesus impossible, but the post-Bultmannians have called that into question, with the result that the Bultmannian synthesis is dissolving.

138 Ibid., p. 1208.
139 Ibid., p. 1209
140 loc. cit.
"Furthermore, the most recent understanding of history has largely removed the barriers erected against the original quest. For the historian's task is increasingly seen in the identification of the meaning of historical event, rather than merely in the establishment of chronological and causal sequence. If the latter is impossible in the case of Jesus, the former is seen as a possible goal of historical research. . . Thus New Testament scholarship is reaching a synthesis between the kerygma and the historical Jesus."[141] Consequently, in the New Testament too history is to be understood as meaningful occurrence and interpreted fact --- the Jesus of history is the meaningful occurrence and the kerygma is the interpreted fact --- and a synthesis is being reached between the two.

This certainly sounds like a step in the right direction, but there are two things that Robinson fails to give sufficient thought to in his new definition of "real history." First, what does Robinson mean by the words "occurrence" and "fact" in his definition of history as meaningful occurrence and interpreted fact, in the light of what he thinks about J, E, D, P and the kerygma? In order for J, E, D, P and the kerygma to be meaningful occurrence and interpreted fact, they would have to be factual accounts of the events they describe. But Robinson does not believe that; he has

[141]Ibid., p. 1210. It comes as something of a surprise to see Robinson here almost say that the original quest should be renewed, especially in the light of his stern rebuke of Macquarrie, but it must be remembered that Robinson wrote this Christ Gent article before anyone had accused him of reviving the original quest, consequently his words are somewhat unguarded. The course of his later writings quickly set this straight and he later had cause to regret this article.
expressly rejected the idea that facts are of any ultimate significance in the kerygma\textsuperscript{142} and he says of J, E, D, P in this \textit{Christian Century} article that much of what one finds there is not factual at all. So how can he call history interpreted \textit{fact}? Second, it is difficult to see how Robinson can meaningfully relate the "meaning" and "interpretation" of "meaningful occurrence" and "interpreted fact" to the events they purport to describe when in many cases there are no events to interpret in the first place, and second, when there are events they are only "vestiges" of historical occurrence (merely a "having-happenedness") and the interpretation often comes centuries after even that. How can Robinson seriously call a mere "vestige" that centuries later had a "meaning" tacked on to it "real history"?

The only way Robinson could salvage the past with this re-statement of what "real history" is would be for him to take it a little more seriously and allow the "occurrences" and "facts" actually to be "occurrences" and "facts". This would also necessitate a revision of his existentialistic subjectivism. But unfortunately Robinson is unwilling to do this, and because he is trying to build his new quest on a "new" theory of history and not on any of the older options, his problems still remain. It should also be pointed out that when the flood of criticism did come, with much of it accusing him of reviving the old quest, whatever rays of "objectivist" hope were to be seen in this article quickly received a nearly fatal blow.

\textsuperscript{142}NQHJ pp. 48-58; KhJ pp. 113-124.
But even if this article did not solve anything, it is none the less an important one because from it three things clearly emerge. First, it is clear that Robinson is struggling with the issues and would at least like to get history out of the existentialist clouds and back to earth again. Second, it is equally clear that Robinson has failed to do what he set out to do, and by using traditional historical terms such as "meaning", "fact", and "occurrence", he has only succeeded in perpetuating the ambiguity of his earlier position. He has not been able to break free to "real history" (as he would like to understand that term), merely by using traditional terms. This situation created in Robinson a desire to find a new set of terms and a new rationale that would bypass what he thought were the traditional road-blocks. Third, Robinson's article helped to make clear where some of the problems in his approach to history lay. It showed first and foremost that the problem of subjectivism was still there, even though he had set out to adjust that very thing. Second, it brought to light another problem and that was how to relate "meanings" to "events" in the light of the fact that the meaning was simply a later addition to the event. So when JEDP or the kerygma ascribe meaning to an event --- in some cases years or even centuries after the event --- how can that meaning be properly related to the event? Third, it brought into focus another problem that was only latent in his earlier approach, namely, how can something be considered "historical" when in fact it never happened. Since Robinson has defined "real history" as "interpreted fact", and much of JEDP and the kerygma is
not factual, Robinson must face this problem. It is not a completely new one however. It came up in NQHJ when he said "one may observe that material regarded as wholly 'unauthentic' in terms of positivistic historiography may not seem nearly so 'unauthentic' in terms of modern historiography. For a saying which Jesus never spoke may well reflect accurately his historical significance, and in this sense be more 'historical' than many of the irrelevant things Jesus actually said." \(^{143}\) Robinson never went into the question of how a saying that Jesus never spoke could be more historical than one that he did speak, but the same problem came up again in this article. In as much as JEDP and the kerygma are called "interpreted fact" when in fact much of it never happened, how can JEDP and the kerygma be considered "history"? So, although this article did not solve any problems, it did help to bring some of them into focus for attention later on.

Robinson continued the re-evaluation of his position and his defence of himself at the National Meeting of the National Association of Biblical Instructors, which was held at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., on December 29-30, 1961. \(^{144}\) Here Robinson was forced to admit that his earlier proposal suffered from "various inadequacies." \(^{145}\) However, what he did say there did not make any substantial advance on his earlier position, any more than did the

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\(^{143}\) NQHJ p. 99, note 3; KhJ p. 184, note 12.

\(^{144}\) This was published in JBR, Vol. 30 (1962) pp. 198-208 as "The Recent Debate on the "New Quest".

\(^{145}\) Ibid., p. 198.
Christian Century article. He simply defended himself against his critics and worked along the same lines as before.

He begins by saying that in America the old quest never ended and as a result the new quest is in danger of being confused with it. But the new quest is not the old quest and "if any advocate of the new quest is to make his point in the present situation he must go to great pains to argue that the new quest does not 'parallel perfectly' the old."\(^{146}\) Robinson also notes that some of the original new questers are now not so sure that it is a worthwhile enterprise and hence "the emergence of critical reservations concerning the new quest..." is part of the new situation.\(^{147}\)

Robinson then spends the rest of his time in replying to Bultmann because Bultmann has lined himself up against the new quest. This is particularly embarrassing to Robinson because earlier he had said that Bultmann had given his full blessing to the new movement; "The discussion as to reopening the quest of the historical Jesus has been so vigorously advanced within the past six years that the new quest of the historical Jesus has been almost universally accepted (!) as the order of the day. Bultmann himself has conceded in a letter to me the possibility and legitimacy of the quest."\(^{148}\)

But when Bultmann spoke publicly on the subject he was highly critical of it and of Robinson in particular. Consequently Robinson found it necessary to justify the new quest as over against Bultmann's rejection of it. Thus he says,

\[^{146}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 200.}\]
\[^{147}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 201.}\]
\[^{148}\text{Christ Cent Vol. 76 (1959) p. 1210.}\]
"When Bultmann then asks me whether the evangelists' interest in emphasizing the significance of history for faith goes beyond merely affirming the "dass", the fact that the Lord was a historical person, I must reply: In the situation in which the synoptic authors found themselves, one could no longer maintain, as Paul could, the "dass", the historicalness of the worshipped Lord, merely by repeated assertions of the fact of his historicalness. In their situation - and ours - an emphasis upon the "dass", indispensable as it is for the kerygma and for Bultmann, could only be made in terms of the Jesus-tradition and not by ignoring that tradition through an exclusive proclamation of the Easter gospel. In their situation, the synoptic writers could retain the "dass" only by maintaining a position on the "was", i.e., only by making corrective use of the Jesus-tradition, by replacing the un-christian understanding of existence which had invalidated the Jesus-tradition, with a christian understanding of existence. This is the Sitz im Leben, the Tendenz, which accounts for and justifies the practice of the Synoptics, so different from early kerygmatic texts and from Paul, and which also authenticates the Gospels as canonical and, with them, the validity and necessity of the new quest in our situation."

Bultmann had also criticized the "post-Bultmannians" for "not distinguishing clearly between an existentialist interpretation and an objectifying view," and Robinson comes to the defence of their position (represented by Fuchs) by saying, "Fuchs has most recently shifted his terminology from Jesus' self-understanding to his time-understanding, which may clarify the distinction between psychological observations falling outside an existentialist interpretation and structures relevant to an existentialist interpretation."

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149 JBR Vol. 30 (1962) p. 204.
150 Ibid., p. 205.
151 loc. cit.
the existentialist camp. He wants to have a new quest, but he only wants it to be an existentialist one, not an "objectifying" one. Consequently, he is very sensitive to any suggestion that the post-Bultmannians (which includes himself) might be anything but bona fide existentialists.152

Robinson replies to the specific criticisms of himself made by Bultmann and narrows them down to this:

"Here precisely is the point at issue between Bultmann and myself in our understandings of Jesus: I have argued that implicit in Jesus' message there is a structure corresponding to the kerygma's reference to the once-for-all event of cross and resurrection. I do not have in mind predictions of the passion or messianic claims, against which Bultmann rightly but one-sidedly protests, but rather the presupposition, upon which Jesus' ministry was built, of divine intervention in the last hour. Thus the debate over whether we should study Jesus historically depends to some extent upon the outcome of such a study --- a fact which need embarrass not those who maintain the theological relevance of such study, but only those who deny it."153

So apparently Bultmann ought to be embarrassed.

Robinson concludes his defence of himself against Bultmann by remarking that if Bultmann can accuse him of making the kerygma irrelevant, he can accuse Bultmann of making historical study irrelevant. "Thus the basic refutation of Bultmann's position on the relevance of the historical Jesus is that if carried to its ultimate consequence it would prove too much. It would bring to an end the

152 See also Christ Cent Vol. 83 (1966) p. 580.
scholarly study of the Bible and theological scholarship in general as having any function for the church. At stake ultimately is the relevance of biblical and theological scholarship for the church....\textsuperscript{154}

None of this was of any help to Robinson in overcoming his basic problem however. He still had not found the new categories that he needed in order to move beyond his simply mixing together objective and subjective ideas. All he had done was to protest on the one hand that he was not an old quester, and to re-affirm on the other that he was an existentialist, in spite of his use of the historical-critical method.

B. The "New" Robinson

About three years after Robinson published NQHJ and wrote the Christian Century article where he unsuccessfully tried to re-state his view of history, he was able to make the break-through that he was looking for.\textsuperscript{155} This was brought about by two things. In the

\textsuperscript{154}Ibid., p. 207.

\textsuperscript{155}Cullmann has noticed this shift to the "new" Robinson as well. He says, "The new direction that J.M. Robinson has begun with his stress on Heidegger's concept of "Lichtungsgeschichte" (history seen as 'clearings') may ultimately be regarded as symptomatic of the same break in the homogeneity of the Bultmann school... He faithfully follows the shift he thinks he discerns in 'the earlier Heidegger.' In Heidegger's 'self-disclosure of Being in history', ("Lichtungsgeschichte"), Robinson sees a way leading back even to the salvation history of Hoffmann... It [salvation history] becomes a 'speech-event' in which the history of Israel is given utterance." "Salvation in History" (1967) p. 61. Ralph P. Martin also notices a shift in Robinson, but he puts it at the wrong place. "Aware of these pressures [i.e. criticisms of his view], Robinson has modified his earlier view, which based an existential understanding of Jesus' message upon his selfhood (Selbstverständnis)... Instead of "understanding of self", Robinson now prefers to speak of "understanding of existence" (Existenzverständnis)." Jesus of Nazareth: Saviour and Lord, ed. Carl Henry, (1966) pp. 37-38. But this was not a basic re-orientation, only a shift in terminology to avoid being called a "psychologizer."
period of time subsequent to NQHJ the "various inadequacies" that characterized his position apparently became a source of great concern to him, especially the three problems mentioned above in connection with the *Christian Century* article, that is, the subjectivity of his approach, the "chronological" problem of relating later meaning to earlier event, and what, for want of a better term, may be called the "historical" problem. The subjectivity of his approach was a fundamental difficulty that faced Robinson. He had tried to make history the selfhood of the participant in history or the meaning found in stories from the past. In order to tie this more into the world of fact, however, a more concrete approach would have to be offered. Robinson could have moved into the objectivist camp of course but this would have been an admission that his earlier statements were erroneous. Nevertheless, some more objective solution would have to be offered, if the past is to be a significant part of historical research. And this much must be said: Robinson emphatically desires that the past happenedness of the past be preserved. The "chronological problem" also needed to be faced. Somehow Robinson would have to get the "meaning" (which in some cases arose centuries after the event) back to the event to tie it into time. Otherwise, there would be no guarantee that any interpretation has any relationship at all to the event to which it is attached. The third problem is called the "historical" problem because in the "new" Robinson one finds a new understanding of what it means to be historical. The problem that this new definition is designed to solve is the perplexing one mentioned above, that in
non-historical material one finds "historical" meaning --- i.e. Biblical writers often use phrases that imply a historical understanding of what they are writing about, but the stories they wrote have been judged by modern historiography to be unhistorical. So the problem is: How can a non-historical episode still be considered historical? It is these problems that Robinson wants to solve by his new understanding of history.156

The second thing that brought about a re-evaluation of Robinson's view of history, and in fact suggested the new definition of history, was Robinson's discovery of the "later" Heidegger. Robinson outlined his new proposal in an article entitled "Heilsgeschichte und Lichtungsgeschichte" that appeared in 1962.157 It was published in English in 1963 as "The Historicality of Biblical Language."158 1963 also saw the first volume of Robinson's New Frontiers in Theology, entitled The Later Heidegger and Theology, in which Robinson wrote "The German Discussion of the Later Heidegger."159 It was

156 On examination, these three problems turn out to be variations of the basic problem Robinson has faced all along, from QHJT on --- how to be "subjective" without being a subjectivist, and how to be "objective" (i.e. tie his method into history and time) without reviving the old quest.

157 Evang Theol Vol. 22 (1962) pp. 113-141; hereafter abbreviated HUL.

158 In The Old Testament and Christian Faith ed. B.W. Anderson, pp. 124-158; hereafter abbreviated as HBL.

159 Hereafter abbreviated GDLH. This was translated into German in 1964 as "Die deutsche Auseinandersetzung mit dem späteren Heidegger" in Die Spätere Heidegger und die Theologie, pp. 15-93; hereafter abbreviated SHT.
the "later" Heidegger that opened up a new frontier for Robinson and he tried to apply this newly discovered knowledge to the problem of history. Here were the new categories that he needed.

Robinson says that "the explosive potentialities of 'the later Heidegger' for theology" did not become evident until 1959; and that of course precluded their use by Robinson earlier for he had written his earlier views of history before that "explosion" took place. But now a new day has dawned because in the later Heidegger there is a move beyond metaphysics, beyond subject-object categories, to a more fundamental ontology that is radically "objective." The shift in Heidegger has been described by Schultz in this way,

160 It is interesting to note that, important as is this subject of the "later" Heidegger, Robinson is apparently of two minds on it. He said in 1963 that Heidegger had shifted his position, hence there is an "earlier" and a "later" (GDLH, p. 7). Robinson however was criticized for this (in October of 1963) by John Macquarrie --- "Here we may pause for a moment to consider the propriety of talking about 'the later Heidegger.' If the expression is taken to imply some deep cleavage between the Heidegger of Being and Time and the Heidegger of the later writings, it is highly misleading." Theol Tod Vol. 20 (1963-64) p. 420. Robinson then said in 1964 about Heidegger's new position, "Hence it is to be considered as a consistent continuation of that basic concern [that of Being and Time] when the later Heidegger moved beyond an analysis of man's being as his center of orientation" (HBL, p. 152; HUL p. 136), but he also said on the same page (note 32) "The basic shift in Heidegger's philosophy justifying a distinction between the "early" Heidegger of Being and Time and the "later" Heidegger is analyzed in The Later Heidegger and Theology (1963)." When SHT appeared in 1964, his distinction between the earlier and later Heidegger remained unchanged (SHT, p. 19). So, is the later Heidegger a "consistent continuation" of the earlier, or is there "a distinction between the 'early' Heidegger of Being and Time and the 'later' Heidegger?" Robinson apparently cannot make up his mind.

161 GDLH p. 5; SHT p. 17.
162 HBL p. 153; HUL p. 137.
"In connection with the commentaries on Hölderlin and the corresponding discussions of art, Heidegger took his departure from the tradition with a radicality that left far behind it the overcoming of the traditional approaches that the existentialist analysis of Being and Time had in certain respects carried through. Now the epoch of metaphysics, lasting from Plato to Nietzsche, is held to be an 'error'. To be sure, it is not an error to be condemned, or that could in principle have been avoided. Rather it is an error in which thinking was 'led astray' by being. Being --- that was now the center of Heidegger's thought. It was clear that Heidegger placed this concept of being --- and the concept of the 'holy' which was apparently somehow equivalent to it --- at the center of his works, and it was from this center that he dismantled the tradition so radically."\(^{163}\)

The shift was thus from the existentialia of man, i.e. from his self-hood and the categories of his existence, to the ground or being of any being, including man, that is to say, to Being itself. It is not necessary, for our purposes, to pursue the later Heidegger any further except to observe that a fundamental problem was created by his shift from the "thrownness" of man to the "throwing-ness" of Being, and that is, how to relate man's understanding of Being to Being itself without falling into subject-object categories, in as much as Being is beyond metaphysics (i.e. beyond the subject-object schema). The only way to do this was somehow to enfold language and Being within a fundamental ontology that would postulate a non-metaphysical primal unity of the two.\(^ {164}\) Since the function of language is to reveal, its identity with Being gave Being a revelatory character and since Being is the primal ground of all beings,

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\(^{163}\) Quoted by Robinson GDLH p. 9; SHT pp. 21-22.

\(^{164}\) See GDLH p. 50; SHT p. 61.
that gave language a primal ontological character. Being then is Being's disclosedness.

Robinson is convinced that use of the later Heidegger can solve theology's problems, and in particular the problem of history. For, in as much as history is grounded in Being and is conveyed to us in language, which in the later Heidegger is identified with Being, the problem of history becomes an ontological problem. Hopefully for Robinson, the problems inherent in his earlier definitions of history, which were based on the "earlier" Heidegger (and Collingwood and Dilthey), can now be overcome by moving from the subjectivity of the observer (the "historicity of the historian") to the "objective" ground of beings, to Being as "disclosedness", and he can now be "radically objective."

Robinson begins his new theory of history with the posing of a problem that exists in the Old Testament. There one finds that the writers conceived of salvation in terms of events that actually happened. Heilsgeschichte is the salvation of God in time. So the Old Testament is for Von Rad a "history book." But historical-critical studies have shown that the events described often did not happen as they were described and the difficult question of how to relate the two, that is, the description and the event, arises. Robinson notes that Pannenberg rightly criticizes Bultmann and Gogarten for "dissolving history into the historicness of existence," and asserts that this criticism can also be applied to Von Rad.

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165 HBL p. 127; HUL p. 115.
Barth (with his Urgeschichte) and Baumgärtel (with his Grundverheissung). However Pannenberg is also to be criticized because his use of the promise-fulfillment schema is just as much a use of "structure" as over against history as is the use of such supra-historical categories as Urgeschichte or Grundverheissung. "Here Pannenberg has unconsciously conceded the incompatibility between history and his structure. For if history is preserved only where his structure is transcended, the structure itself is implicitly conceded to be unhistoric. The logic of his argument should require him to go all the way and reject the structure as another substitute for history, itself un historic and at times unhistorical. It is un historic in that the structure, rather than the event, is the basis upon which theology builds; it is un historical in that even promises whose fulfillment actually never happened are --- because of the pressure of the superimposed structure --- said to have been fulfilled, and events whose happening was never promised are --- because of the pressure of the superimposed structure --- said to have been promised. Thus, even in Pannenberg's position, structure and construction tend to replace history."167

This criticism of Pannelberg is important at this juncture because it can be applied directly to Robinson himself, that is, to his earlier understanding of history. Robinson has criticized Pannenberg for not allowing his structure to be sufficiently historical, i.e. to talk about real events. He says that the pressure of the structure forces Pannenberg to see unfulfilled promises as fulfilled and unpromised events as promised. In short, the event is gone as the ground of theology. But when Robinson writes of the gospel of Mark, in The Problem of History in Mark, he uses

167HBL p. 129; HUL pp. 116-117.
exactly the same "system"-oriented approach. He talks of Mark as "historicizing" the life of Jesus, i.e. talking about it as historical when in fact the events never occurred. JEDP and the kerygma do the same thing. But what then becomes of the event as the ground of theology? The "historicizing" attitude becomes all-important and the "structure" has replaced the event. Thus Robinson is in effect criticizing himself at this point --- that is, his earlier position.

So the question remains unanswered when one thinks in the old way; Historie and Geschichtete have not been successfully related. One either becomes a positivist and thus loses Geschichtete, on the one hand, or he becomes a "structuralist" and thus loses Historie, on the other. Indeed "the difficulty is so acute that one might well wonder whether the recurrent metabasis eis allo genos is not inevitable when one proposes to state in language what once occurred as event. Yet such a conclusion is inevitable only for a rationalistic understanding of language, which conceives of it as consisting of concepts or symbols which are basically different in kind from history. The historicality of Israelite religion --- its fusion of the historical and historic --- could be preserved in language only if here historicality and language tend to coincide."¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ HBL pp. 129-30; HUL p. 117. It is important that one be clear as to what Robinson has in mind by these terms. Fortunately he explains it. "I translate Geschichtlichkeit", he says, "as "historicness", to distinguish it from "historicity", which I reserve for the traditional English meaning of "What really happened", equivalent to Historizität. My term "historicness" is based on the precedent of R.H. Fuller in Kerygma and Myth (1961), who translates geschichtlich by "historic" and historisch by "historical" (cf. p.xi), a policy which seems to grow easily out of antecedent English usage. For the union of historicity and historicness, I employ in this essay the term "historicality." HBL p. 127, note 8.
Robinson is suggesting is that we give up what he calls "a rationalistic understanding of language" and substitute a new idea of language. The trouble with the rationalistic idea of language is that it cannot in principle bridge the gap between what occurred and the report of that occurrence (= language). It conceives of symbols as "different in kind from history." But the later Heidegger has offered a way out of this problem. By merging the historical and the historic, i.e. by merging what really happened with the meaning of what really happened as it is expressed in language, one can overcome the subject-object problem and avoid the metabolisis eis allo genos that would otherwise appear to be inevitable. Robinson puts it this way: "For Heidegger, the term language (Sprache) does not merely designate audible or verbal articulation. It is more basically related to the conveying of meaning. For example, a thing's identity with itself "speaks" this identity to us, calls upon our thinking to correspond and our speaking to respond to this speech that comes to us from the subject matter." Language, like thinking is rooted in Dasein as the place where being clears and becomes perceived."

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169 The term "subject matter" is a Heideggerian terminus technicus. It means "Being-as-that-which-speaks." It will not do to speak of it as the object of thought because that conceives of thought (language) as different from Being, standing over against it. So it is named "subject" as that which thinks thought, not that which is thought about. Hence "... what is to be thought is being itself, in its distinctness from beings, that is, in its ontological difference. This difference is not a separation, as if being were some entity alongside the beings. It is rather their being, seen in itself... for being and what is to be thought tend to converge." GDLH p. 25; SHT pp. 32-33. See also HBL p. 153; HUL p. 137.

170 GDLH pp. 48-49; SHT p. 60. See also HBL p. 153; HUL p. 141; GDLH p. 23.
Or again:

"Language is not to be understood as functioning as a sign, to designate a given content by means of commonly accepted sounds. Nor is language to be understood as functioning to express ineffable inner experience, whereby it would be the speaker himself who comes to expression in his language, and language itself would always be inadequate because of its derivative, objectifying tone. . . . [rather] language is the clearing-concealing arrival of being itself. When thus identified with the unveiling of being, language rather than man can be said to do the speaking: Language speaks;"  

for "Existence itself is essentially linguistic." Thus human language is basically 'answer'" [and]" shares in the fate-laden character of thinking. Primal language is being itself, to which our language corresponds. This path of language from being to human words is the actual dimension in which thinking and being take place."

For this new understanding of Being-considered-as-history (and hence essentially linguistic) Robinson suggests the word "historicality." It is the fusion of historicity and historicness at the primal ontological level.

But then the question arises, Is historicality an adequate understanding of the biblical idea of history? Robinson is convinced that it is. He argues that it is being that speaks and man only responds with the language he uses. Human language is to correspond to a thing's account of itself. In the Old Testament things happened that were seen at the time of their occurrence as acts of God. To commemorate these happenings, formulae of praise arose and these formulae passed on through Israel's history, carry-

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171GDLH pp. 49-50; SHT p. 61. See also HEL p. 157; HUL p. 140.  
172GDLH p. 55; SHT p. 67.  
173GDLH p. 50; SHT p. 61. my italics.
ing the past into the present. Sometimes historical details were borne along by the formulae, but most often they arrived at any given point later in their transmission devoid of any historical details. It was in the light of this historical attitude that Israel daily lived, seeing God as active in their affairs, just as he was in their past. The presence of the formulae helped to shape this attitude, but it worked both ways. The attitude helped to shape the formulae also, as in the case of stories that were sometimes created as vehicles for the formulae. When these stories were written, the characters in the stories often spoke in formulaic terms, using the formulae that were current in the lives of their creators, or perhaps taken from the past. This process was carried on from generation to generation and it was natural that the stories surrounding the formulae would be altered, added to, subtracted from and re-shaped through the years. But the formulae retained their original content through it all, and that content is conveyed in the form alone. The forms of tradition became the conveyors of historicality. Among these forms "one encounters the Bərəkâ ("blessing") as an already set formula." This type of formula and the hodayoth, which is essentially the same as the berachoth, extend through the whole Bible and one may observe that "the continuity of the formulae from Old Testament to New Testament is itself

174 Robinson stresses the "constitutive" nature of Israel's daily life; See HBL pp. 136, 145, 146, 147, 149; HUL pp. 122, 130, 131, 132, 134.

175 HBL p. 131; HUL p. 118.
one of the various instances of historical continuity." It is here that historicality resides. The relationship of this to Heidegger's theory of language lies in the fact that in the language of the formulae one finds a linguistic response to the speech of Being. The created stories of later generations are also responses to Being speaking. In both cases it was the hearing of what Being had to say in their daily experience. What it said was that God had acted in the past, was acting in the present and would continue to act in any situation of need. Being had thus been saying down through the generations that life is God's act.

Robinson summarizes the historical aspect of it in this way:

,"It is, however, more important to observe that within this body of material which Formgeschichte draws together one has to do with the historicality of Israelite-Jewish-Christian history, i.e., with the fusion of its historicity and its historicness. The material presented within the context of these formulae is historical, not simply in that it may preserve historical fragments of a factual kind, but primarily in that the cast given the material by these formulae corresponds to the cast which the history had as it was experienced when it happened; for the formulae arose as part of the original historical events when they happened. Thus the formulae themselves both are a part of the history that happened and preserve the historical mode in which the history happened. But the material brought together in terms of these formulae also presents this history in its historicness. The formulae themselves were called forth and molded by that history and are thus themselves one way in which that history was historic, i.e., survived as a continuing influence. Here Formgeschichte is itself part of the historicness of Israelite history. But these formulae are also intimately related to the historicness of Jewish and Christian religious experience,

176HBL p. 133; HUL p. 120.
in that they tend to cast this experience into historic dimensions and themselves underwent alteration in terms of whether this experience was more or less historic. For where religious experience became more cultic and less historic, as in "normative" Judaism, the formulae tended to undergo alterations which avoided the need of a specific event; for example, the second line of the Beracha ('who has. . .') could be replaced by a Beracha upon God's name, or the 'occurrence' could be vague, general, or unhistoric, such as the provision of food through nature. On the other hand the formulae served to preserve Israelite history in Jewish and Christian times in its historic dimension (Heilsgeschichte), the primary way in which it then played its historic role in relation to the New Testament. It is this group of various relationships of these formulae to the historical and the historic in biblical history --- i.e., to the Bible's historicality --- which is here to be illustrated."

Robinson then goes on to discuss the formulae as they occur in the Old and New Testaments.

But the question can still be asked, How has this solved the three problems that came into focus relative to his earlier understanding of history --- the problem of subjectivity, the "chronological" problem of meaning and the "historical" problem? Let us deal with each of these in turn. First, it solves the problem of subjectivity in this way. Robinson says that events occur and statements (symbols) about events occur. But he does not here mean that there was an event that happened and there was also a statement made about that event, both of which may be (separately or together) verified in the usual "rationalistic" manner. Rather the two are coalesced into one event as the language of Being. He would like to project the happenedness of the occurrence into the

177HBL pp. 133-34; HUL pp. 120-121.
symbol and the happenedness of the symbol into the occurrence and thus have only one happenedness with two modes or aspects --- symbol and event. Perhaps a diagram would make this clear.

Rejected View

Happenedness
Event or Occurrence
Symbol

Accepted View

Happenedness
Event or Occurrence
Symbol

In the rejected view there are two separate historical entities to be seen --- the event of the occurrence and the event of the symbol. This seemed to create for Robinson the insoluble problem of having two historical entities that, in spite of their difference in kind, must somehow be blended together. That appeared to Robinson like trying to mix oil and water; ultimately the two must
separate out and go their separate ways. Speaking historically, it makes man the subject (one entity) talking about "objects out there", i.e. the events that occurred (the other entity) and they cannot effectively be related. However, if one could overcome this "rationalism" and see his way through to the accepted view, the problem would be solved. The two events are only aspects of the revelation of Being and have their "happenedness" in common. Then after the occurrence of the composite event, the symbol continues on, bearing within it the whole of the event as "happening", because it had its happenedness in common with the occurrence. When one at a later date sees the symbol, he sees in the symbol the guarantee of the event. This is not to say however that all of the details that have clustered around the symbol are historical. That may or may not be the case. Nevertheless, the symbol lives a life of its own.\(^{178}\) It may be altered, separated from its original context, put in a wrong context, inserted into a non-historical episode, pick up layer upon layer of legend --- but still be a window back to the happenedness of the event and ultimately to being itself.

The reason why this breaks subjectivity is that this view

\(^{178}\)GDLH p. 23. "Thus each concept has its history --- not just in retrospect as the history of ideas, but in itself, as the very nature of what a concept is."
rather than the 'object'."\(^{179}\) So the object (subject matter) speaks in man and thus "Berachoth and Hodayoth are the language of being, which in view of their historicality, means that Israelite history is a history of being, history experienced in the wonder of its being, i.e. experienced as God's act, as Heilsgeschichte."\(^{180}\) And since the symbol was a window into Being when it was formulated, it may remain so as long as it is seen, because Being, by definition "is", \(^{181}\) i.e. is not confined to the past event through which it symbolized itself, but remains itself through time. So when one sees the formula, he sees clear through to Being; but it is always Being in time --- not abstract time, however, but historical time, the time of the symbol, then and now. Subjectivity is thus overcome in that in as much as the event participates in Being (Happenedness) and so does the symbol, the response to the event (the Symbol) is part of the event and hence is objective, just as the event is objective.

The second difficulty, the "chronological" problem, is solved by postulating that the description of the event (usually as a formula) occurred at the same time as the event. This is an essential part of Robinson's new view of history. In order for the symbol and the event to be the same event, they must occur at the same time; so Robinson says that in these formulae "we have to do with the oneness

\(^{179}\) HBL p. 153; HUL p. 137.

\(^{180}\) HBL pp. 156-57; HUL p. 140.

\(^{181}\) This is to be understood non-metaphysically, of course.
of the historical and the historic: the occurrence to which the formula refers is expressed in its meaning, in terms of an act of God. But the meaning is not a secondary, theological interpretation added belatedly to the occurrence. It is only because the occurrences were **when they happened** experienced as divine act that the participants commemorated them with religious formulae,"\(^{182}\) or again, "The material presented within the context of these formulae is historical. . . primarily in that the cast given the material by these formulae corresponds to the cast which the history had as it was experienced **when it happened.**"\(^{183}\) or again, Robinson says "Perhaps of more importance than the possibility of the formulae preserving details of historical information is the fact that the formulae were **part of the historical occurrences themselves**, and a part which would give these experiences their particular cast."\(^{184}\) So the chronological problem of having to relate events with descriptions that were given years (or centuries) after the event is solved by having the descriptions all occur at the same time as the event and in fact be part of the event. In other words, there is no chronological problem --- the event and the symbol must, by definition, have occurred as one event, and hence one does not need to relate later symbols to earlier events since there are no later symbols to relate relative to those events.

\(^{182}\)HBL p. 135;  HUL p. 122. *my italics.*  
\(^{183}\)HBL p. 134;  HUL p. 121. *my italics.*  
\(^{184}\)HBL pp. 140-41;  HUL p. 126. *my italics.*
The final problem, the most difficult one, is how to find historicity in non-historical episodes. Robinson begins by admitting that the presence of formulae "does not imply that the content is in each case historical. The Berachoth, e.g., from the historical books of the Old Testament, share in the problem of the historicity of these stories. If the story of Abraham's servant finding Rebekah and the story of Ruth are only great short stories, the Berachoth in them are hardly historical..."¹⁸⁵ But this does not mean that no history¹⁸⁶ can be found in the stories, because "the formulae themselves were called forth and moulded by that history and are thus themselves one way in which that history was historic, i.e., survived as a continuing influence. Here Formgeschichte is itself part of the historicness of Israelite history."¹⁸⁷ Thus,

"The formulae 'Blessed be God who has...,' and 'I thank thee Lord, for thou hast...,' could hardly have arisen without some occurrences for which one wished to bless or thank God. They did not begin as blank formulae which were superimposed as non-historical constructions on history; rather historical experience seeking for adequate expression in language produced the formulae, which hence reflect by their very form the nature of the historical experiences that created them. Consequently the formulae do not stand as unhistoric and unhistorical structures in tension with the history itself..."
rather the formulae share in the historicality that characterizes their contents."188

So the symbol can either break off from the event and continue on through time bearing with it its "historicality" (i.e. the fusion of the historical and the historic),189 or it can arise out of the present experience of the story-teller as a historical occurrence. In either case, if one can penetrate into the happenedness of the symbol he has at that point gone into the eventness of the past because the happenedness of the symbol and the happenedness of the event are one and the same thing. Thus the symbol can carry this happenedness along with it through time and remain historical190 even though it be found in nonhistorical stories. In this way historicality is preserved throughout Israel's history even though the stories in which the historicality resides are not historical, and the problem of finding historicity in non-historical stories is solved; although it is not, strictly speaking, history that one finds, but rather historicality.

But will the new category of historical existence, historicality, bear the weight that is placed upon it? One can certainly

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188HBL p. 136; HUL pp. 122-23.

189cf. HBL p. 135; HUL p. 122, "The use of the formula is thus both a reliable historical hint about the event and itself part of the historic effect of the event."

190"Historicalal" is an unfortunate looking word, it is true, but since Robinson has coined the word "historicality" as a noun, this is the only possible adjectival form available. He has already assigned meanings to "historic", "historical", "historicness", and "historicity." Since the root of the word by which he designates his new definition of history is "historical --- (+ ity)", "historical-al" is the logical adjectival form.
admire the bold way in which Robinson attempts to solve the vexing problems of historical research, but it is doubtful if the later Heidegger is as reliable a guide to biblical thought as Robinson thinks he is; and there is, on the face of it, something disturbing (and perhaps symptomatic) about the whole project. We used to be told that the earlier Heidegger had opened the door to the modern world with a terminal analysis of man that stood beyond all dispute. It was a post-modern, post-philosophical description of what man's being-in-the-world really consisted of and hence was not to be confused with other "philosophies"; Heidegger had provided the ground and possibility of all philosophy. So Bultmann poured his new wine into Heideggerian wine-skins. And following him, so did Robinson; howbeit, some doubted. But now, since the magic year 1959, when Heinrich Ott declared that the earlier Heidegger was a side-track, but that the later Heidegger was the royal road to the heavenly city of Episteme, everyone may breathe more easily. And the theologians who had cried "Lo Here!" to the earlier Heidegger are now rushing headlong into a cry of "Lo There!" in the direction of the later Heidegger, and Robinson is leading the pack. But will this turn out to be any more of a heavenly visitation than the cry of "Lo Here!"? It is doubtful indeed.

The first thing to be observed about Robinson's reworking of the later Heidegger's understanding of Being into the concept of historicality is that in his rejection of the distinction between the past-happenedness of the event and the past-happenedness of the symbol, and in his substitution for that of a past-happenedness-
in-common that the two elements of the past have (that is the event and the symbol), he has cast out the possibility of understanding the past. For certainly the rejected view is correct. How could anyone possibly confuse a statement about an event with the event itself. To say e.g. "I was saved by going through the Red Sea" is hardly the same thing as actually being saved by going through the Red Sea. The two kinds of "happenedness" are vastly different. The only thing that makes them look the same now is that neither one exists any more as event, or better, both exist now only as ideas in our minds about the past. Two ideas can "look" very much alike, in fact, identical in terms of their "being."

But this is only true now. When the two events, i.e. the occurrence and the symbol about the occurrence, took place, the two kinds of happenedness that took place were quite distinct and unconfused. To go through the Red Sea was one thing; to remember it and talk about it, even if it was in terms of formulae, was quite another. After going through the sea, that happenedness was over forever --- then a second happenedness occurred (if occur it did) in the commemoration of that event by means of a symbol. Even if the two events occurred at exactly the same time, the problem would not be solved. First, it is questionable if it can be proved that the commemorating symbol took place at the same time as the event, and second, even if it did, one was a physical event, whereas the other was a mental (or spiritual or existential) event. To assert that they are the same because they happened to occur at the same time is impossible.
Robinson could of course reply that this is looking at the symbol as the creation of man, whereas, in reality, it was the creation of the "subject matter." It was not man who was commemorating what happened by means of the symbol, it was the revealed-ness of Being making itself known in symbols through the men who used them. But this will hardly save Robinson's theory because it can always be asked, Which commemorating symbol is in fact the true symbol? This might be, by Robinson's standards, a very "rationalistic" question, based on a "rationalistic understanding of language", but it is one that can hardly be avoided. For suppose when the people were passing through the sea, at the very same moment two people shouted "We are saved", only one added "by Jehovah" and the other added "by Baal." Or suppose a thousand different people shouted a thousand different things. Could they all be the Speech of Language revealing Being? That Robinson can hardly say yes to this is obvious, for that would make him a thoroughgoing relativist. But Robinson can hardly say no to it either, for to say no is to admit that the "rationalistic" approach is a valid one after all, for it would, perforce, make a distinction between the happenedness of the occurrence and the happenedness of the thousand symbols and ask which one, in fact, best describes the occurrence.\footnote{Even Robinson, for all of his talk about having overcome subject-object categories, must talk at times of a correspondence between symbols and events. See GDLH pp. 46-49; SHT p. 60. However, the point here is not to discuss how one may in fact decide historically which of the thousand interpretations is the most adequate description of the event, if indeed, it can be decided historically. The point is that some sort of "rationalistic" procedure is necessary to deal with the event as past, if one is to talk about it, and its interpretation, at all.} The only
way Robinson's theory could be salvaged would be if it could be shown historically that only one interpretation has ever been attached to any one event. If this could be done, it could be shown that Being was "speaking" its word through events. But clearly, different interpretations have always been attached to the same event, and this in principle denies that the happenedness of the interpretation and the happenedness of the event were originally the same thing.

Second, if it is true that when a symbol outlives the event and is passed on from generation to generation it carries with it its own happenedness, then every symbol must infallibly carry with it the happenedness of the event also because the happenedness of the symbol and the happenedness of the event are the same thing. Robinson says as much when he is discussing the formulae in non-historical stories; he says "But the formulae here used in a secondary setting, i.e., in telling a story, none the less reflect a primary setting. For they betray neither a literary origin nor do they suggest an original setting in the transmission of the tradition; rather they are structured as an immediate response to a specific occurrence, and hence are to be understood within the category of acclamations called forth by an epiphany."\(^{192}\) But this can hardly be the case. Can it be seriously asserted that the mere presence of formulae is a guarantee of "happenedness", whether that happenedness be present in the life of the story-teller or an

\(^{192}\)HBL p. 136; HUL p. 122.
ancient happenedness that somehow became embedded in a formula and floated down through time to the moment when it was inserted in a non-historical context? Can a mere formula guarantee that an event occurred, independently of historical study, simply because it is a formula? Robinson declares that the "very form" of the formula does this, but his hypothesis is most unlikely. It could show, and Robinson says this as well, that the story-tellers who used the formulae were of a certain "historic" mentality, but this does not say anything about what the formulae reveal as history. It only shows that the story-tellers were accustomed to putting doxologies and words of thanks similar to those used in daily life into the mouths of the characters in their stories. But this proves nothing historically. It might be that the story-teller thought that what was being related was true and that the formula in his story was a genuine response by a real observer in praise to the God who had acted, but whether or not God had so acted would remain an open question historically. The formula cannot somehow guarantee that an act of God has occurred. Indeed, if it could be shown that the event did not occur (a thing that Robinson is quite willing to grant in many cases) then it is evident that God never did act, no matter how much pious sentiment might be generated by the recitation of it as an occurrence. What Robinson would like to have is an act of God in time that can be guaranteed independently of historical study, in fact, could be guaranteed even when historical study says that it never did occur; and he would like the ontological nature of the formulae to be this guarantee. But historical questions can
only be answered historically, regardless of what Robinson would like.

Third, Robinson must insist that the symbol arose at exactly the same time as the event itself, otherwise it could not have been part of the event. If this were not true, his entire historical theory would collapse. But his defence of this necessary postulate is very weak indeed. He argues as follows. By the time of J, the "blessing" is a set formula and "since the berachoth are already fully formed, one may assume the formula to be of considerable antiquity, and since in the Old Testament the formula was more typical of narratives than of psalms or liturgical texts, one may assume that the formula was not primarily cultic in any narrow sense,"\(^\text{193}\) and the conclusion to be drawn from this is that the formulae are not therefore non-historical constructions, but rather their very form reflects "the nature of the historical experiences that created them."\(^\text{194}\) This is the line of reasoning by which Robinson seeks to justify the assertion that the formulae arose from the event. Elsewhere he is content merely to assert it.\(^\text{195}\) But it is certainly a long way from being established. Simply because the berachoth were fully-formed by the time of J does not prove that they go back to the event. Neither does the fact that they are of considerable antiquity

\(\text{\textsuperscript{193}}\)HBL p. 131; HUL pp. 118-119.

\(\text{\textsuperscript{194}}\)HBL p. 136; HUL p. 122.

\(\text{\textsuperscript{195}}\)HBL pp. 134, 135, 140-41; HUL pp. 121, 122, 126.
prove that they go back to the event. Nor is it proved when Robinson says that they are more typical of narratives than of psalms. The fact is, this is a historical question that can only be answered historically. The "very form", which is the key to Robinson's new definition of history, can prove nothing by itself. Only "rationalistic" historical study can answer the question of whether a formula is historical or not, but that of course, marks the end of Robinson's newest historical theory, because it is supposed to have moved beyond the subject-object level of analysis to a non-metaphysical level of primary linguistics.

Fourth, it is most unclear what Robinson has in mind when he talks of the dimension that both the event and the symbol have in common, this "happenedness" that is Being. That the event and the symbol can hardly be said to have this in common has already been shown, but Robinson's theory must insist that they do --- but he must also explain what it is. However here one is confronted with statements worthy of the oracle at Delphi. This Being is not an object and yet is more objective than any object; it is pure subject yet escapes subjectivity; it speaks in silence and yet human words are a response to it and in fact can be said to have been spoken by it; it "is" not and yet is (i.e. it is non-metaphysical but can still be called Being); it is the realm of non-conceptual thinking that produces concepts that "clear" to it, and it is somehow to be equated with a non-metaphysical God. There is, no doubt, some mystical truth in all of this, but how it is an answer to the historical problems of the Bible is very hard to see, even if one
could fully understand it (which of course is a priori impossible because to understand is to think "rationalistically" and metaphysically — the very thing that is ruled out by this non-metaphysical approach to Being), --- in the words of Oscar Cullmann, referring to the "new" Robinson, "Is the philosophy of Heidegger with its manifold evolutions, or any philosophy at all, really necessary for a proper appreciation of the biblical salvation history?" 196

C. Historicality and the New Quest

It took Robinson about two years to apply his new concept of historicality directly to the new quest, and it took place on December 28-30, 1964 at the one-hundredth meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, held at Union Seminary (New York). There he read a paper entitled "Kerygma and History in the New Testament" 197 in which he tried to relate his new idea of history as "Lichtungsgeschichte", "language-event", specifically to the problems of the New Testament and came to the conclusion that the whole question of the kerygma and the historical Jesus would have to be dismantled and re-assembled in different terms. Following the insights that he gained from the later Heidegger that fused the happenedness of the event with the happenedness of the symbol --- i.e. turned history into a "linguistic-event", Robinson said that the historical Jesus

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196 op. cit., p. 61.

197 Published in The Bible in Modern Scholarship (1965) ed. J. Philip Hyatt, pp. 114-150; hereafter abbreviated as KHN. It was translated into German later in the year as "Kerygma und Geschichte im Neuen Testament", ZTK Vol. 62 (1965) pp. 296-337; hereafter abbreviated as KGNT.
must now be seen as the "history of the transmission of the traditions about Jesus" (Traditionsgeschichte) and not as a brutum factum. Thus when one is talking about the historical Jesus, he is really talking about the "history of the traditions about Jesus" since they are the "linguistic-event" in which Jesus now resides, and are, as a matter of fact, as far back as one can go. Thus the new quest of the historical Jesus becomes a new quest of the historical "history of the traditions about Jesus" which was encountered by the early church as linguistic-event (kerygma), and can be encountered by the church now as linguistic-event --- all of which supposedly leads back to "Jesus", the saving event who "happens" in the linguistic-event that is his history.

Robinson begins his address by saying that the two terms --- kerygma and history --- are no longer clear and need to be dismantled in order to lay bare their "subject matter." This is because the terms are ambiguous and no longer speak to us, thus the whole problem needs to be re-structured. Regarding "history", Robinson says,

"There seems to be no problem in regarding 'kerygma' as a term applicable to what we find in the New Testament, for kerygmatic theology has taught us that the New Testament itself is to be understood as the explication of the kerygma. But what then is the history with which the New Testament explication of the kerygma has to do? Not simply the historical Jesus! For the historical Jesus has been

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198 KHNT p. 114; KGNT p. 294.

199 KHNT pp. 116, 118; KGNT pp. 296, 298.
undergoing kerygmatization for a generation before the New Testament writings began. . . The history with which the New Testament kerygma had directly to do was not the historical Jesus but rather the "history of the transmission of the traditions" about Jesus. And our access to that history is via the method that calls itself Traditionsgeschichte, the tracing of the traditions with their changing use, shape, and meaning."200

Regarding the "kerygma" Robinson says that in fact there were many kerygmata --- "the kerygma itself was subject to a plurality of understandings. . . This variation of the kerygma itself was due to the fact that the kerygma had still another relation to history than its relation to the history of the transmission of the traditions about Jesus. For the kerygma was related to the series of historical situations in which it was proclaimed and heard."201

This meant that historically conditioned categories and language (that is, conditioned by developing circumstances) had to be used. Thus,

"Rather than the saving event simply being described as it happened, to some extent it happened as it was described. For whatever happened happened among people living within languages. Man's being is not logically prior to his language, but is constituted in terms of his linguistic world. Hence whatever happened, to whatever extent it was an event in the lives of man, happened as a linguistic event. The event itself included a process of understanding in terms of given categories.

200KHNT p. 118; KGNT p. 298.

201KHNT p. 118; KGNT pp. 298-99. One wonders what S.G.F. Brandon would say to this. He had said that Robinson's new quest could not possibly succeed because it was an attempt to compare Jesus with the "kerygma", when in fact there was no single kerygma, but rather two kerygmata, and it was impossible to tell which one was original. Consequently, the new quest --- as comparison of Jesus and kerygma --- must fail. Mod. Churchman, NS, Vol. 5(1961) pp. 214-215. But now, far from denying the force of this criticism, Robinson postulates a multiplicity of kerygmata! In the light of this Brandon's criticism becomes all the more acute.
To this extent the saving event cannot be shelled out as a brute fact behind the language witnessing to it. 

There were rapid changes in the kerygma's historical setting and "all these contextual variations necessitated a rapid series of translations of the kerygma. . . . This on-going linguistic transaction in which the kerygmatic point is successively scored in ever-changing historical contexts is thus a central dimension in which kerygma and history are related in the New Testament." Thus the re-structuring of the problem: The kerygma is to be understood as the hermeneutical translation in varying circumstances of the New Testament proclamation, and is thus a problem of "hermeneutic." The historical Jesus is to be seen in terms of the history of the transmission of the traditions about Jesus. These are not unrelated studies however, because the kerygma is also a line of development and thus a traditionsgeschichtlich problem, and the historical Jesus is also kerygmatic and thus subject to the various contextual alterations that constitute the nature of the kerygma.

Robinson then goes on to analyze two sample problems in terms of his restructured kerygma and historical Jesus. He deals with the kerygma first, and analyzes the interpretation of the resurrection as it is found in the kerygma. He traces it through the

\[202\] KHNT p. 119; KGNT p. 299.
\[203\] KHNT pp. 119-20; KGNT pp. 299-300.
\[204\] KHNT p. 121; KGNT pp. 301-302.
New Testament noting the changes and corrections that it underwent as it moved into a gnosticizing environment.\(^{205}\)

Robinson then turns his attention to the historical Jesus and says "If what seemed such a simple and unambiguous thing as 'the kerygma' in I Cor. 15:3-5 became complex and ambiguous as soon as one considered how it was understood and translated, we must also recognize that 'the historical Jesus' was less 'common ground' than a common point of departure, when one thinks in terms of the history of the transmission of traditions about Jesus."\(^{206}\) Then, still chafing under Bultmann's criticism of him, Robinson takes up a point with him by contending that one must look into the pre-Easter period for the "point of departure" for Christianity:

"For either there was a christology at best implicit in Jesus' self-understanding prior to Easter, which could then be made explicit in various ways, or there was a quite ambiguous or wrong-headed messianic view about Jesus that stood in potential tension to the kerygma... We wish to face this problem here not in terms of our reconstructions of the historical Jesus, but in terms of the New Testament church, that is to say in terms of the history of the transmission of the traditions about Jesus."\(^{207}\)

Robinson does this by tracing the miracle stories about Jesus through their various changes in Mark, the "signs-source" in John, Q, and Paul in I and II Corinthians.\(^{208}\)

\(^{205}\)KHNT pp. 121-131; KGNT pp. 302-316. It is not necessary to discuss Robinson's ideas in detail here. For a statement of them and a criticism, see D.M. Stanley "Response to J.M. Robinson's "Kerygma and History in the New Testament", The Bible in Modern Scholarship (1965) pp. 151-155.

\(^{206}\)KHNT pp. 131-32; KGNT p. 316.

\(^{207}\)KHNT p. 133; KGNT p. 318.

\(^{208}\)KHNT pp. 133-146; KGNT pp. 318-333.
Robinson concludes his paper by summarizing his thesis in four points. First, "The use of current categories in the assigned topic [i.e. kerygma and history (historical Jesus)] provided occasion for calling to attention the crisis in the basic categories of our discipline in which we find ourselves today. This crisis has emerged because of the carefully detailed research of our day that has, in spite of contrary categories, established facts calling for a revision of inherited categories. Yet the inadequate categories persist and in many cases continue to provide guidelines that mislead the direction of research, so that results of even carefully detailed research may be less relevant than would have been the case had the Fragestellung been more accurately focused." Robinson concludes from this that the categories must therefore be changed.

Second, "Both 'the kerygma' and 'the historical Jesus' turned out to be abstractions when confronted with the realities of the church of New Testament times. We have found instead a process of understanding and translating the kerygma, without there being any instance of the kerygma, however carefully codified, that was not another instance of that hermeneutical linguistic process. And we have found instead of instances in which the historical Jesus was directly a factor in the time of the church, as memorized sayings or

\[209\] KHNT p. 146; KGNT p. 333.

\[210\] cf. KHNT p. 120; KGNT p. 300. "Thus the saving event goes on as a language event that names God in our world, identifies him in performatory language in which reality is cast in the mode of creation."
unaltered memories, rather a process of growth, deletion, and shifting involved in the meaningful transmission of traditions. The "kerygmatizing" of the "historical Jesus" turned out on examination to be a series of conflicting influences on the transmission of traditions about Jesus, in terms of varying understandings of the kerygmatic meaning of Jesus."^{211}

Third, Robinson describes the early situation as a fluid one. "There seems not yet to be a central body of orthodox doctrine distinguished from heretical doctrine to the right and to the left, but rather a common body of beliefs variously understood and translated and transmitted. In such a fluid situation one must ask not simply what was said, but rather which way what was said cut, what happened when the language was used. To this extent the terms "heresy" and "orthodoxy" are anachronistic."^{212} But Robinson assures his hearers that this does not lead to relativism, although he fails to say why.^{213}

Fourth, The kerygma is to be dismantled and reassembled into "hermeneutic" and history is to be dismantled and reassembled into "Traditionsgeschichte." When this is done one will be able to see what the text has to say. "The present paper has advocated the thesis that only the most penetrating analysis of the specific historical situation in which the source was written is able to

^{211}KHNT pp. 147-48; KGNT p. 334.
^{212}KHNT p. 148; KGNT p. 335.
^{213}KHNT p. 149; KGNT pp. 335-336.
make possible a penetration through the conceptualizations and traditions used to the point being scored, which is really what should be referred to as the theology of the text. . . Such a restructuring of New Testament scholarship would then find itself at the growing edge of neighboring disciplines, from literature (the "new criticism"; Emil Staiger) and philosophy (Whitehead; Gadamer) to contemporary theology translated for a world come of age and contextual ethics."

It is difficult to respond with any degree of confidence to what Robinson says here regarding history and the historical Jesus because so much of what he says is, as elsewhere, fragmentary and "programmatic." He says just enough to raise questions in one's mind, but not enough to provide any convincing answers. However it is possible to respond to what he says in more or less his own terms, asking questions and making observations "programmatically." First, Robinson nowhere explains how the idea of historicality is to be related to the new quest. That he thinks it can be related is clear enough; in fact he thinks that in the light of it the whole question will have to be dismantled and reassembled to take into consideration the category of language-event. But it is one thing to suggest it and quite another to show how it can effectively be done; and this Robinson does not attempt to do. There is another dimension to the problem however. Even had Robinson shown

\[21^1\text{KHNT p. 150; KGNT pp. 336-337.}\]
how it could be done, what of the problems that attend to the concept of historicality itself? Since the relation of historicality to the new quest involves the use of historicality, manifestly, it will have not only the problems that would inhere in such a relation, but also the problems inherent in the original idea of historicality. Consequently, one wonders if it can, even in principle, be accomplished.

Second, how will Robinson be able to find the historical Jesus in his re-structured study? Since the history of Jesus has been transformed into the history of the transmission of the traditions about Jesus, has not this virtually evaporated Jesus, as history, into the history of tradition, and at that, only to the degree that it is encountered as language-event? Robinson might reply by saying that that is only one aspect of the problem; Jesus has another dimension, the dimension of "pastness" that lies in the traditions, and Jesus, as history, can be sought there. But if this is the case, one might then observe that this is to re-introduce all of the old categories that the re-formulation of the problem into new categories was supposed to remove. One would then be doing historical-critical study looking for the historical Jesus, as he really was. But Robinson's re-formulation of the problem has made that Jesus (i.e. the Jesus of history) an "abstraction" that does not exist. So the question still remains, can Robinson find the historical Jesus in his re-structured study, without re-introducing sub rosa the old categories that the new structure was supposed to replace?
Third, and this can only be a question at this juncture, does the fact that Heidegger is not mentioned in this article, and that Robinson says specifically that if New Testament scholarship were to re-structure itself properly it would find itself edging over toward the philosophy of Whitehead portend anything? Is there to be a "new" new quest, based this time on Whitehead and not on either the earlier or the later Heidegger? One can only ask.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Who is Jesus Christ? This is a question that each generation must answer anew for itself. Not that the answer can be wholly new of course. Each generation builds upon the work of those that have gone before, either by accepting what has been done and enlarging it, or by rejecting what has been done and moving out in a new direction, taking along with it what it can. In the generations immediately preceding our own, the time of a liberal ascendency, it was felt that an answer had been adequately given to this question. It was felt that a definite philosophy of history had laid the proper foundation for answering this question, that an adequate view of the Gospels as historical sources had been developed, and that Jesus as a man had been discovered. The work of Albert Schweitzer dissolved this liberal illusion however. He showed that in many cases what was supposed to be an objective picture of Jesus was in fact far from objective and represented only the viewpoint of that particular author.

The realization that objectivity had not been reached brought about a reaction on the Continent. The liberal dream was followed by a period of disillusionment wherein it was felt that the historical Jesus could never be found, nor was it necessary to find him.

This radical rejection of the quest of the historical Jesus could not last for long however. It was followed in our own time by a revitalization of interest in the quest and a renewed search for the historical Jesus.
The situation in Great Britain and America did not parallel that of the Continent. There never was a period of disillusionment in which the quest for the historical Jesus was radically rejected. It continued unabated for the whole time, even up to our own day. Consequently there exist now two answers to the question Who is Jesus Christ?, given by those who are engaged in finding him as an historical person. One is the Continental answer based upon a reopened quest for the historical Jesus, the so-called New Quest. The other is the more traditional answer given by British and American scholars who never stopped the search for the historical Jesus in the first place.

I. Aspects of the Quest for the Historical Jesus in William Manson's Works

A. William Manson on the Nature of History and Historical Study

William Manson is a representative of the British point of view. He is attempting to answer the question of how to find the historical Jesus and he begins his answer with a discussion of the philosophy of history that he sees in the Bible and that is the concept of Heilsgeschichte. This view postulates a purpose for history and that that purpose is disclosed in the Bible. Manson sees its beginning at the Exodus of Israel from Egypt. This was the call and election of Israel by God for the purpose of salvation. God had chosen Israel to be the historical medium through which he would ultimately save the world and Israel on her part was to remain true to the covenant that God had made with her. Israel did not remain true to the covenant that God had made with her however. As
a result a new element was injected into Israel's history, namely, judgment. Israel felt the chastening hand of God upon her because of her sin. But in God's providence the suffering borne by Israel did not remain without effect. A new plan for Israel was made known: Israel was the vicarious sufferer for the nations of the world. Israel thus became prophetic in its history of Jesus Christ. When Christ came he fulfilled all that Israel was to have been by being himself the supreme sufferer --- suffering for the sins of the world. But history did not end with Christ. After his resurrection, he ascended to heaven there to be the Lord of history as time moved on; time being now the time of the Church. The Church was God's new creation, a universal body that offered salvation to all men on equal terms. So history now is the time of God's call to salvation. This time will last until Christ returns in great glory to earth once more. This will mark the end of history as we know it and will usher in God's eternal reign.

The history of Israel had been pointing in the direction of Christ. He is the presentation-point of the divine working in history and as such, he is the climactic moment of history and the final revealer of God. He possesses, because of his personal relation to God as Son, an authority transcending all other authorities and the effects of this are far-reaching. Jesus, as Lord of all, must also be seen as the Lord of history. He is its temporal center as the fulfilment of Israel's hopes and dreams, but he is also its ontological center as its universal Lord and director. Jesus' presence thus affects all history, past, present and future.
With Christ the last hour of time has struck and the New Age has announced itself.

Manson goes on to say that not only is Jesus the Lord of history as one who is its temporal center and its universal Lord, he is also the ultimate revelation of God in time. God was in Christ and because of this ultimate reality has projected itself into time through him. And since Christ is the universal Lord of history, he has been at work in all of history, including the history of Israel. But Jesus did not simply manifest God in time as though all men needed to do was to gaze upon him and return to their old way of life unchanged. On the contrary, men must hear, and believe, and be changed for the better because of him. Jesus is thus the supreme religious crisis for all mankind, being as he is the existential call of God to salvation. Neutrality is no longer possible; we must negate ourselves, renounce all claims that the world has upon us, and let Christ replace our ego as the actuating principle of life in us. In this way we make the invisible things of God to be the supreme reality of our life and determinative of our very existence.

Manson contends that Jesus brought the transcendent holiness of God to expression in his own person and that he also embodied it in his teaching on the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God marks the summons by God to repent and believe. Now the reason why Manson stresses the Kingdom of God in his writings is that it allows him to solve the problem of history because the Kingdom of God is both this-worldly and other-worldly. It is this-worldly in that the
Kingdom of God is located in the world of life as we know it and it is other-worldly in that God is at work within it. Manson says a great deal about both of these emphases of the Kingdom of God. Because it is this-worldly, social reforms may be undertaken and grounded in God's work in the Kingdom of God. Because it is other-worldly men need not despair of the results for God is at work in it. This also keeps the Christian from identifying the Kingdom too closely with any human institution, thus relativizing the Kingdom of God.

Manson sees history as a line running through time, intersected by God's acts of redemption, but intersected in particular by God's great act of redemption which is Jesus Christ. Consequently, he is against any view that would de-historicize the acts of God, such as mysticism. God's activity takes place in history, not outside of it. Because of this Manson sees history as a network of objective, historical fact and objective, discoverable meaning.

Manson gives basically three reasons why objective facts are needed to be true to the Bible. First, facts are needed for theological meaning to inhere in. If there were no facts, one would be reduced to talking in abstractions about ideas and not about events of redemption. But Christian historians are not talking about abstractions that have settled upon events ab extra, meaning inheres in the very event itself. Second, facts are necessary because of the nature of Heilsgeschichte. Heilsgeschichte says God acted in space and time for man and his salvation, thus making the history of salvation a history of historical facts. If it could be shown
that there were no facts, that would annul *Heilaggeschichte*. Third, historical facts are necessary because it is only in Jesus as a man that one may see the perfect revelation of God. In him and nowhere else is God's person to be seen. To be sure, all of nature and history is revelatory of God in its own way, but only Jesus is the perfect revelation of God. If one could not see the facts of his life, one could not see God.

But Manson also contends that it is not just facts that are necessary. Interpretation must also be given and the interpretation must come out of the facts. There is objective meaning in events and that meaning must be drawn out for a full understanding of any past event. Manson illustrates this with the atonement. Jesus died, that is the fact, the objective meaning is "for our sins."

Manson consequently wants to see the past as it really was. Since God acted in history and the Bible is a book of God's redemptive acts, Manson desires to know those events, for it is his contention that only the tested and measurable fact has any moral value; mere theory can be the most deadening thing in the world.

Because Manson has grounded his philosophy of history in an objective historical process, he wishes to know the past as it really was. He is constantly asking questions of the text of Scripture to see what he may find out about the facts of history. But how does one interrogate the text in order to find the past? Manson says by means of the historical-critical method. Such a procedure is necessary because the text of Scripture is itself historical, coming from a specific place in time, and it must be
examined like any other book.

There are basically six factors that demand and justify the use of the historical-critical method. First, the text of Scripture needs to be established because of the numerous versions that exist. Second, the languages of the Bible must be mastered because it was written in ancient tongues. Third, not everything in the Bible is a word of God. Historical-criticism helps to show what is. Fourth, ancient documents can only be understood when they are seen in their proper context which means that the Bible must be seen against the background of the ancient world. Fifth, there is discernible development in the Bible that must be examined. Finally, the motive of the writer must be weighed when studying the Bible.

The proper theory of sources that historical-criticism must use is the kernel-husk theory. Certain facts are primary and upon them there has been placed an interpretation. Historical-criticism will disengage the two, establish the past as event, and determine which interpretation is the most accurate one. Here Manson probably overstates his case with respect to what historical-criticism can do. In common with others of the older liberal persuasion Manson would like to have historical-criticism make virtually all of the ultimate decisions. But can it really be maintained that historical-criticism is in a position to do this? Can historical-criticism really show that Jesus died for our sins? Certainly all would agree that historical-criticism can show that Jesus died, but can it go on and prove that it was for our sins? Is not this something that only a believer can say? At this point
Manson does not sufficiently distinguish between historical knowledge and what might be called "faith" knowledge. He seems to think that historical knowledge inevitably involves a certain kind of "faith" knowledge, but this is not necessarily the case. It is quite possible that two historians, one a believer and the other an unbeliever, could agree on numerous historical points with respect to the Gospels and yet radically disagree as to the significance of those points.

Manson felt it necessary to defend his use of the historical-critical method because the fundamentalists had rejected it and the liberals had misused it. The fundamentalists rejected it because they had an a priori view of Scripture that said everything in the Bible was of equal value. But this is to be rejected and historical-criticism must be used to show what is primary and what is not. The liberal misuses historical-criticism to destroy the facts upon which Christianity is built. This too must be rejected and historical-criticism must find a positive place in New Testament studies.

B. William Manson on the Nature of the Gospels as Historical Sources

For Manson a discussion of the Gospels is a discussion of the history of the early Church. The Gospels are the soul of the Church and contain what it knew of the historical Jesus. But the Gospels did not arise during the first generation of the Christian Church and there are specific historical reasons why. To begin with, there is the example of Jesus who never wrote anything down.
Second, the early return of Jesus was expected. Third, the Orientals were not in the habit of writing things down. Their way was to remember things of importance. Fourth, the Apostles of Christ were still alive. They had been eye witnesses of the things that they testified about and that was better than the dead letter of a book. Fifth, the memory of Jesus was still fresh in the minds of many people. Sixth, the living Christ still spoke through Christian prophets and finally, the life of Jesus per se was not the content of the Gospel. His life was important and the Christian teachers explained what it was to the converts, but the Gospel was that Jesus died for our sins and rose again.

The Church did not stay confined to Jerusalem. Persecution spread the Christian believers over virtually the whole of the Roman Empire and thus the Gentile world-mission began. The impact of this upon the Church was great but the influence must not be overstated. No change took place in the Gospel itself, just in the form that it assumed when it was preached to Gentiles rather than Jews. The Church developed a literature at this time as well, and the first literature of the Christians were the letters of Paul. He wrote to meet the practical needs of the Gentile Christian communities and his theology was in a direct line from the main body of the Church.

Throughout this time the traditions about Jesus were preserved by the Church. During the early part of the Church's history they were passed on orally and were preserved in the preaching and general community life of the Church. Since they were oral and not written
they were subject to two sets of forces that on the one hand tended to preserve them intact and on the other hand tended to alter them. The stabilizing factors --- factors that tended to preserve the tradition intact were these: First, there was a natural reverence for the words of Christ. Second, the Oriental memory was an extremely retentive one. Third, the use of the Old Testament by the Church prevented a drift off into gnostic mythology away from the historical Jesus. God had acted in history in both Israel and Jesus and this historical orientation was preserved because of the Church's use of the Old Testament. Finally, eye-witnesses were teachers. This kept speculation and change down to a minimum. In spite of this however there were disruptive factors at work during the oral period as well. These factors tended to alter the oral tradition about Jesus. They include the very fact that the tradition was passed on orally. Since this was the case one would expect that the content thus passed on would suffer some alteration. Second, the material was used controversially and apologetically, as well as in Christian preaching. Third, the practical needs of the Church shaped the material. Fourth, the voice of the Christian prophet added to the content of the material. Fifth, there was an assimilation to Old Testament prophecy. When something looked like a fulfilment of the Old Testament, that episode was shaped in the direction of the Old Testament text. These two sets of factors then --- stabilizing and disruptive --- worked on the tradition during the oral period of its transmission.

At the time when Manson was writing a new theory of Gospel
origins was being developed, that of form-criticism, and Manson felt it necessary to enter into a discussion with it, mainly because the early form-critics were very skeptical concerning the trustworthiness of the Gospels. He notes that there is a good deal of value in the new method. It has performed a useful service in its technical exegetical work and has helped to clarify the place of the Church in the development of Christian tradition. It has also discovered that there were certain laws at work shaping the tradition and has helped to classify the Gospel materials according to form. For all of this however, form-criticism is not to be uncritically accepted for there are problems with the view. First, it is needlessly skeptical and anti-historical. Also it is extremely doubtful if the form of the tradition alone can decide the historical question as the form-critics claim. Manson adds to these two general criticisms of form-criticism some more specific negative observations. First, it operates on the basis of an unproved and negative a priori. Second, the analogy that the form-critics draw with Hebrew saga is a doubtful one. Third, it is illegitimate to rule out personalities in the shaping of the tradition as form-criticism does. Finally, form-criticism cannot explain the nature of the Church's tradition or the Church itself.

What Manson concludes from this is that (1) the Gospels speak primarily of Jesus and only secondarily of the Church, (2) the Gospels are reliable unless proven otherwise, and (3) the Gospels are not the creations of the Church.
C. The Historical Jesus in the Works of William Hanson

Hanson writes on the life of Jesus from two related points of view. First, he writes from an external historical point of view tracing the historical movements of Jesus. Second, he writes from an internal historical point of view tracing the internal development of Jesus' self-consciousness.

In dealing with Jesus' life externally (and internally), Hanson finds that it consists of seven historical crises. The first crisis takes place when Jesus is baptized by John and this marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. It is here where Jesus finds certified his own thoughts on what his life is to be. He had been meditating on Isaiah 53 and the Spirit of God now confirms that Jesus' life is to be that of a Suffering Servant. The second crisis follows quickly in the wilderness where Jesus is tempted in spirit by Satan. Satan attempts to entice Jesus to interpret his messiahship upon national or personal grounds, but Jesus resists the three temptations and will accept only the will of God for his life. The third crisis takes place at Caesarea Philippi. Here Jesus lays aside his former reserve concerning his messiahship --- he had been deliberately silent up to this time --- and accepts Peter's designation as Messiah. This takes place near the end of Jesus' Galilean ministry during which time Jesus had been preaching concerning the Kingdom of God, healing the sick, and working miracles to the glory of God. The fourth crisis was Jesus' transfiguration. It was a vision seen in a trance and it pointed to a Messiah who would be exalted through suffering. The glory that attended the vision
verified that Jesus had taken the right step. The fifth crisis was in the Upper Room where Jesus, while eating a fellowship meal with his disciples, declared what the meaning of his death would be. Jesus' body would be broken and his blood would be shed for the sins of the many. Jesus' life would be a ransom given for the sins of the world. The sixth crisis takes place in the Garden and here Satan tries to the very end to divert Jesus from going to the Cross. Jesus only prays however that God's will be done and he accepts the Cross as the inevitable outcome of his life as Servant of Jehovah. The final crisis is on the Cross where Jesus dies for the sins of the world.

In dealing with Jesus' internal development, Manson notes that Jesus used three terms with regard to himself. First, Jesus referred to himself as Son of God. For Jesus this was an expression of a filial consciousness that marked him out from among the sons of men. He was the Son in very fact, whereas all other men are only sons of God. The second term that Jesus used to designate himself was taken from the book of Isaiah and that was the Servant of the Lord.¹ As Servant Jesus had come to do God's will and that will was

¹This view is held by perhaps the majority of New Testament scholars, although it is disputed by Morna D. Hooker who persuasively argues that the Servant theme did not play much part either in the Synoptic Gospels or in the early Church. In her own words "... with regard to the first group of passages [those in the Synoptic Gospels], the criteria of judgment were stated to be first, proof that the reference was exclusively to Deutero-Isaiah, and secondly, the application of the Servant's sufferings to Jesus. We found that a considerable number of passages fulfilled the first of these conditions, but of those that did so only one, Luke 22:37, fulfilled the second. Of the other passages in this group which speak of suffering, none could be proved to have the Servant Songs definitely and exclusively in mind... There is, therefore, very little in the [Contd.
that Jesus go to the Cross to lay down his life a ransom for many.

Third, Jesus referred to himself as Son of Man. Jesus took this term, which ultimately goes back to the book of Daniel, from the apocalyptic speculation of his own day. Jesus chose it because it had no political associations and he could use it to define his messiahship in whatever way he wanted. His messiahship was to be one of suffering and subsequent glory.

These three terms then explain what Jesus thought himself to be and Manson notes a development from Jesus' early years where in

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germinal form there is a consciousness that surpasses that of other men up to his baptism where Jesus is convinced that he is God's Messiah. Jesus remained silent about it however until Caesarea Philippi where he made known that he was God's Messiah and he tried to explain that his Messiahship was to be one of glory through suffering. Jesus' self-consciousness then reached its high point in the Upper Room where he disclosed that his life would be given as a ransom for many. Jesus finally went to the Cross as one who knew that this was the only way to bring men back to God.

II. The New Quest of the Historical Jesus by James M. Robinson

A. The Rise and Development of Robinson's New Quest

James M. Robinson was chosen as a representative of the second point of view that is current today relative to the quest of the historical Jesus, that of the so-called New Quest of the historical Jesus.

Since Robinson's view is a view that is in transit, that is, a view that is in the process of being developed, it is necessary to see it in its various stages of development in order properly to understand it.

The first glimmers of the idea occur when Robinson is discussing Jesus' parabolic teaching. He notes that there is an inner dialectic in Jesus' parables that is temporal, that is, a present-future tension exists in all of Jesus' eschatological parables. The second thing that Robinson emphasizes about Jesus' eschatological parables is that they are to be interpreted existentially. In these two ideas
the beginning of Robinson's new quest may be seen. It lies in Robinson's interest in patterns of thought in Jesus' teaching and in the stress upon existential exegesis.

The next development in Robinson's thought occurred when he wrote on the historical Jesus and the Church's kerygma. He says that a supplementary method must be sought to go along with the present set of criteria to determine the authentic Jesus material. This supplementary method Robinson finds in the attempt to locate in the authentic Jesus material the foreshadowing of the kerygma and to find in the kerygma the development of what is in the authentic Jesus material. As stated however, Robinson's view is hardly new, but he does add a new emphasis in it and that lies in identifying a person (here Jesus) with his own existential self-consciousness.

The third phase of development came when Robinson reviewed Rudolf Bultmann's Theology of the New Testament. Here he both commends and criticizes Bultmann. He commends Bultmann for his existential approach to the theology of the New Testament, but he criticizes him for making his existential norm too narrow. Now New Testament studies must remain Bultmannian, i.e. be kept existential, but a way must be found that goes beyond Bultmann's narrow norm back to history. However it cannot go back to the old and outmoded historicism of an earlier day. The question now becomes, How is this to be done?

The final phase of the first stage of Robinson's thought comes in a formal analysis of Colossians 1:15-20. The precise point that Robinson makes in this article is irrelevant for the present question, but the emphasis found there is of great importance. It is the
emphasis upon patterns of thought. Later Robinson will try to compare the kerygma with the formal structure of Jesus' message to see if one can find Jesus, not on an objective level, but on the level of Jesus' own existential self-understanding. Still later he will use it to define history in a new way as the language of Being.

The second stage of Robinson's thought was reached when he read Günther Bornkamm's *Jesus von Nazareth*. He considers this to be one of the most important books to be published since the second world war. It marks the shift that has taken place in Continental thought from Barthianism to Bultmannianism. But more than that it marks a new phase in New Testament studies; it is now possible to look for the historical Jesus again. Reading Bornkamm's book gave birth to the idea of a new quest for Robinson and all the aspects of the New Quest are in Robinson's review article of it. There is the rejection of the old quest as illegitimate and impossible — as seeking to prove faith. There is a Bultmannianism that operates within the fragments of material allowed to be authentic. There is the attempt to find the "person" of Jesus within the fragments and the attempt to compare that "person" with the Christ of the kerygma. Finally, there is the discovery of a new, modern historiography that seeks not so much to describe the past as to mediate an encounter with the historical past. This opens a second door back to the historical Jesus along with the kerygma. At this point a problem arises however. Precisely what sort of continuity is Robinson seeking to reestablish between Jesus and the kerygma? Is it to compare the two messages in an external way to see if they are the
same? This can hardly be the case since Robinson has dismissed this as historicism. But in rejecting it, has not Robinson rejected the only answer that will keep his new quest from falling into subjectivism?

Negative factors were also at work helping to shape Robinson's thought. At a conference attended by Robinson in 1957 he heard a paper by Harald Riesenfeld that sought to reject the Bultmannian approach all together. Robinson severely criticized this lecture when it was later published as being too objectivist in tone and not Bultmannian enough to be the view of the future.

The third stage of Robinson's thought was reached when he published an article on the quest of the historical Jesus today. It had four parts. First, Robinson showed that the old quest was both impossible and illegitimate. It was impossible because the sources do not allow such a quest and it was illegitimate because the discovery of the centrality of the kerygma called such a quest into question. Second, Robinson answers the question, Can the quest be renewed? He contends that it can because a new view of history and the self has been developed. By looking into the authentic Jesus material one may apply the principles of the new historiography and there encounter Jesus as a possibility of existence. Third, Robinson says the quest ought to be reopened because modern historiography allows it. Fourth, Robinson says that it is a necessity that the quest be opened again because there are now two avenues back to Jesus. The kerygma is one and the path of modern historiography is the second. Since there are these two avenues
to Jesus, they must both be used so that the Church may build upon an unshakeable foundation.

The definitive stage of Robinson's thought came with the publication of his full-length treatise *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*. This book is an expansion of the earlier article on the quest of the historical Jesus today. He intends it to be a programmatic essay in New Testament study outlining a program for finding the historical Jesus once more. It has three parts. First, there is an introduction that deals with the state of the problem today. Here Robinson notes that Bultmannianism has replaced Barthianism in German theological thought. However, it is not simply following Bultmann. There is a new post-Bultmannian generation that is following the Bultmannian lead but it attempts to go beyond Bultmann back to history again.

The second section deals with the philosophical and historical structure of the new quest. He contends that the older quest, with its positivistic orientation, did not penetrate to the depths where the reality of history lies. It sought simply a Jesus in the past. It also thought that historical study could be objective in its treatment of the past. As a matter of fact however objectivity cannot be attained and the historicity of the historian must be taken into consideration.

The old quest of the historical Jesus needs to be abandoned because it is both impossible and illegitimate. It is impossible because the sources are not primarily historical but kerygmatic. It is illegitimate for two reasons. First, modern historiography is
not primarily interested in facts. It is interested rather in the profound intentions, stances, and concepts of existence held by persons in the past. Since the older historiography was interested primarily in facts, it is now seen to be illegitimate. The second reason why the old quest is illegitimate is that it tried to prove Jesus' authority and hence is the opposite of faith. Faith only believes. To try to prove faith is an act of unbelief and that needs to be rejected.

However, a new quest is now possible, not along the lines of the now outmoded old quest, but along entirely new lines. This is so because radically new concepts of history and the self have emerged. History is now seen to be "the act of intention, the commitment, the meaning for the participants, behind the external occurrence." A new view of the self has also emerged. Selfhood is now seen not as one's personality but as "constituted by commitment to a context, from which commitment one's existence arises." Armed with these radical new insights into history and the self, one can then proceed to the authentic Jesus material and there attempt to encounter Jesus' history and his existential selfhood.

This new approach to Jesus is formally analogous to the kerygma in as much as it too speaks of the meaningfulness of a historical person as a call to encounter.

Robinson then proceeds to establish the legitimacy of the new

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[^3]: NQHJ, p. 67; KhJ, p. 136.
[^4]: NQHJ, p. 68; KhJ, p. 137.
quest. It is legitimate because it is not trying to "prove" Jesus, as the older quest was trying to do, it is simply attempting to mediate an encounter independently of the encounter with the kerygma now that that encounter has been made possible by modern historiography.

The third major section of Robinson's book deals with the way in which the new quest is to operate. The historian is to begin his work with the authentic Jesus material. He is to lay bare Jesus as a possibility of existence in this authentic material and encounter Jesus there. Robinson considers this procedure to be an objective one but it is "existential objectivity" not the older and outmoded objectivity of the positivists. Since the kerygma also offers Jesus as a possibility of existence, one now has two avenues back to Jesus. That is, two possibilities of encounter with Jesus exist, and they may be compared to see if an encounter with Jesus in the kerygma is the same as an encounter with Jesus via modern historiography. If it is, that is all that the new quest can do.

Robinson had his English A New Quest of the Historical Jesus translated into German, and although there is not a great deal of change from the one to the other, he does add a new emphasis in the German edition of his book. He is concerned lest a stress on anthropological theology should evaporate the historical Jesus, and Christianity become a new gnostic system. He does this by broadening his concept of existence to include what takes place in historical understanding of the world or history. Jesus may then
be brought back to history and the world by means of his understanding of existence as constitutive of his person. In order to find Jesus' understanding of existence one is to look in the authentic parables and logia. When this is done one notes a structure in the material, a playing off of this aeon against the aeon to come. By examining this eschatological emphasis one may get back to Jesus' understanding of existence and hence to Jesus himself, because a person is constituted of his existential self-understanding.

B. An Evaluation of Robinson's New Quest.

At this point Robinson's new concept of history is outlined and then criticized. His view of history is seen to have three aspects. First, history is "essentially the unique and creative" being the "act of intention, the commitment, the meaning for the participants behind the external occurrence." Second, the reality of history would not be apart from the event in which it becomes. Third, the truth of history can only be known through historical encounter.

There are four criticisms made of this view of history. First, it is ambiguous. Robinson says both that history is the act of intention and that it is essentially the unique and creative. The question becomes, Which is it? It cannot really be both. Second, it leaves unexplained the nature of the past event. Third, if the reality of history does not exist apart from the event in which it becomes, then Robinson's view dissolves into a basic historical

\[^5\]_NQHJ, p. 67; KHJ, p. 136.
relativism. Fourth, Robinson says history can only be known through historical encounter, not by inference from a rational principle or by Platonic recollection. If this is true however, then most of what has passed as history historically is not really history at all because it is based on inference and recollection. Also, Robinson's attempts to describe historically the kerygma and the early Church are non-history. But Robinson does so describe the kerygma and the early Church. Consequently he finds himself in the embarrassing position of rejecting most historical work as non-historical and then engaging in the same sort of work himself.

Next Robinson's view of the self is examined. It has two aspects. First, there is the new definition of the self as such. Here Robinson says that the self is not just one's personality but is "constituted by commitment to a context, from which commitment one's existence arises." The second aspect of Robinson's new view of the self is that the self-actualized self is equated with history. Criticisms of these two aspects of Robinson's new definition of the self are the following: First, it leaves unexplained what it is that does the committing. Second, the relationship between the self and one's personality is left unexplained. Third, it overlooks the fact that non-

\[^6\text{NQHJ, p. 68; KhJ, p. 137.}\]
commitment can also be constitutive of one's personality or self as well as commitment. Fourth, Robinson's equation of the self-actualized self with history is unconvincing. It would mean that history only exists with commitment. But if this is true, how can one know history after the momentary act of self-actualization?

Robinson's new theories of history and the self as they are used in the new quest are then examined. It is judged inadequate for four reasons. First, it is difficult to see how any historical information could be found. All that one has is two self-understandings, one from history and one from the kerygma, that are to be compared. Second, Robinson nowhere says how one is to lay hold of the acts of commitment and intention that constitute history. Third, Robinson's modern historiography, that is, that the past can only be known by personal encounter, would open the historian to all the evil of the past.

There is one more problem with Robinson's new quest. It is that remnants of the old quest still remain in it. Robinson must set out to find the authentic Jesus material and what the nature of the early church is, and this can only be done by using the older outmoded methods of historical analysis. He is criticized for this by Harvey and Ogden. Another difficulty with Robinson's view is that he is asking the historian to be both objective and subjective at the same time, and this is an impossibility.
C. Further Development in Robinson's Viewpoint

Because of the adverse criticism that Robinson's new quest occasioned, he felt it necessary to defend himself and attempt to clarify his position. He did this by trying to restate his view of history. However this restatement of history had three problem areas. There was a basic subjectivism in it, there was the "chronological" problem of relating later meaning to earlier event and finally, the "historical" problem of trying to find historical meaning in events that are described in the Bible, but in fact never occurred. These three problems Robinson tried to solve by a new definition of history that is based on the later Heidegger. What Robinson wishes to do is to blend Historie and Geschichte together at a primal ontological level. In other words, he tries to avoid the dichotomy that is usually drawn between the two. He does this by using Heidegger's understanding of language. Heidegger has said that language and Being are the same at the primal level. Being speaks and man responds with his own words. For these words to be accurate they must correspond with Being's account of itself. But how does this solve the three problems that confronted Robinson when he wrote this article? It solves the problem of subjectivity in that both language and Being have their happenedness in common and thus language is not the subjective utterance of man, but is the restating in words a thing's account of itself. Since the event and the symbol about the event have their being --- happenedness --- in common, subjectivity is overcome. The subject-object pattern of thought is rejected in the interests of a greater objectivity, an objectivity in
which the object unveils itself in language.

The "chronological" problem of how to relate later symbols with earlier events is solved in that Robinson contends that the symbols arose with the event. In other words, symbol and event occur simultaneously. The symbol then passes on (as a formula according to Robinson) carrying with it its own guarantee that the event occurred. But the initial event was composite: language spoke from Being and that language passed on through time.

The "historical" problem of how unhistorical stories can be the bearers of historicality is solved by having the formulae of blessing bear the historical weight of their original formulation, that is, the formulae are not blank non-historical utterances; they arose because of some event either earlier in time or later in time in the life of the writer. This being so, the formulae can be trusted to preserve their historicness even when they are found in stories that are not historical.

There are four criticisms made of this new view of historicality. First, it is impossible for there to be a happened-ness in common between the event and the symbol about the event. The two possess two different kinds of happening. Second, if it is true that a symbol that is passed through time bears its happened-ness along with it, then every symbol (formula) must infallibly tell of the past, which fact Robinson denies. Third, Robinson must insist that symbol and event occur at the same time, which is most unlikely. Fourth, Robinson nowhere explains what the happened-ness that both symbol and event have in common is. It is an extremely elusive
idea and until Robinson explains what it means, the theory of historicality that he bases upon it must be looked at with suspicion.

The final phase of Robinson's new quest of the historical Jesus came when he tried to apply his new concept of historicality to the New Testament. Here he said that the whole problem of the historical Jesus needed to be dismantled and re-structured. He then proceeded to dismantle the problem of the historical Jesus and re-structure it in terms of the history of the traditions about Jesus. These multifarious traditions are as close as one can get to the historical Jesus. The ever-changing set of circumstances moulded the tradition, and New Testament scholarship must now trace the growth and development that took place there. In as much as the kerygma is also subject to the same alteration, the historical problem of Jesus and the historical problem of the kerygma tend to merge and become a linguistic problem.

Robinson's view is then criticized for these reasons. First, he nowhere shows how his new concept of historicality can be directly applied to the text of the New Testament. Second, if the history of the traditions about Jesus is as far back as one can go, what happens to the historical Jesus? It would seem that he has evaporated into the on-going tradition about him.

III. William Manson: The Better Way

The above summaries place before the reader the differences that exist between Manson and Robinson in perhaps the best possible way. The two points of view are in fact worlds apart. Manson's
view operates in a world of classical historical study where specific facts are important and the historian is asked to work his way patiently through his sources in as objective a way as possible. Robinson's point of view, while it does allow for the historian to work in the sources objectively, does not place the emphasis upon such work. The heart of Robinson's position lies in its existentialistic orientation, in a world of encounter and meaning where the historian's life is called into question asking him to make a fundamental existential decision for or against the selfhood laid bare by historical analysis. This being the case, that is, that the two views are fundamentally different from one another, the researcher has a choice thrust upon him. Since he cannot go both ways at the same time, the question arises as to which way he will go. He can either follow Manson down the road of traditional historical study and search for Jesus in the Gospels, understanding them to be basically reliable sources or he can go the way of Robinson and search for the historical Jesus in the scanty authentic Jesus material that is postulated by a radical form criticism, using "modern" historiography. This then is the choice that must be made when one considers the views of Manson and Robinson in relationship to one another. This is not to say of course that no agreements exist between Manson and Robinson at all, but it is to say that one must decide which way he will go and follow that way through to the end.

It is the opinion of this writer that Manson has shown us the better of the two ways and that for four reasons. First, Manson
has a sound view of history and historical study. He has grounded his philosophy of history in the Biblical notion of Heilsgeschichte and this means that history is the place where God has acted for the salvation of mankind in his great acts in the past, and it also means that God is continuing to act in history now, with Jesus as the Lord of time and history. This being so Manson is interested in history as such since it is in history where God acts. One of the most important things to be noted in this regard is Manson's stress upon the necessity of the past as being something that exists independently of the historian. History is not something that, in order to be understood, needs to be taken up into the history of the

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7 The concept of Heilsgeschichte is in much dispute today. It is disputed by the existentialist theologians who aver that it misses the fundamental point of the New Testament. The New Testament, they say, is in essence a call to faith, a word-event that concerns a person's existential self-understanding. To the extent that there is a Heilsgeschichte in the New Testament it is a secondary objectification of what was primarily a call to faith. Heilsgeschichte then is a turn away from the true essence of the kerygma toward an "early catholic" Christianity. But as O. Cullmann says, "certainly the whole New Testament contains the call for the decision of faith and implies a new understanding of existence. But does not this call rest on the faith that a divine history has occurred, is occurring, and will go on occurring, which, while envisaging this faith, is first of all independent of it and stands over against the believer? Does not faith therefore mean aligning our existence with this series of events hic et nunc?" Salvation in History (1967), p. 12. The concept of Heilsgeschichte is also disputed by some Barthian theologians because Heilsgeschichte is represented by a horizontal line extending through time, whereas the act of God is always a vertical line driven in from above. But as Cullmann again says, "... I do not dispute the verticity of the saving event, but this verticity becomes significant and understandable only on the basis of the horizontal nature of the line of salvation, and the vertical line, as in a co-ordinate system, derives its meaning from, and is defined by, the basic, horizontal line." Salvation in History, (1967), p. 16. For a full defence of the concept of Heilsgeschichte see the whole of Cullmann's book Salvation in History as well as his Christ and Time (1951). See also C.F.D. Moule, The Phenomenon of the New Testament (1967), p. 80.
historian and historicized. It is something that exists in its own right and can be understood as such. Thus when Manson talks about the history of Israel or the life of Jesus, it is as historical data that they are discussed. The events took place, there are records of these events and the historian must now work his way through the records to the events of the past.

Manson also emphasizes that the past is objectively knowable. Since man is created in God's image and since the historical process is a process of man in time, it stands to reason that since man is rational, the process of men which is history is also rational. Man may understand himself and he may understand his past as it is recorded for him in the historical records that deal with the events of the past. The records are not deceptive, designed by their writers to obscure the past, but rather they are designed to open up the past so that it may be known. Because this is true Manson stresses the fact that one may push his way back through time into the past and there know what occurred as event.

Manson is also concerned to point out that specific facts of the past are necessary and that it is in order to know these facts that the historian works. It is not just that the past as such is independent of the historian or that it is objectively knowable as such, more than that, specific events are knowable and it is this that history is concerned with. It is also this that Christianity is concerned with. Christianity does not postulate that Jesus was simply "back there" as a limiting concept as it were to our historical knowledge. It indeed postulates this, but more than this it
postulates that Jesus lived at a certain time, in a certain place, that he did certain things and taught certain things, that he died in time and rose again in time as the Saviour of the world. Thus it is the specifics of Jesus' life that the Christian historian will want to know.

Manson gives basically three reasons why the facts of the past are necessary for Christianity. First, the facts are necessary for theological meaning to inhere in. Theological meaning is not something that exists in an abstract world of its own, independent of our life and the concerns of our life. Rather, theological meaning is grounded in fact and Christianity is a religion of historical facts. The doctrines of Christianity are grounded in these facts and without them, the doctrines would be cut loose from the only thing that makes them relevant to our concerns. Second, the facts are needed

...It is interesting to note here how the position of Manson anticipates that of Wolfhart Pannenberg, especially with respect to his Christology. Pannenberg too stresses the fact (and facts) of Jesus' earthly life as the ground of any understanding of what Jesus' office was. "One must begin with the historical Jesus --- otherwise we bring in all sorts of experiences and ideas that have little to do with the actual, historical Jesus of Nazareth" Theology as History, eds. J.M. Robinson and J.B. Cobb, New York: Harper and Row, (1967) p. 222. Again in discussing Jesus' humanity Pannenberg says, "In his person Jesus has become the fulfillment of the human destiny to community with God." Jesus-God and Man (1968), p. 195. Pannenberg recognizes the danger of projecting back upon Jesus one of our own images and imagining that Jesus was like that (p. 200). In reality, the relationship is the other way around. Our understanding of man must be taken from the historical figure and message of Jesus (p. 203). There is another point where Pannenberg agrees with Manson and that is in his stress upon history as being the whole of reality and in the historian's task as being one of grasping the "total meaning of all history." Theology as History, pp. 242-243. There are three corollaries to this that are also stressed by Manson. First, because the whole of reality is historical, God is the Lord of history in Jesus Christ. Theology as History, pp. 101, 241. Second, no distinction can be made between secular and sacred history. History is
because Christianity is a religion of Heilsgeschichte and that means that God acted in the past on behalf of man and his salvation. 9 If

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one unified whole that allows of the characterization that it is a universal history. This being so, no artificial distinctions can be made in it. God is, of course, the God of all history and shows himself to be the Lord precisely in his Lordship over history. Theology as History, pp. 247-48. Third, the key event in understanding history is the resurrection of Jesus. It is an historical event that can be verified like any other historical event because it occurred in space and time. Theology as History, p. 265. For an excellent discussion of Pannenberg and his "circle" see "Revelation as Word and History", by James M. Robinson, Theology as History, pp. 1-100.

9One notes here a marked similarity between Manson's view and the view of Oscar Cullmann who also writes from a basic Heilsgeschichtlich point of view. They both begin at the same place, continue along the same lines, emphasize the same things and make the same concluding observations. With regard to starting point, Cullmann says this "...I start from these two facts: First, at the centre of the early Church's new interpretation is this tremendous statement that Jesus of Nazareth, whose earthly life is known to the first witnesses, is the one who fulfills the whole history of Israel in carrying out the divine plan and is the one who brings salvation to the world. Second, the early Church does not refer directly back to the Old Testament kerygma for this new interpretation, but goes to the kerygma of the historical Jesus, his life and his preaching." 1 Salvation in History (1967), pp. 110-111. Compare with this Manson's "two facts" that constitute his starting-point. "The first of these ... is that before any of the acts or words of Jesus were proclaimed to mankind as the sign or proof of a divine redemption offered to the world in him ... Jesus was already acknowledged as the Messiah of Israel, the coming son of man ... A second fact ... is that the confession in question, by the very circumstance of its being made with reference to a Jewish teacher who died a death of shame upon a cross, cannot have originated except upon grounds already given in the life and mind of the Crucified himself." JM, p. 2. Manson and Cullmann continue along the same lines and emphasize the same things. Thus Cullmann finds the beginning of Heilsgeschichte in the New Testament to be in Jesus' own teaching rather than in the later so-called "early Catholic" writings. Salvation in History, pp. 167-236. Jesus said that the end would occur within a limited period of time (p. 210) but he was no visionary for whom time had no significance (p. 218). The Kingdom is already existent in Christ. "With Jesus himself it is anchored in his own self-consciousness. The 'already' is now manifest for Jesus in his certainty that he himself is already here as the fulflier of the coming salvation." (p. 179) In line with this Cullmann stresses as does Manson that Jesus regarded himself both as the Son of Man and as the suffering Servant of God. (pp. 108, 232-33). Following Jesus his disciples sought to build their kerygma upon the
these acts of God were not knowable, one would not be able to see that God had acted and would have no assurance that God could or would in fact so act. But because the facts of the past are knowable it is also possible for man to live in the glad assurance of God's care and activity on his behalf. Third, the facts of the past are necessary because it is in the facts of Jesus' life that one has the full revelation of God as Saviour. One may look there and see in the most perfect way that God cares for mankind. Were these facts not knowable, man's knowledge of God would be confined to some vague general impression of what God was like, drawn inductively from the flow of life in general. But man is not confined to that. Because the facts of Jesus' life are knowable, it is possible to know in the fullest way what God is like and how he cares for us.

The second reason why Manson is chosen over Robinson is that he has the better view of the Gospels as historical sources. It is here that one of the fundamental differences between Manson and Robinson

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foundation of the kerygma as it occurred in Jesus' message. These same disciples then had an awareness of being the guarantors of the life and words of Jesus (p. 111. See also p. 305). Cullmann also stresses as does Manson the public ministry of Jesus. "He [Jesus] knows that not only his death, but his public ministry, and the sequence of events of which he is the instigator, occupy a decisive place in salvation history. The Gospel writers understood this, since they limit the expression to the narrating of the life of Jesus." (p. 235) Cullmann also stresses the need for external events to have occurred, "It is essential to faith as it is found in the New Testament and as it is asked of its readers, that it be related to events not instigated by the readers, nor by the reader's faith; events having taken place apart from their faith --- pro nobis, but extra nos. (p. 119. See also p. 120) Finally, both Manson and Cullmann make the same concluding remarks regarding history, namely that the consummation will occur at a point in time, because Jesus was and is the Lord of history and time. (p. 209). See also pp. 306-307).
may be seen. For Robinson the Gospels are viewed within the form-
critical frame of reference. He understands them to be primarily
about the Church and its affairs and only secondarily about Jesus.
He says that the Gospels are fundamentally the devotional literature
of the Church and as such must be seen in that light. This means
that what one looks for in the Gospels is the theology, devotion,
thought, history, and practical experience of the Church. To the
extent that Jesus is seen, he is seen refracted through the life of
the early Church. Consequently one cannot use the Gospels to learn
about Jesus' life in any biographical sense because the Gospels were
not written to provide that kind of information. They were written
within the context of the worshipping community that looked upon
Jesus as being its heavenly Lord and consequently the community was
not interested in the past facts of Jesus' life as a man. As Lord
he had a present rather than a past significance and the Gospels
reflect what Jesus meant to the community as present Lord.

Another reason why Robinson does not feel that biographical
information can be found in the Gospels lies in the nature of form-
criticism itself. This view postulates certain laws that operate
upon oral tradition which shape it along certain lines. According
to these laws contemporary concerns mould the traditions that exist
to such an extent that one may confidently look only for those con-
cerns. This is not to say that no ancient tradition may be found
in the tradition at all but it is to say that one may be certain of
the present use of the tradition and the place that the tradition
played in the life of the community and can only dig into the pastness
of the tradition in an uncertain way. With respect to the Gospels this means that they are to be seen as products of the Church and reflective of Jesus in only a secondary way.

Manson's point of view is directly opposed to that of Robinson. Although he is aware that form-criticism has rendered useful service to the study of the New Testament, he rejects it as a comprehensive position from which to view the Gospels. The reason he does this is that form-criticism is needlessly skeptical and anti-historical. There is no reason why, even if it be granted that certain laws did operate upon the living tradition, that the tradition ought to be distrusted. Surely there is more to it than that. There also existed during the oral period of the tradition a body of eye-witnesses who could oversee the development of that tradition and verify its contents. There were also factors at work that tended to preserve the tradition in its original form rather than re-shaping it. Such factors were the reverence that the Church would naturally feel for the words of the Lord, the basic historical orientation of the Church that it derived from its use of the Old Testament where history played such an important part and the fact that the Church was concerned, in spite of what the form-critics say, about the life of Jesus as a man.10

10 Certain Scandinavian scholars would add another category to this list and in fact make it the primary force that preserved the early Christian tradition intact. It is hinted at in H. Riesenfeld's *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings* (1957) and fully developed by Birger Gerhardsson *Memory and Manuscript* (1961) and *Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (1964). They contend that the gospel tradition must be viewed in the light of the Jewish schools current during Jesus' day. For them this teaching was of such first-
Manson has other observations to make about form-criticism as well. He rightly points out that it operates on the basis of a negative and unproved a priori. It rules out of court without ever considering it any genuine historical interest on the part of the Church. There is no reason why the Church should not be interested in historical matters, in fact, if the Gospels are any indication, the Church was indeed interested in history. He also points out that the analogy that the form-critics draw between Hebrew saga and the Gospels is a doubtful one. Hebrew saga developed over a period of hundreds of years, the Gospels were written during the second generation of believers. There simply was not time enough for the Gospels to be altered and restructured in the way Hebrew Saga was.

For these reasons then form-criticism is to be rejected. But

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rates importance that they had their pupils memorize their words. They then sought to ensure that their disciples mechanically transmitted these words on to the next generation. In this way error was kept at a minimum. Riesenfeld and Gerhardsson argue that Jesus sought much the same thing in much the same way. In this way the gospel tradition was secured until it was put down in writing. This position has been severely criticized by Morton Smith "A Comparison of Early Christian and Early Rabbinic Tradition," The Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 82, (1963), pp. 169-176; W.D. Davies, "Reflections on a Scandinavian Approach to 'the Gospel Tradition'" The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount (1964), pp. 464-476; C.K. Barrett, Jesus and the Gospel Tradition (1967), pp. 8-10; Otto Betz, What do we know about Jesus? (1968), pp. 20-23; R.H. Fuller, A Critical Introduction to the New Testament (1966), p. 309; Hugh Anderson, Jesus and Christian Origins (1964), pp. 99, 309-311; and Norman Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus (1967), pp. 30-32. Criticisms of the Scandinavian position are these: (1) New Testament evidence shows not just faithfulness to oral tradition but also great creative freedom on the part of the evangelists to use it. (2) It assumes that Jesus foresaw and planned for a long period of time between his death and the parousia, but this in fact a post-Easter situation. (3) It fails to account for the post-Easter faith and its influence in the recollection, shaping, and modification of the tradition. (4) It ignores the part played by early Christian prophets in creating the Jesus-tradition. Many words of the Lord are actually words of the risen Christ given to these prophets.
Manson's position is not simply a negative one, that is, he does not simply react to form-criticism and leave it at that. He has some positive things to say about the Gospels as well. First, he says that the Gospels tell us primarily about Jesus and only secondarily about the Church. Here Manson would agree with Robinson that the Gospels do tell us about the Church but he disagrees over the relative degree to which the Gospels represent it. For Robinson it is primary, for Manson it is only secondary. The Gospels do tell us about the life of the Church but this is not the fundamental thing to be said about them. The fundamental point to be made is that the Gospels tell us of Jesus. And why not? Certainly when one reads them they look like history. The Church did not invent a historical mode of expression simply because it had no form in which to express itself relative to Jesus. It chose the historical mode of expression because it was confident that it was writing history—the history of Jesus and not of itself. The Church is reflected, of course, Manson is willing to grant that, but primarily the Gospels are the history of Jesus of Nazareth. Second, Manson affirms that the Gospels are historically accurate unless proven otherwise.\footnote{This assertion is disputed by the present-day form-critics. They assert that the burden of proof now lies on those who claim that the gospels are trustworthy. See e.g. N. Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus (1967), p. 39. This is rejected by Birger Gerhardsson. He says "The form-critics take the hypothesis that the Gospel material was created by the Christian congregation as their starting-point. The burden of proof is laid on whoever maintains that a tradition goes back to Jesus himself. This method seems to me to be wrong from the historical point of view. The burden of proof should rest on those who reject the statements contained in the sources: the commonsense, sound view is to start with what the sources say... but to criticize the sources and to reject what appears to be
that there is no particular virtue in a methodological skepticism in historical matters. One ought not to approach his sources doubting them. Rather he should work with them, analyze them, carefully deal with them and then if it can be shown that they are in error, reject that much accordingly. But there is nothing scientific in the attitude that makes the negative decision beforehand and then accordingly finds the Gospels unhistorical. In fact the more one works with the Gospels the more one gets the impression that they are to be trusted and that they are basically reliable accounts of Jesus' life. Third, Manson says that the Gospels are not the creations of the Church. The Church did not simply make up the stories that are found in the Gospels, rather the Church acted as custodian for the traditions that it received. It put them together and produced what we now have in the New Testament. But the Gospels were not created thereby. They are the compilation of earlier tradition, tradition that went back for the most part to eye-witnesses, and they were compiled while many of those eye-witnesses still lived to oversee the process of writing the Gospels.


The place that eye-witnesses played in the formation of the gospel tradition is in much dispute today. D.E. Nineham in a series of three articles in The Journal of Theological Studies, [Vol. 9, (1956), pp. 13-25; 243-252; Vol. 11 (1960), pp. 253-264.] argues persuasively that eye-witnesses did not stand behind the gospels. He centers his discussion on Mark because this was the gospel that was used by the other two synoptics. He says concerning it "... if the organization of the material and the connexions between the incidents in Mark are theological in basis and intention, then they
So the Gospels may be accepted as telling us of Jesus and being guaranteed by the very process of compilation itself. It is for these reasons then that Manson is preferred to Robinson with respect to the nature of the Gospels. Manson has seen that they are fundamentally reliable historical sources that may be trusted to tell us of Jesus and are not, as Robinson would hold, the creations of the Church and reflective primarily of that and not of Jesus.

Third, Manson is preferred over Robinson because it is he who

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do not need the activity of eye-witnesses to explain them." The Journal of Theological Studies, Vol. 9 (1958), p. 24. Nineham concludes his study by saying that we have no compelling reason for assuming that eye-witnesses stand behind the gospels and that even if we did we possess absolutely no watertight criteria for establishing where it would be so. The Journal of Theological Studies, Vol. 11, (1960), pp. 254-5. See also pp. 259, 261. Nineham does not come away a complete skeptic however. He affirms concerning the gospels "...they make possible sufficient historical knowledge of the person and ministry of Jesus for us to assure ourselves that the early Christians were not making bricks without straw..." The Journal of Theological Studies, Vol. 11 (1960), p. 264. Also arguing against eye-witnesses are P.G. Downing, The Church and Jesus (1968), pp. 109-110 and N. Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus (1967), pp. 28-29. Defending the role of eye-witnesses against its detractors is B. Gerhardsson, Memory and Manuscript (1961), pp. 328-30; William Neil, The Rediscovery of the Bible (1954), p. 88; and C.S.C. Williams in A.H. M'Neile, An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament (2nd edition), pp. 53-54. Williams writes "Form-critics write as though the original eye-witnesses were all caught up to heaven at the Ascension and the Christian Church were put to live on a desert island." op.cit. p. 54. Manson argues his case in JM, p. 27. Nineham's position was severely criticized by Anthony Hanson in an article "The Quandary of Historical Skepticism," Vindications (1966), pp. 74-102, where he concludes "If Nineham is right, then Christianity is a mystery religion, which offers an experience of God founded on a myth or at least on an historical question mark." op.cit., p. 102. Nineham defends himself against Hanson's attack in "et hoc genus omne," Christian History and Interpretation (1967), pp. 199-222.
presents to us Jesus as a man. Robinson has no such presentation even though it is the avowed purpose of his new quest to get back to the historical Jesus. The reasons for this are not hard to find. Because of Robinson's negative attitude toward the Gospels as sources for the life of Jesus he has nowhere to look for Jesus as a historical person. All he has is a body, small at that, of authentic Jesus material that he is able to gather together as a result of his form-critical analysis of the Gospels and it is here that he must attempt to find Jesus. But the body of material is so meager that he is not able to come up with anything convincing about Jesus as a man. The only thing to be done is to change the nature of the problem and re-define what it means to be a man and then set out to find that sort of man. This Robinson does by means of his new theory of self-hood. Jesus' self-hood is no longer defined as the historical self-hood of a person whose life is known but is defined rather as that of existential commitment. This being the case Jesus' self-hood and hence Jesus' person may be found in the authentic material and the historical Jesus is knowable once more.

For Hanson it is not necessary to make a series of doubtful re-definitions in order to find Jesus as a person. Because he is willing to trust the Gospels as historical sources, he is able to structure the life of Jesus as it is found there and present the world with the person of Jesus. For what is Jesus as a person in the past to us but this? To see him as he lived his life, as he taught and preached to the crowds surrounding him, as he responded to his circumstances and those people who came to interrogate
him, to see him heal the sick of their illnesses and relieve the oppressed of that which oppressed them, to go his inevitable way to the cross and to rise again on the third day. This is the life of Jesus of Nazareth and hence is that which constitutes his person for us today. For this we may thank the early Church. They instinctively saw that the life of Jesus was one of the most important factors of their existence. As long as they had the Apostles with them to guarantee that that life was not lost to them, nothing was done by way of writing to preserve the tradition of Jesus' life. But when the Apostles and eye-witnesses began to pass away one by one it was realized that something must be done to preserve for all time the life of Jesus so that Christianity might stay rooted in him. Consequently the Gospels were written. Here the traditions that the Church lived by were preserved for posterity.

But it was not simply that the Church at that time saw the need for preserving the facts of Jesus' life. The Church ever since that time has felt the same need for knowing Jesus as a man. Thus when the Church moved into the second century and was endangered by docetism, it stoutly resisted it and anything like it that tended to dissolve away the manhood of Jesus. And so through the history of the Church to our own day. When it was doubted in some quarters, notably in Germany, that Jesus could be known as a man who lived among men it was not long before a reaction set in in the form of the new quest of the historical Jesus. This was commendable. But the question that needs to be asked at this point is this, has the new quest found its way back to the historical Jesus? Is it not
also, because of its existentialistic categories of existence, in
danger of losing Jesus in those categories? Is Jesus to be thought
of as a man or only as a possibility of existence for us today? It
is just possible that the new quest is in danger of losing Jesus
in just this way.

However the Church will not allow that to happen. It will turn
again to the position of Manson, or to one similar to it in due
time, in order to preserve the unique work of God in the man Jesus
Christ.

The fourth reason why Manson is chosen above Robinson is that
he has the better view of what constituted Jesus' understanding of
himself. Robinson's case is largely a negative one, denying that
Jesus had any awareness of himself as different from other human
beings. Consequently Robinson denies that Jesus had any conscious¬
ness of himself as Messiah, or that he was aware of himself as Son
of God in any unique sense or that he ever referred to himself as
Son of Man. Jesus was just like any other Jew of that day,
causally bound within the structure of what constituted life at that
time, confined to thinking in those terms, living according to the
principles of that day, teaching what was acceptable at that time
and in general behaving as one whose life was bound within first
century Judaism as it was found in Palestine. There is something
positive to be said however. Just as every human being achieves
selfhood by committing himself to a context, thus possessing an
understanding of himself relative to his circumstances, so Jesus
achieved selfhood and thus had a self-understanding. Robinson
nowhere goes into detail as to what constituted Jesus' self-understanding but he does say this much: Jesus was aware of himself as living within a context that included God as above all; he accepted his finitude thereby finding transcendence, and he accepted death thereby finding life for himself and ultimately for others. So Jesus' selfhood consisted in accepting himself and his circumstances which freed him from himself and his circumstances and opened him up to live on behalf of others. But all of this was done within the context of first century Judaism. Jesus as a man was a first century Jew and what he expressed concerning himself was bound within the structure of life at that time.

Manson's position is very different from that of Robinson. The weakness of Robinson's position is that he has nowhere seen any uniqueness on the part of Jesus and it is precisely this fact that Manson wishes to stress. Not that Manson would disagree with all that Robinson has said. Manson would agree that Jesus thought and taught in first century terms and that his general behaviour was like that of any other Jew of that day. It is just that Robinson wishes to stop there and Manson wishes to say more. Jesus was a Jew, but he was also more than just another Jew; Jesus did teach in the terms of that day, but he also taught as one having authority not as the scribes did; Jesus was aware of himself as a man, but he was also aware of himself as being more than just a man. It is this then that Manson wishes to stress with respect to Jesus, that which makes him more than just another Jew of that day, that which constitutes his uniqueness.
But what specifically does Manson say regarding Jesus' awareness of himself? Here one finds a threefold emphasis. First, Jesus was aware of himself as Son of God in a unique way. Manson wishes to stress this point. It is in fact one of the fundamental points that Manson wishes to make with regard to Jesus. Jesus was not just aware of himself as a man who found transcendence by accepting his finitude, he was aware of himself as uniquely the Son of God. No one else has ever had an awareness of himself similar to that of Jesus because only Jesus is Son of God in this way. So although men may become sons of God by adoption and thereby have a certain awareness of themselves as sons of God, it is a derived and secondary sonship. Men are sons of God only because Jesus was Son of God. Jesus was aware of himself as thus the Son of God and as he lived and taught he gave evidence of this. He never placed himself on the same plane as other men because he was not as other men were. They were aliens and strangers to God because of their sin, he was one with God and knew during the whole of his public ministry that he was one with God as his Son and hence had God's authority as he taught. So Jesus lived with a unique awareness of himself as God's only Son.

Second, Jesus was aware of himself as Messiah. The Old Testament had promised that God would send an anointed one who would act in God's behalf as Saviour of the world and Jesus was aware of himself as being that anointed one. This awareness was something that grew in time as Jesus lived his life. Thus even at an early age, he was about his Father's business. At his baptism it came home to him in a decisive way and during his time of temptation in the wilderness
he was forced to define what his Messiahship was to be. Then he lived his life to the end aware of the unique place he had in Israel's history. He was God's anointed one come to save the world. Third, Jesus was aware of himself as Servant of the Lord. Jesus knew the Old Testament and in particular he knew the book of Isaiah, consequently as he lived his life he patterned it after the life of the Servant that he found therein depicted. His life was to be one of rejection and suffering. He was to know what it meant to be set at naught by the leaders of Israel and to see the crowds turn from praise to judgment during his last days in Jerusalem. But he took all this as part of God's will for him because he was the Suffering Servant who was to come. By means of these three things then Jesus knew himself to be unique among men.

The above four reasons are the reasons why Manson's position is preferred to that of Robinson. He has the better view of what constitutes historical study, he has the better view of the Gospels as historical sources, he presents the world with Jesus as a man, and he has the better view of Jesus' understanding of himself. These reasons then, in the opinion of this writer, justify the choice of Manson as a position from which to work and justify the statement that it is a position like that of Manson that needs to be reinstated in New Testament study today. Not that there are none who hold a position similar to that of Manson. There are many and in fact Manson's position is that of British critical orthodoxy. But what needs to be done is to recognize that New Testament studies, if it follows the existentialist lead of Robinson could be in danger of
losing all that it stands for, namely Jesus of Nazareth. For this is in fact what New Testament studies are all about. Were it not for Jesus and what he represented there would be no New Testament studies today except perhaps out of some antiquarian interest that someone might have in ancient religious thought. But this is not the case and it is a position like that of Manson that puts things in the right perspective by placing Jesus at the center of its thought and then seeking to know Jesus by means of the historical critical method. This is the quest of the historical Jesus as it ought to be pursued.

IV. A Renewed Quest of the Historical Jesus

The two above summaries placed before the reader the differences that exist between Manson and Robinson in perhaps the best possible way. The two viewpoints are in fact poles apart. We are standing at a fork in the road and we may go either down the existentialist road of Robinson or down the more traditional road of historical criticism with Manson.

It is the opinion of this writer that Manson has shown us the better of the two ways. What is needed today is a revision of his basic point of view. That revision could proceed in something like the following way.
A. A Quest to be Resumed

The renewed quest of the historical Jesus ought to begin at a place where all are in agreement. That place is the theology of the early Church. All would agree that Jesus is depicted there as Saviour, Messiah and Lord. It is also possible to understand the impressions that Jesus made on those surrounding him by looking at the Gospels. These impressions are multiform. Now the question becomes this: Is it possible to ask behind the theology of the Church and the impression that Jesus made on those around him? Is it possible to go through these data back to Jesus? In one sense the answer to this must be no because this is as far back as we can go, or for that matter, need to go. In the New Testament we have Gospels and epistles that give us the Church's theology and the impressions that Jesus made on the people around him. These Gospels are interpreted accounts, seen in the light of the post-Easter situation. They tell us that in this earthly man God was at work redeeming the world. Since these Gospels are basically proclamation, one could stop here. Reading the Gospels is hearing the kerygma -- so is reading the epistles. The Church, for most of its history, has stopped here.

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In another sense, however, the answer must be yes. Historians want to know what the exact course of history was and if the interpretations of the Church have any basis in fact. But it is precisely at this point that the problem arises because what one will admit to be a fact depends upon his whole philosophy of history and set of presuppositions. The older liberal theology had a set of presuppositions, the most important being that there could be no direct intervention in history by God. Hence when they set out to find the historical Jesus objectively they were anything but objective. They found the picture they were looking for because of the pressure of their systems, regardless of what the evidence said.

What did emerge however from all this analysis of the sources was that the Gospels may be layered into Mark, L, M, and Q, and that each layer, in spite of what the liberal theologians had made of it, portrayed a supernatural Christ. In other words, as far back as one could go at that time, it was agreed that the sources depicted belief in a Jesus who, although a man, was more than just a man.

The trouble with the older theology then was in its portrayal of Christ as being just a man who was ultimately like any other man, and in its treatment of the Gospels as sources. It postulated that there existed a series of facts, which were primary, and to these primary facts were added a whole series of secondary interpretations. After removing the secondary material, they were able to explain the Gospel stories in a basically naturalistic way.

What happened when the dogmatism of this approach became apparent is now a matter of history. The liberals had in fact been forced to deny virtually all of the evidence of the Gospels in order to produce their "Jesus".
With Bultmann a new stage was reached. He was willing to accept the distinction made by the liberal dogmatists between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith and to assert that there was, none the less, a unity between them — a paradoxical one. Jesus is just a man but nevertheless God's act as believed by the Church. What convinced the Church that Jesus was God's act was the "resurrection experience". But Bultmann's liberal dogmatism (and Lutheran doctrine of *sola fide*) will allow virtually none of this to be rooted in Jesus. Even if Jesus were an "X" historically, that would be enough according to him.

At this point the historian, if he is basically a naturalist like Bultmann, will say that Bultmann's approach to the problem just confirms what the historian has been saying all along — there is no basis in fact for the Church's theology. The Church says that Jesus rose bodily from the grave, Bultmann says he did not. The Church says Jesus made Messianic claims, Bultmann says he did not. The Church says Jesus worked miracles, Bultmann says he did not. And so forth. So Bultmann has made no real advance upon the older liberal theology except to add orthodox theology shorn of its historical foundation.

James M. Robinson would like to make an advance on Bultmann, but unfortunately he uses exactly the same method. He too begins with a naturalistic reductionism. Starting there he moves up to Bultmann's position, but at that point realizes that one must go back to history if one is to have Jesus. He attempts to do this within the Bultmannian structure by means of an existential encounter with the
historical Jesus. But he cannot successfully turn an existential encounter into a historical statement. Historical statements can only be verified historically and at this point Robinson finds himself in a quandary because his historical position is exactly the same as Bultmann's. He has denied in advance (or at least placed in suspension indefinitely) that Jesus made Messianic claims or worked miracles or rose bodily from the grave. All his existential historiography produces is Jesus' self-understanding as a possibility of existence for me.

The true historian will be disappointed in both Bultmann and Robinson because they both have worked in defiance of the sources. The sources clearly depict Jesus as a wonder-worker, risen from the dead and so on, and the historian will continue to ask, did it happen? Robinson's royal road to historical knowledge by means of existential encounter really adds nothing to historical study. This is not to say, of course, that Bultmann's and Robinson's stress on finding existential meaning for oneself in the sources is out of place. It is a welcome change to the thoroughgoing naturalists who scorned interpretation and personal involvement. But that this is inconsistent with their own naturalistic orientation in handling the sources is evident. They are just not very consistent naturalists.

So the question still remains. One could take recourse, like the conservative, and this is not necessarily to be despised, to the text as it stands. The text is, after all, the Church's theological understanding of Jesus. It is enough and always has been, and the
risen Christ meets us there whether we understand one word of the modern debate or not. Indeed most people have neither the inclination nor the time to go into it all.

But this will not satisfy everyone, so the question still remains, Can we get back to Jesus? It has already been argued that we cannot get back beyond the sources. They are all we have and their interpretations are part of the primary data with which we have to work. But how can a historian work with these sources and still be a historian? Only in this way:

(1) Disallow, for analytical purposes, one's own presuppositions about what could or could not have happened;

(2) Work out what the Church's theology was;

(3) Work out what the Gospels say about Jesus and the impression he made on those around him;

(4) Ask the question: What sort of Jesus could have brought all this about? Then construct a picture that is consistent with the evidence.

Now it might be argued against this view that steps two and three involve subjective factors and hence the Jesus that emerges from this analysis is not really Jesus as he was, but Jesus as seen by one historian. This observation is true enough, but one must be content with this state of affairs. What other alternative is there? Unless one is content to be a fundamentalist on the one hand or give up historical study all together on the other, he must accept the fact that no picture of Jesus is going to be fully objective. It will of necessity involve some subjective factors. But
it escapes subjectivity, not because it is one hundred percent objective (as if there were such a thing), but in that it is a reasonably constructed picture of Jesus that is consistent with the sources. This is as objective as any historian could wish to be.¹⁴

This does not mean, however, that everyone will accept the picture of Jesus as drawn by the historian. If one, in the second place, then brings his presuppositions to bear, and they are basically naturalistic, he will of course reject the picture he has painted. He may then set out to re-paint it more in line with his own presuppositions, but to that extent he will be distorting the picture as presented by the sources, to a greater or lesser degree. But there is no reason why before the re-working --- if it be done --- the picture of a believer and an unbeliever would not be very similar to one another. The unbeliever might be unwilling to make the inductive leap necessary to accept a believer's picture of Jesus, but he could certainly acknowledge that the believer's picture is what the sources say Jesus was. For instance, the church claimed to work miracles in Jesus' name, the crowds looked upon Jesus as a wonder-worker, what Jewish sources that do exist look upon Jesus as working wonders (howbeit by Satan) --- the question now is: What best explains this historically? That Jesus was a wonder-

¹⁴F.G. Downing argues in much the same way, but carries his observations one step farther. Not only is no picture fully objective but one must be content with a plurality of pictures drawn by a plurality of historians. No one picture can become the norm by which to judge other pictures, they all are equally valid, so long as the arguments supporting the picture are consistent, of course. See The Church and Jesus (1968), pp. 126, 169-70, 189-90.
worker. The unbeliever ought to be willing to say all of this, even the last --- It does best explain historically why Jesus was remembered as a wonder-worker. But whether he will or not is a personal matter, a matter of faith.

It is at this point that a plea for existential openness is in place. But this is not a second avenue back to Jesus brought in to save us from disaster because historical study has dissolved away Jesus' uniqueness. It is a plea to take the sources seriously and let them say what they will to our present situation. But this is a matter of faith.

B. The Quest for Criteria

It was said above that in order for a historian to be objective, that is, as objective as it is possible for a historian to be, he must construct a picture of Jesus that is consistent with the sources. The question now arises, how is the historian to use his sources to construct this picture that is consistent with them? Are there any simple criteria that can be used when one wishes to find the historical Jesus in the Gospels? Is it possible to distinguish between authentic and unauthentic Jesus material by using set rules to make the decision? This is a question that sooner or later the historian must face when he approaches the Gospels in quest of the historical Jesus.

Over the years various criteria have been suggested for distinguishing the authentic from the unauthentic Jesus material. But the historian must ask himself two questions with regard to them. First, are these criteria valid ones? Can one really distinguish
authentic from unauthentic material on the basis of them? Second, is it really possible to have any set criteria? That is, is there a short-cut to examining each pericope independently to see if it is consistent with what one knows from elsewhere in the Gospels? Are there any valid criteria? H.E.W. Turner in a small book entitled *Historicity and the Gospels* (1963) suggests four criteria for distinguishing authentic Jesus material. First "where a teaching of Jesus diverges from contemporary Judaism or from that of the primitive Church or preferably from both, we can be reasonably certain that we are on firm ground."15 Second, "where there is an overlap of interest between the Gospels and early Church, but a marked difference in the scale of treatment, we can be reasonably sure that we are on firm historical ground."16 Third, "formal criteria are of considerable importance in assessing the historical character of the teaching of Jesus."17 Turner then lists some of the formal criteria that may be used to distinguish authentic from unauthentic material. Parables are held to be authentic as are standard forms of Hebrew poetry and phrases in the original

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17 Turner, *op.cit.*, p. 76.
Aramaic. Statements following the solemn formula "Amen, Amen I say unto you" are also authentic. Also, "it may also be suggested that the substitution of an active verb with God as its subject by an impersonal passive as a reverent periphrasis for too frequent a use of the Divine Name was characteristic of Jesus himself." Fourth, "In general terms, the closer the approximation of a passage in the Gospels to the style and idiom of contemporary Aramaic, the greater the presumption of authenticity."  

How valid are these criteria? Let us examine them in order. The first one says that a saying is likely to be authentic if it diverges from contemporary Judaism and the early Church. One wonders about this. Why must it be assumed that Jesus always differed from contemporary Judaism and the early Church? Certainly a great deal of authentic material will parallel both. Jesus no doubt took over much that was current in his day and used it in his teaching and the early Church no doubt took much of its teaching from Jesus. This criterion says however that only what differs from Judaism and the early Church will be allowed to be authentic. This certainly must unnecessarily limit what is considered to be authentic. Something positive may be said about this criterion however. If a saying does diverge from both Judaism and the early Church, it is

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18 Turner, op. cit., pp. 76-77.
19 Turner, op. cit., p. 77.
20 Turner, loc. cit.
21 Turner, op. cit., pp. 77-78.
highly probable that that saying is in fact a saying of Jesus. The problem with the criterion lies in its assumption that only what differs from Judaism and the early Church is in fact authentic. Turner’s second criterion concerning an overlap of interest but a difference of treatment sounds fine in theory, but would be difficult to put into practice. What exactly is a "difference in the scale of treatment"? It is left up to the individual to decide, thus making it a very subjective matter at best. Even Turner is not so certain about the workability of this criterion for he says "As might be expected in documents in which two purposes overlap, the great bulk of the material does not readily permit of such a method of historical verification." Turner’s third criterion of authenticity, that of formal characteristics, is more likely to produce results, but unfortunately the returns are meagre indeed. Dealing with them, it is no doubt true that the Lord taught in parables but the question is now, Which parables are authentic? Does Turner mean to say that a parable is authentic simply because it is a parable? Is it impossible that the early Church made use of parables? And what of the relationship of this form of teaching to contemporary Judaism? Here is a form that parallels contemporary Judaism for the rabbis also taught in parables. If criterion one is accepted this should rule out all of the parables because of their likeness to the rabbis of Jesus’ day. Turner also says that if a teaching is in the standard form of Hebrew poetry it is authentic. It is difficult to

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22 Turner, op.cit., p. 75.
accept this however. Why could not the early Church have taught in the standard form of Hebrew poetry? There is no a priori reason why they could not have. Turner's two other sets of formal criteria are more probably true however. Where there is an original Aramaic word or the "Amen, Amen I say to you formula" we are probably dealing with authentic Jesus material. The trouble with this is however that this produces a very small group of authentic passages. Finally, Turner's fourth criterion that the closer a passage in the Gospels is to the style and idiom of contemporary Aramaic the more likely it is to be authentic is one that is only partially true. Since Jesus no doubt taught in Aramaic, it would be true that if a passage in the Gospels did come from Jesus it would have to more or less approximate the contemporary Aramaic style. This much is true. But it is not true that therefore every passage which approximates Aramaic is authentic. There was a Palestinian community that also taught in Aramaic and they could be the source for any one of the passages in the Gospels that approximates contemporary Aramaic style.

Turner's four criteria then turn out to be both too narrow and too broad. They are too narrow in that some material that is authentic is likely to be rejected because of the criterion of dissimilarity. Just because a saying does find a parallel either in Judaism or the early Church does not necessarily mean that Jesus could not have spoken it. But Turner's criteria are also too broad. Just because a saying looks as though an Aramaic version of it is possible does not necessarily prove that it is authentic. To allow
all such sayings into the authentic category is probably to allow some that are unauthentic to be considered authentic. In short, Turner's four criteria do not provide any certain guide as to what is to be considered authentic and unauthentic in the teaching of Jesus.

Another man who has systematically treated the question of criteria for authenticity and unauthenticity is Howard M. Teeple. He offers five criteria of judgment. First, "If a saying reflects a point of view which was characteristic of the early Church and was not, as far as we know, characteristic of Jesus, the saying probably is not authentic. These sayings include those which deal with problems which arose in the church and which could hardly have been a problem to Jesus himself. In this category too, are logia which represent points of view which do not fit Jesus but do fit in the early Church." This criterion is a variation of the criterion of dissimilarity and like it is too narrowly conceived. The key to understanding this criterion of Teeple's lies in the small phrase "as far as we know." He says that a saying is unauthentic if it agrees with the Church but does not agree with what Jesus taught. The problem is that we do not know all that Jesus taught. He could very well have said something that was picked up by the early Church but which finds no large place in the Gospels. The very fact that the saying is placed on Jesus' lips is

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evidence that it was not considered to be out of place by the early Church. So how can we, at our remove from the events, say that Jesus could not have spoken on a subject that also happened to be a problem in the Church? Jesus could very well have faced problems, and spoken to them, that were similar to those faced by the early Church.

Teeple's second criterion is this. "If a saying reflects gentile or hellenistic attitudes, customs, and situations, rather than those which historical knowledge indicates would be characteristic of a Palestinian Jew in the first century A.D., it is probable that the logion is unauthentic." This criterion, as stated, is a bit too broad to be of much use. It states that if a saying reflects gentile or hellenistic attitudes, customs, and situations, the saying is probably not authentic. However, this, by itself, would not be enough to prove unauthenticity. What must also be shown is that the gentile or hellenistic attitude, custom or situation that is reflected in the saying can only be gentile or hellenistic and could not in any way reflect the situation in Palestine. But this would be an extremely difficult thing to do because we do not in fact know how much hellenization affected Palestinian Judaism. Teeple considerably weakens the force of his argument by admitting this. He says, "admittedly, we do not know precisely to what extent Palestinian Judaism was affected by hellenization." But if we do not know this how can it possibly be

\[^{24}\text{Teeple, loc.cit.}\]
\[^{25}\text{Teeple, loc.cit.}\]
shown that the saying in question is actually reflective of a
distinctively gentile or hellenistic attitude or custom. It could
possibly be, and Teeple is willing to admit this, that that gentile
or hellenistic attitude or custom was current in Palestinian Judaism,
and if it was, this criterion would no longer be of any use. In
short, not enough is known of Palestinian Judaism to make this
criterion a workable one.

Teeple's third criterion is "if a saying identifies a human type
of Messiah with the Son of Man, it can hardly be authentic. In the
Jewish background the Son of Man was not identified with the Son of
David, prophet like Moses, or Messianic priest. . . . There is no
apparent reason why Jesus would want to combine the two types, but
after some communities believed that Jesus was the Son of Man, and
other communities believed that he was the Son of David, the two
streams of tradition were combined, especially in Matthew and
Luke."26 There are two things to be noted about this criterion.
If the criterion of dissimilarity (Turner's first criterion) be in
any sense valid (and it is to this extent) then this criterion of
Teeple's runs directly counter to it. Teeple's criterion says that
a saying which differs from contemporary Judaism must be judged
unauthentic, but the criterion of dissimilarity says that any
saying that differs from contemporary Judaism must be judged to be
authentic. Since the balance of probability is in favour of the
criterion of dissimilarity being the true one here, Teeple's third

26 Teeple, op. cit., pp. 219-220.
criterion must be set aside. The second thing to notice about this criterion is that it is built upon a false assumption of knowledge. Teeple says that there is no apparent reason why Jesus would want to combine the two types, that is, a human type of Messiah with the Son of Man. But how Teeple came by this bit of information he nowhere says. He merely assumes that because he can find no reason for combining two different types of idea together, Jesus could not have found any reason for it either. This must remain speculative however because there is no \textit{a priori} reason why Jesus could not have combined the two together. In fact, when one does find the two combined together, there is every reason to consider that logion authentic because it differs from contemporary Judaism at that point.

Teeple's fourth criterion says this. "If a logion views Jesus, either explicitly or implicitly, as the Son of Man Messiah, it can hardly be a genuine saying of Jesus. Jesus surely must not have identified himself with the Son of Man, because the latter did not fit his human career. If Jesus thought of himself as a human being born on earth, he could not have identified himself with a heavenly, pre-existent supernatural being."27 This criterion is a very narrowly conceived one, being applicable only to the Son of Man sayings in the Gospels. It says that since Jesus never thought of himself as the Son of Man Messiah, any logion that does make that assumption is not authentic. As stated, this criterion can probably

\footnotesize{
27Teeple, \textit{op.cit.} p. 220.
}
be accepted as valid. Jesus, in all probability, did not identify himself with the coming Son of Man. Every logion that does make that identification would therefore be unauthentic.

Teeple's fifth criterion of authenticity says this. "If a saying makes salvation depend upon loyalty to Jesus' person, it can hardly be a genuine logion of Jesus. If any authentic tradition of the teaching of Jesus has survived, it is the synoptic pericope of Jesus' basic message, 'The time has been fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has drawn near; repent and believe in the good news' (Mark 1:15). ... Loyalty was to God and not to the Messiah. In Jesus' basic message, too, it is repentance, not acknowledgment of the person of the Messiah or Jesus, which is fundamental in the process of salvation. The situation became otherwise in the church. Repentance dropped out as a basic theme of the kerygma, and the emphasis shifted toward faith in Jesus."\(^{28}\) As stated this criterion is only partially true. While it is no doubt the case that where explicit statements make salvation dependent upon Jesus' person one is dealing with unauthentic material, this is not necessarily so when salvation is only implicitly dependent upon Jesus. One finds this in those synoptic passages where Jesus sees the Kingdom of God as having come in his own person and work. For one to take a stance relative to the Kingdom of God, one is also taking up a stance relative to Jesus because Jesus conceived the Kingdom to have proleptically arrived in his own person and work. The passages that make

\(^{28}\)Teeple, op.cit., p. 222.
salvation dependent upon Jesus in this implicit way are to be considered authentic. The church then built upon that idea and clarified the relation of salvation to Jesus by making it an explicit one.

Perhaps the fullest and most satisfactory treatment of the question of criteria is to be found in R.H. Fuller. He begins by discussing four basic criteria for authenticity. He says, first, that the Bultmann school takes it main and often sole criterion from Bultmann's discussion of the similitudes. A similitude is authentic where its content is opposed to Jewish morality and piety, where it reflects the eschatological temper characteristic of Jesus' proclamation, or where such teaching exhibits no specifically Christian traits. Fuller then says that Cullmann has modified this criterion in a somewhat more positive way: Sayings are authentic if they differ from contemporary Judaism or from the post-Easter proclamation of the Church. This criterion will be recognized as Turner's criterion of dissimilarity although Fuller prefers to call it the criterion of distinctiveness. The second criterion Fuller takes from Joachim Jeremias and it has two aspects. If a saying has Aramaic traits or poetic form it is probably authentic, or, if a saying reflects Palestinian conditions, it is authentic.


31 Fuller, op.cit., pp. 94-95.
The third criterion Fuller takes from F.C. Burkitt and he calls it the "cross-section method." This method says that where a saying occurs in more than one stratum of the Gospel tradition, it is probably authentic. C.H. Dodd extended this criterion by an appeal to Form-Criticism. He says a saying is likely to be authentic if it occurs in more than one form of the Gospel tradition. The final criterion mentioned by Fuller is the criterion of consistency. This criterion says that if a saying is consistent with an authentic saying of Jesus, it too is probably authentic.

Fuller then goes on to assess the value of these four criteria. Regarding the criterion of distinctiveness, he notes its limitation in that Jesus may have agreed with Judaism and the post-Easter Church may have agreed with him. This does not nullify the criterion however. "Here the right procedure would seem to be first to apply the criterion in Cullmann's way in order to see positively where Jesus differs from contemporary Judaism, then to apply the criterion of consistency to the elements of agreement with Judaism. Where Jesus has transformed an element in Judaism in the light of his distinctive message, its claims to authenticity are high. Where, however, Jesus merely repeats the conventional Jewish teachings without any trace of his own distinctive message, such a saying is

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32 Fuller, op.cit., p. 95. N. Perrin calls this the criterion of "multiple attestation", op.cit., pp. 45-46. See also Harvey K. McArthur, Interpretation, Vol. 18 (1964), pp. 41-42.

33 Fuller, loc.cit. This criterion is also discussed by N. Perrin, op.cit., p. 43.
a re-judaizing of Jesus’ teaching by the Church or an erroneous transfer." Regarding the linguistic and environmental tests, Fuller says that applied by themselves they can only take us back to the Palestinian tradition, and therefore only to the earliest Palestinian Church. They still have their place however, when used with the other criteria. Fuller is less favourable to the cross-section method. He says, "if the same tradition occurs in different primary sources or in different oral forms we can take it back to an earlier stage in the history of the tradition. But by itself, the Burkitt-Dodd method cannot establish authenticity." In discussing the criterion of consistency, he notes that it has no usefulness by itself, but it is of great value after the central message of Jesus has been established by the use of all the other criteria.

Fuller concludes his discussion of criteria with a useful summary of his position.

"To sum up. The quest of the historical Jesus should be seen as part of and as the end-process of the study of the whole history of the gospel tradition. That study is an attempt to assign to their proper place in the history of the tradition the various strata: first, redaction, then primary sources, then oral tradition, Hellenistic and Palestinian, then finally the authentic Jesus tradition. The appropriate criteria

\[^{34}\text{Fuller, op.cit., p. 96. See also Fuller’s The New Testament in Current Study (1966), pp. 40-41.}\]

\[^{35}\text{Fuller, op.cit., p. 97.}\]

\[^{36}\text{Fuller, op.cit., pp. 97-98.}\]

\[^{37}\text{Fuller, op.cit., p. 98. See F.G. Downing’s criticism of this, op.cit., p. 117. Cf. also F. Borsch, The Son of Man in Myth and History (1966), pp. 33-35, 41, note 2.}\]
must be applied at each successive stage.

1. The redaction. This is established from the criteria furnished by source criticism and by the redactio-historical method (K.L. Schmidt).

2. Primary sources. These are established by source criticism.

3. Hellenistic and Palestinian oral tradition. This is established by the cross-section method applied to the primary sources (Burkitt), by form criticism (Bultmann, Dibelius), by the cross-section method applied to the oral forms (Dodd), and by the linguistic and environmental tests (Jeremias, Black).

4. The authentic Jesus tradition. This is established by the criteria of distinctiveness.

5. The criterion of consistency (Carlston) can then be employed to confirm the results at each stage, and to recover for the Jesus tradition some of the material which had been previously rejected by the test of distinctiveness.  

This is probably the best statement to date on the use of criteria to lay bare the authentic Jesus material. The strength of it lies in Fuller's recognition of the various strata of tradition and that different methods must be used to evaluate these strata, methods that are appropriate to each stratum. There is one criticism to be made of this however. Regardless of how careful Fuller is to recognize the limitations of the various criteria in the abstract, when he comes to apply them to the Gospels he writes as though the criteria had mechanical efficiency and could be used without giving them any more thought. But one must be careful at all times to keep H.E.W. Turner's caution in mind: "They [the criteria] cannot, it is true, be applied with the precision of scientific techniques, and the results which attend them are more

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38 Fuller, loc. cit.
likely to be probable than certain. The risks involved in questions of historicity... remain inevitable and admit of no methodological or theological evasion. It is the necessary price a Christian pays for his belief in historical revelation and redemption." 39

One final word. The quest for criteria was not one that William Manson gave a great deal of thought to. Now it was said above that a position similar to Manson's was the one that held the greatest promise for the future. Consequently, anyone who attempts to update Manson will find that he has some hard thinking to do relative to this subject. It could well be that some of the things that Manson held to be certain cannot now be seen in quite that light. It could be that what we know of the historical Jesus is not as great as was formerly thought. However that might be, and it is a matter that must be considered, this writer is still convinced that despite the revisions that need to be made in his position, Manson still provides the best position from which to begin a study of the historical Jesus in our present day.

39 Turner, op. cit., p. 92. F.G. Downing would carry this note of caution to the end of the road. He says that all of the criteria are subjective and that "there is no way, as yet, to break the circle... It is endemic in the material as it stands... Once we decide to subject the New Testament evidence to a very thorough scrutiny, there is no escaping the circle --- unless and until a great deal of fresh evidence turns up." op. cit., pp. 115, 116.
APPENDIX

Types of Sources in Manson's Commentary on Luke

In Manson's commentary on Luke, one is able to find four major varieties of historical source that he has uncovered. First, there is what might be called the Simple Description. This is the simplest variety of source and may be charted thus:

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<th>Source A (&quot;L&quot;)</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Event plus Meaning)</td>
<td>description of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primitive Fact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historian</td>
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An illustration of this may be seen in Luke 10:38-42.¹

"Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion which shall not be taken away from her.'"

Here the historical fact is that Jesus arrives at the home of Mary and Martha and does not allow the well-meant but unfair complaint of Martha to stand. The point or meaning of this episode is a defence of Mary. These two elements together, the fact and the meaning, constitute the Primitive Fact. Source A is the L source that simply relates it, adding nothing by way of interpretation to it. The historian then approaches his source, and penetrates without much difficulty, back to the historical fact.

The second variety of source is that of a Simple Description plus an interpretation that has passed from one source into another thus moving it one step further from the event and creating for it a "primary" setting. It may be charted thus:

\[
\text{Source A (Q or Mark)} \rightarrow \text{Source B (Luke)} \rightarrow \text{Historian}
\]

\[
\text{Primitive Fact (Event plus Meaning)} \rightarrow \text{Description of Primitive Fact} + \text{Interpretation A}
\]

An illustration of this may be seen in Luke 11:29-32.²

"When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, 'This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah became a sign to the men of Nineveh, so will the Son of man be to this generation. The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.'"

Here the historical fact is that Jesus delivered a discourse to the crowd and the meaning is that Jesus is preaching repentance to Israel just as Jonah did earlier to the Ninevites. That is the Primitive Fact or historical kernel. Source A can be either Mark

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²Luke, pp. 142-44. A variation of this may be seen in Luke 12:10 (Luke, p. 152), where Source A is an aramaic description of the event that went into Mark and Q in different forms, but then went from Q to Luke unchanged. Another variation might be in Luke 16:19-31 (Luke, p. 190), where Source A ("Judean") bore a wrong interpretation and when it was inserted into Source B (Luke), the right interpretation replaced the wrong one. Manson considers this only "possible" (Ibid.). A much more complicated variation of this may be found in Luke 8:8b-15 (Luke pp. 88-91).
or Q, but for Luke it happens to be Q and Q interprets it in one of two ways (Manson is not sure which). Either, as Jonah was delivered from death, so Jesus will rise from the dead, or as Jonah, being raised went to Nineveh, so Jesus will rise and come again on the clouds of heaven. Here an interpretation is added and it happens to be a wrong one. Source A (Q) is then incorporated into Source B (Luke) and Source B adds nothing further to it. The historian then works back through Source B (Luke) to Source A (Q) to the Primitive Fact.

The third major variety of source is that of a Simple Description plus an interpretation that has passed from one source to another where a second interpretation is added to it, creating thus a primary and a secondary setting. It may be charted thus:

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Primitive Fact → Source A (Q) → Source B (Luke) → Historian
(Event plus Meaning) → Description of Primitive Fact → Description of Primitive Fact
+ Interpretation A + Interpretation A + Interpretation B
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An illustration of this may be found in Luke 6:46-49.⁴

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Every one who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But he who

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⁴Luke, pp. 73-74. Another illustration of this is in Luke 12:41-48, where the Primitive Fact is not determinable. Source A (Q) interprets the parable to refer to the Apostles and Source B (Luke) adds the interpretation that it refers to all the followers of Christ.
hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

Here the historical fact is that some of Jesus' hearers had calculated him "Lord" or "Master", but refused to acknowledge his authority by not doing what he said. The meaning is that not all who simply call Jesus "Lord" or "Master" will be saved. This constitutes the Primitive Fact. Source A (Q) takes "Lord" to refer to the day of Judgment. This is taken into Source B (Luke) where the word "Lord" is taken to mean "Lord" in a more or less Pauline sense and Jesus is seen as the Glorified Risen Lord of His Church. The historian must then work his way back to the original event by way of the primary and secondary elements, being careful to distinguish the one from the other.

The fourth major variety of historical source is that of a Simple Description of an event plus an interpretation that has passed into another source where a second interpretation is added and then the whole complex unit passes into yet a third source where yet another interpretation is added, thus creating a primary, a secondary, and a tertiary setting. It may be charted thus:

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Primitive Fact (Event plus Meaning) → Source A (Mark's source) → Source B (Mark)
     Description of Primitive Fact + Interpretation A → Description of Primitive Fact + Interpretation A
     → Source C (Luke)
             Description of Primitive Fact + Interpretation A + Interpretation B + Interpretation C
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Historian
An illustration of this may be found in Luke 9:21-27.4

"But he charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, 'The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.' And he said to all, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.'"

The historical fact is that Jesus is going up to Jerusalem to claim the City for God and His Kingdom. The meaning is that Jesus is to be a ransom for Israel. These two elements constitute the Primitive Fact. Source A (Mark's source) takes verse 23 to refer primarily to the disciples. This went into Source B (Mark) who adds the crowd to the audience and this goes into Source C (Luke) who sees the words as referring to everyone, because the Christian Church saw that Jesus' sacrifice demanded that all who follow Christ give up their own life.

These then constitute the four major varieties of source that Manson finds in the Synoptics and one may clearly see how the historical critical method operates on the basis of a Kernel/Husk theory of sources. It becomes a matter of working back, layer by layer,

until one finally reaches the historical facts themselves. But Manson realizes the great difficulty of this sort of research and says with respect to it, "If the problem of Christian origins is not easily resolved by the methods of historical analysis, the cause lies...in the complexity of the documentary evidence." But in spite of the complexity and the uncertainty that often attaches to the results of such analysis, it must be pursued in order to lay bare the historical facts upon which the Church is built.

5Messiah, p. 1; Bist Du, p. 9.
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