THE CANONS OF
HISTORICAL AUTHENTICITY
IN THE WRITINGS
OF RUDOLF BULTMANN,
GUNTHER BORNKAMM
AND ERNST KÄSEMANN

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The focus of concern in this study is an analysis of the historical method employed by Rudolf Bultmann, Günther Bornkamm and Ernst Küsemann. Frequently, these three scholars (along with certain other former students of Bultmann) are spoken of as the "Bultmann School" and their historical work is often spoken of collectively as grounded in the form-critical method and existential principles of interpretation. A question which is not answered by such general description, but which is of real concern to ongoing New Testament scholarship, is that of why these scholars should differ from one another in significant ways in their historical reconstructions of Jesus, if they share a common historical methodology. A further but related question is that of why Bornkamm and Küsemann assign a somewhat different theological significance to their historical reconstructions of Jesus than Bultmann does with his historical reconstruction of Jesus. Finally, it is important to evaluate what elements in the work of each scholar appears to be of lasting value for New Testament scholarship and what in their several contributions should be either jettisoned or improved.

By procedure, a three-part presentation is undertaken. The first section deals with the question of what historical authenticity means for each scholar and what, in fact, constitutes canons of such for each. The second section is an examination of their critical and interpretative historical canons as they are actually employed by each scholar on representative sections of the synoptic gospels. Finally, in the concluding section a general methodological evaluation is offered of the consistency and validity of the critical and hermeneutical canons of Bultmann, Bornkamm and Küsemann; together with a concluding appraisal of the role of such historical work for theology and the church.
I hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis entitled, "The Canons of Historical Authenticity in the Writings of Rudolf Bultmann, Günther Bornkamm and Ernst Küsemann" represents the original research of S. Allen Foster, B.A., B.D., has been composed by him, and has not previously been published nor submitted for credit in fulfilling the requirements for any other academic degree.

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S. Allen Foster
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PREFACE

In this study no attempt will be made to present an exhaustive analysis of the theologies of Professors Rudolf Bultmann, Günther Bornkamm and Ernst Käsemann. Nor will an attempt be made to trace the developments of their theologies nor show the relationships of their thoughts to other historians, theologians or philosophers, except where a limited observation might especially serve the point under discussion. All of these goals would be quite valuable to pursue but here they would serve to take the present writer afield from his intended task.

This study will concentrate on certain aspects of the thorny problem of history and faith with regard to the question of "the historical Jesus" as it emerges in the writings of these three scholars. More precisely, a special focus will be placed upon the historical method employed by each scholar in his attempt to establish a historical reconstruction and understanding of Jesus. Thus a major concern of this study will be the question of how "the Jesus of history" is related to "the Christ of faith".

By procedure, the present writer will undertake a three-part presentation. The first section will deal with the question of what historical authenticity means for each scholar and what, in fact, constitutes canons of such for each. The second section will be an examination of their critical, and interpretative historical canons as they are actually employed by each scholar on representative sections of the synoptic gospels. Finally, in the concluding section the present writer will offer a general methodological evaluation of the consistency and validity of the critical and hermeneutical historical canons of Professors Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann.
SECTION I
When one sets out to render a description and an evaluation of the canons of historical authenticity in the writings of Rudolf Bultmann, Günther Bornkamm and Ernst Käsemann, with especial regard to the historical Jesus, one is immediately faced with several matters of definition. What do Professors Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann each mean by historical authenticity in this context? What precisely would constitute canons of such historical authenticity for each scholar? For only when these basic questions have been answered with clarity will it be possible to examine the canons as they are actually employed by each scholar in New Testament criticism and interpretation. The final goal of the present writer will be an evaluation of the consistency of these scholars in the use of their own canons and an evaluation of the validity of their canons for the ongoing work of biblical criticism and theology. In the present section, however, discussion will be focused upon the questions of what Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann each mean by historical authenticity, what exactly constitute canons of such for each and what their canons allow them to say in general terms about the kerygma and the historical Jesus.

It must be noted at the outset that it is no simple matter to sort out neatly what Professors Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann would mean by such terminology as historical authenticity. This is due, in part, to the much discussed difference of linguistic formulation available in the German language on matters pertaining to history and, in part, due to the specific academic context out of which these scholars have come. Nevertheless, the present writer believes that by examining the issue from an Anglo-American perspective, no final injustice need be done to the intentions of Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann. In fact, an examination from a perspective outside the
immediate context of these scholars should provide for useful questioning and clarification, if care is taken to understand that other context properly.

(A)

First, it must be asked what Professor Bultmann means by historical authenticity. It is quite apparent that Bultmann means more than one thing. His writings show that he has been a pioneer in making theology keenly aware of the many ways in which the noun history and adjective historical are constantly used by laymen and professional historians, philosophers and theologians alike. As we shall see, in his manner of expression and actual use of certain German words, he distinguishes between three general levels of history. Each level thereby has its own peculiar type of historical authenticity.

I. One sense in which he commonly speaks of history and historical authenticity is when he uses the German noun Historie or adjective historisch to refer to the external events of the past that are accessible to the objective judgment of the historian in his scientific evaluation of evidence and reconstruction of past events. 1

Sometimes, however, he refers to this same aspect of historical reality using other terminology. 2 In any case, history referred to in


2. Rudolf Bultmann, Die Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1931), p. 6, p. 260 footnote 1; Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus (Berlin: Deutsche Bibliothek, 1929), p. 8-9. These are examples of how Bultmann uses the nouns Geschichte and Geschichtlichkeit and the adjective geschichtlich to describe that aspect of history which he often refers to elsewhere by means of the noun Historie and adjective historisch. In English he frequently
this way has the character of pastness, externality and distance from the personal life of the historian and his readers today. Yet the historian must maintain his scientific distance (or neutrality) in reconstructing the past in order to remain impartial and honest in his various critical judgments.

It follows, for Bultmann, that the historian must employ a method that will best enable him honestly to reconstruct past events as fully as possible. Nevertheless, every historian must use those kinds of critical canons in his work which are common to the whole community of historians. Therefore, the Christian historian must be especially careful not to employ any "special canons" in his attempt to establish past events, which could not equally be employed by the non-Christian historian. Nor should the Christian historian fail to use the most stringent criteria. Specifically, he must not deal with the history of Christian origins by means of a method which would be unacceptable to other ancient historians working in their respective fields of study.


of the gospel materials stands as his best example of his understanding of the nature of scientific historiography. In his form-critical work, as we shall see, he demonstrates precisely the sort of thorough-going criticism which he maintains is required of any sound historian. Here he shows a concerted effort to be free from any "special canons" which would allow him to accept material as critically reliable that would be unacceptable to any secular historian, and he thereby avoids any form of the special pleading that he believes becomes necessary to support such "special canons" as are sometimes employed by theologically conservative theologians who are anxious to find a maximum amount of the gospel material historically reliable. It should be noted that this intense loyalty to the scientific historical method is a direct heritage from his early training in the tradition of liberal German biblical criticism (especially in the History of Religions School) and it is not simply a result of his existentialist theology as some have rather one-sidedly suggested.  

Shortly we shall enumerate Bultmann's most important canons, but first we must ask what, then, are the nature and purpose of Bultmann's canons of objective history? His critical canons consist of working rules which he believes enable him to weigh and sift the New Testament evidence for a particular past event in such a fashion that he may accurately and honestly judge what actually took place in that event and what did not (insofar as the evidence at hand is adequate). Of course, Bultmann recognises that all historical judgments are in theory open to reconsideration and are, therefore, never final. Yet he strives for the greatest degree of honest

certainty he can achieve. Still it should be noted that in his actual form-critical analysis of the synoptic gospels, he only claims to reach the earliest strand of the church tradition with certainty, and thus speaks of the historical figure Jesus with some caution (although Bultmann personally believes that the earliest strand of the tradition, in a high degree of probability, represents Jesus as he really was).

No historian, of course, has just one or two critical canons, but many. Yet a chief characteristic of these several canons is that they are generally based upon the results of academic research in many disciplines. Since the historian must deal with the phenomenon of man in all his aspects, he must in part rely upon his own grasp of the underlying assumptions, guiding axioms and results of numerous human disciplines for the components of his working methodology. He must also frequently depend upon the results of other historians who have become specialists in their own areas. In using their work he is, of course, not blindly accepting mere external authorities, for he will accept only those results that have been arrived at by methods and judgments in harmony with his own tested and accepted procedures. Consequently, the individual historian's own judgment always remains sovereign in the formation and use of historical canons.

A few brief illustrations of how the historian undergirds his own work with criteria drawn from other historians and disciplines will illuminate this significant point. Awareness of this point, then, will illumine our understanding of Bultmann's particular critical canons.

For example, where the historian must make judgments about events of nature that may have affected past human events, he will be guided by axioms that represent the consensus of the scientific community on those matters which pertain to his own study. Or if he must make judgments concerning individual human behaviour, he will be aided by the consensus of the academic community engaged in psychological research in order that his judgments may reflect the best current thinking about normal and abnormal tendencies in man. Likewise, if he must make judgments regarding group behaviour, he will find guidance from the sociologists, economists and political scientists. Furthermore, certain canons deal with linguistic considerations as these might serve as clues to the history of given materials. Here the historian's judgments must find backing not only from the work of linguistic experts (and his own knowledge of specific languages), but also from the consensus of those scholars who have specialised in studying the "laws" which appear to govern oral and written traditions in various cultures and institutions. Still other canons are based on a broad grasp of the overall historical situation of a particular period, such as first century Palestinian Judaism or the Hellenistic world at the time of the emergence of the early Christian communities. Yet other canons are based on the results of expert archaeologists and other specialists. Hence, it is clear in each case that the working historian dare not ignore the particular rules of sound reasoning that are relevant to a specific field of study which affect his historical judgments. Therefore, in all of these ways (and more) the historian is dependent on the best work of others for the working standards which are most significant in carrying out his own task.9

As we shall see now, Professor Bultmann's canons of objective history share in this general characteristic of critical historical canons, for the form-critical criteria which he regularly employs are quite dependent upon specific standards and conclusions drawn from other fields of history and numerous other related academic disciplines. However, the way in which this can now best be shown is by isolating Bultmann's chief critical canons in a concrete but summary fashion. These canons, of necessity, must be abstracted from his several writings, and especially from the text of his form-critical analyses, because like most historians he does not attempt systematically to state all of his criteria in advance of his practical work. Thus, the focus of attention will be placed upon the most significant working rules which guide Bultmann as he makes his judgments of historical facticity. Moreover, these canons will be set forth now in their approximate order of importance, as one would judge by noting throughout this study the frequency and manner of their employment by Bultmann. In the following, it should also be noted that the more important canons generally receive a longer explication than those of lesser importance.

1. The primary canon of importance for Bultmann is his "canon of dissimilarity". This canon was initially put forward by Bultmann in his treatment of the synoptic parables of Jesus. He says that, "We can only count on possessing a genuine similitude of Jesus where, on the one hand, expression is given to the contrast between Jewish morality and piety and the distinctive eschatological temper which characterised the preaching of Jesus, and where on the other we find no specifically Christian features."¹⁰

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In stating his canon thus Bultmann is not suggesting that the form of Jesus' message or its allusions to contemporary life (economic, political, sociological, geographical etc.) should be unlike what one would find in other Jewish writings of the same period (and, therefore, even in some Palestinian church writings of the first century). Obviously, if certain aspects of the gospel presentation of Jesus' message are to be found historically reliable, they should reflect genuine traces of life, and common forms of speech, which were typical in Jesus' time and homeland. What Bultmann is actually maintaining with this canon is, that in spite of those expected common features, we can only trust material as authentic Jesus' material where its content also shows distinctiveness over against the writings of contemporary Judaism or the early church.

It can be argued that this canon is too strict and, therefore, can produce no more than minimal results because it cannot account for those aspects of Jesus' life or teaching which actually may have overlapped with Judaism or the church. More attention will be given to this objection later in the course of this study but here it is sufficient to point out that Bultmann's use of it is due to his caution as a historian and his desire to claim no more for the historical Jesus than can honestly be established with a very high degree of probability. Moreover, its value for unearthing any distinctive aspect of Jesus' life and teaching is surely a positive feature.

It should be realised that this canon is one that is dependent upon the content research of other ancient and biblical historians. In addition, it is quite similar methodologically to criteria used by historians engaged in non-biblical fields of study. In the first place, it depends upon the consensus of what is already historically

known about the early church (in its various manifestations) and about first century Judaism. Here, of course, where there are significant differences between recognised authorities, each historian must decide for what he considers the most adequate position. In the case of Bultmann the conclusions of the History of Religions School, in which he was trained as a student, have remained as a strong influence. This should not be surprising since it is from this tradition that Bultmann has learned so much about the scientific historical method. (Hence, it seems to the present writer that it is not simply a blind respect for the pre-eminence of German scholarship or a rigid loyalty to his old teachers [for Bultmann has been quite willing to break with his early training where he has found it faulty] but because the results of these scholars regarding the objective aspects of the past are themselves based on the kinds of canons that he has personally tested and thus believes to be most scientifically sound.) He more readily accepts the general conclusions, then, of other specialists whose methodology he judges critically proper. Secondly, it should be noted that his "canon of dissimilarity" is not unlike those used by non-biblical historians when they must distinguish between propaganda and factual elements, or an original document and a copy. So here it can be seen that Bultmann takes great care to use standards of judgment which he believes will not compromise his credibility in the community of scientific historians.

2. A second canon of criticism which is constantly employed by Bultmann is the "canon of the forms and the Sitz im Leben". He maintains that the historian must detect the creative and reshaping influences where Bultmann uses the evidence of the apparently still existing sacrificial system in Jerusalem as an argument for primitiveness.

of the early church not only at the editorial stage of gospel production but in all the individual pericopae as well. Bultmann's procedure of examining the synoptic texts for traces of church influence is analytical. That is, he begins with the various forms of the text (i.e. apophthegmata, prophetic words, wisdom sayings, miracles, parables etc.) and seeks to discern therefrom what the several shaping influences in the life of the early Christian communities were. However, he admits that he cannot "dispense with a provisional picture of the primitive community and its history, which has to be turned into a clear and articulated picture in the course of my inquiries." For working purposes, he divides that provisional picture of the early church into the broad categories of Palestinian Christianity and Hellenistic Christianity (but he does also allow for the strong possibility of an intermediate, Hellenistically influenced stage of Palestinian-Jewish Christianity as well). As has been noted above, Bultmann's basic picture of the early church is in large measure dependent upon the essential conclusions of the History of Religions School (especially Bousset and Heimüller). Thus, in tracing the Sitz im Leben of pericopae, Bultmann already has a fundamental criterion of historicity. As he says, "The distinction provides us with a criterion which frequently enables us to determine whether this or that feature belongs to the older tradition or was composed later." Beyond this, Bultmann seeks to distinguish

16. Ibid., p. 18.
from the forms, the more particular aspects of the Palestinian-Jewish or Hellenistic church life which may in turn have shaped the individual pericopae.

This canon is dependent upon the tools and categories provided by sociology, for it is that academic discipline which has studied the practical needs, interests and problems of institutions and how these factors influence the developments of institutions and their traditions. Sociological study enables Bultmann to grasp why the early Christian communities should have altered the original words and stories about Jesus, and why the church may sometimes have appropriated material from other sources consistent with what was remembered of Jesus, and why church prophets may even have created entirely new sayings and ascribed them to the risen Christ in order for the church to adapt herself constantly to ever new situations in her ongoing development.17 This canon, therefore, especially reinforces the "canon of dissimilarity" and is used in conjunction with it frequently. For when borrowing is suspected, the "canon of the forms and Sitz im Leben" enables the historian to see why certain aspects of the synoptic tradition were, in fact, borrowed, created or reshaped, in the form of models at hand in Palestine or in the Hellenistic world in order to meet some specific situational need in the life of an early Christian community.

It should be noted, however, that in Bultmann's view sometimes the only evidence for the apparent situational need in the life of an early Christian community must be discerned from the form of the text itself. This procedure has sometimes led Bultmann to maintain

that a given idea was surely characteristic of church theology (in one of its manifestations) because an ostensible sociological need (suggested by the very form of the text) required such. (For example, the form of a miracle story might suggest to Bultmann the needs [and thus beliefs and practices] of the healers within the early church.) Consequently, Bultmann goes on to maintain that since such a given idea was characteristic of early church theology, it must not be characteristic of Jesus himself. The grounds for such reasoning are to be found, then, in a given formal aspect of the gospel text itself and probable sociological considerations based upon the formal aspect of the text, rather than in any other direct, additional evidence. The conclusions drawn from these grounds are in turn used to judge the historical authenticity of that same text (i.e. that it did or did not thus have its origin with Jesus himself). Bultmann believes that this is often a necessary procedure. For as he says, "It is essential to realize that form-criticism is fundamentally indistinguishable from all historical work in this, that it has to move in a circle. The forms of the literary tradition must be used to establish the influences operating in the life of the community, and the life of the community must be used to render the forms intelligible."\(^{18}\)

It is significant to note that the primary function of the "canon of the forms and the Sitz im Leben" is to inform the historical critic concerning the history of the early church rather than about the history of Jesus. Nevertheless, in this very process this canon becomes one of Bultmann's most valuable and frequently used tools for then secondarily making judgments about whether or not a

\(^{18}\) Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, p. 5.
pericope (or part thereof) can fairly be said to have its roots in the actual history of Jesus himself.

Later in the course of this study we shall examine the validity of Bultmann's use of this canon in more detail, but at this point it cannot be denied that often an historian must make a judgment concerning facticity on indirect evidence and general sociological and/or psychological considerations (as to what is normative human behaviour in given circumstances). In that feature Bultmann's canon surely shares a common procedural element with the methods employed by the whole community of scientific historians.

3. A third canon which is also of fundamental importance for Bultmann can be deemed his "canon of the forms and the growth of the oral tradition". This canon is based on two foundations. First, the form of a unit of tradition is studied in its relationship to similar forms from other traditions (in Judaism, Hellenistic sources, various folk tales, Old Testament traditions etc.). This study is carried out in order to discover what the most primitive or pure form of a pericope was likely to have been. Once this typical, fundamental form is known, there is then a basis from which to judge later developments. Secondly, the Christian tradition itself is studied in its literary form in order to uncover tendencies of growth from the early literary sources to the later. When these literary tendencies of growth are discovered, they provide criteria for understanding the probable process of development in the oral stage as well. These criteria gained from the examination of the Christian tradition are reinforced and supplemented by observations of similar tendencies in the developments of other oral traditions.

Bultmann believes that the thirty-to-fifty year period in which the gospel tradition existed in an oral form in the early Christian
communities was a period in which the tradition expanded and changed considerably. During that time the original gospel narratives and sayings were retold, reshaped and added to (by preachers, teachers, miracle workers etc.) in the churches of Palestine and the Hellenistic world. Sometimes these additions simply took the form of interesting imaginative details which were included in order to "improve" the story. There was also a strong tendency to interwork contemporary church theology with the original gospel tradition. Likewise, the various accretions from non-Christian sources and the words of Christian prophets got attached to the tradition at this stage.

Each form must be studied in relation to parallel forms in other traditions in order to discover what the earliest or pure form of a given unit of the tradition must have been. Therefore, the formal characteristics of the most primitive pericopae vary somewhat from form to form. Generally speaking, however, Bultmann holds that the simple form represents the most primitive stage of the tradition. In the simple narrative form, for example, there are relatively few details, only two chief actors present, a single sequence is presented and the entire encounter involves only a brief period of time. In a like manner concise sayings pre-date fuller expositions. In the synoptic tradition, however, even the earliest form of a pericope does not necessarily go back to Jesus. It may be authentic Jesus' material or it may have been created by the earliest Palestinian community. A "pure pericope", therefore, is only relatively authentic with regard to Jesus himself.

As has been noted above, the fundamental aspects of the expansion process are to be gained from observing several factors of growth in the literary stage of the tradition. This expansion can
be observed in detail by noting how Matthew and Luke develop the Markan and Q materials to suit their interests. Likewise, it can be seen that the apocryphal gospels developed and changed the synoptic materials in specific ways. Moreover, the process of the transmission of the text itself is instructive for understanding in what ways the early Christians felt free to adjust the received tradition. These specific tendencies of the Christian literary tradition take on the character of "laws" of the tradition in its oral stage as well, in Bultmann's work. He then reinforces these discovered "laws" by noting cases of apparent parallel expansion in other oral traditions. Thus, Bultmann believes that the gospel tradition can only be properly understood if it is studied in the light of general "laws" of growth in literary and oral traditions. 19

Finally, it should be noted that this canon is used most closely with the "canon of the forms and the Sitz im Leben". Indeed, their relationship is so close that some scholars have treated them as a single canon. However, in this study they have been treated separately in order to show that the "canon of the forms and the Sitz im Leben" really is Bultmann's working standard by which he attempts to demonstrate what the needs of the community were which called for addition and adaptation in the gospel tradition, and the "canon of the forms and the growth of the oral tradition" shows how those changes were actually made by the community. Both canons serve a specific function in judging the relative age of pericope.

4. A fourth canon that is also of fundamental importance for Bultmann, and is a clear example of his desire to avoid "special canons", is one that is drawn from his understanding of the consensus of scien-

tific scholarship. Here he maintains that he is merely using an axiom of scientific thought which guides the daily theoretical and actual experimental work of the whole scientific community. This axiom, he holds, must guide the historian as well when he is dealing with all reported miraculous events recorded in documents from the past. Indeed this canon is constantly and normatively used by historians who work with non-biblical materials and has been consistently employed by liberal biblical critics for two centuries.

The canon itself is best presented in Bultmann's own words.

The historical method includes the presupposition that history is a unity in the sense of a closed continuum of effects in which individual events are connected by a succession of cause and effect. This does not mean that the process of history is determined by the causal law and that there are no free decisions of men whose actions determine the course of historical happenings. But even a free decision does not happen without a cause, without a motive; and the task of the historian is to come to know the motives of actions. All decisions and deeds have their causes and consequences; and the historical method presupposes that it is possible in principle to exhibit these and their connection and thus to understand the whole historical process as a closed unity.

This closedness means that the continuum of historical happenings cannot be rent by the interference of supernatural, transcendent powers and that therefore there is no "miracle" in this sense of the word. Such a miracle would be an event whose cause did not lie within history. While, for example, the Old Testament narrative speaks of an interference by God in history, historical science cannot demonstrate such an act of God, but merely perceives that there are those who believe in it. To be sure, as historical science, it may not assert that such a faith is an illusion and that God has not acted in history. But it itself as science cannot perceive such an act and reckon on the basis of it; it can only leave every man free to determine whether he wants to see an act of God in a historical event that it itself understands in terms of that event's immanent historical causes. 20

This canon is of especial significance in understanding Bultmann's category of myth in the New Testament. This is so because those passages which speak as if God has interrupted the closed causal unity of history by some supernatural means, in order to act as

a cause between events, can never be interpreted in a literal sense by the scientific historian. The historian is compelled to deal with such passages as mythological expressions. Thus, if an act of God is to be perceived in connection with a historical event, that action must be understood as God’s immanent action hidden within the closed unity of history. However, that history itself must be understood by the historian in a quite natural way without the "God hypothesis" as a part of the historical explanation. Only the "eye of faith" can see such immanent action as God’s own action. The scientific eye of the historian can never perceive more than the inherent natural or human cause and effect. This critical canon has vital theological importance for Bultmann as well; for if the historian as historian could detect acts of God, then revelation would be an objectively observable and demonstrable phenomenon and the human freedom necessary to faith in God would be destroyed. But in all of this Bultmann certainly does not deny that there have been miraculous acts of God in history, which have been revelatory to faith. Rather, he defines the meaning of an act of God (or the miraculous) in a fashion whereby there is no necessary conflict between science and faith. The historian is free to do his work on a purely scientific basis without excluding the real possibility of acts of God being present (but hidden) within given events, which he must nevertheless explain on a purely secular basis. This standard holds true equally for the scientific Christian historian and the scientific non-Christian historian with regard to all historical documents, including the Bible. 21

5. A fifth canon which is closely related to the "canon of dissimilarity" and also has frequent application to the gospel miracle

tradition is one which can be termed "the elimination of analogous material." Even where a particular strand of the gospel tradition might not otherwise be directly suspected of having originated in the early church theology or first century Judaism, it might well show certain strong similarities to other materials known to historians of ancient near eastern antiquity. Where close parallels can be shown to Hellenistic sources, for example, Bultmann maintains that a borrowing process must be suspected. This does not mean that each gospel saying or story must be closely paralleled by a single known Hellenistic source to be suspected. Rather, where the several stylistic features of given types of gospel sayings or narratives are paralleled by Hellenistic sources in general, the careful historian must be sceptical of these gospel sayings or narratives having originated with Jesus. Since it is quite possible that this material could have been added to the tradition during the Hellenistic period of the church, and there falsely attributed to Jesus, it must be treated as unreliable qua historical information concerning Jesus himself. For in such circumstances this material could achieve at best a very slight probability of having originated with Jesus. 22 It is clear with this canon as well that the historian is dependent upon the results and methods of other historical specialists.

6. A sixth canon which is also basic to many of Bultmann's critical judgments can be called the "canon of the isolated pericopae". Bultmann wholeheartedly accepts the pioneer work of W. Wrede and K. L. Schmidt who argued that the framework of the gospel of Mark is not to be understood as historically authentic. It is a theological formulation of the evangelist and not a true account of the chronological course of Jesus' ministry. Thus, the source critics were

22. Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, pp. 218-244.
wrong to think that the earliest gospel provides the historian with a historically accurate outline for reconstructing the outer and inner development of the life of the historical Jesus. All that existed prior to the gospel of Mark and Q (and perhaps M and L) were separate oral pericopae (although perhaps several units of similar content may have already circulated together). The only material that surely achieved a continuous form in the oral stage was the passion narrative, for its several parts would naturally have had little meaning in isolation from one another. Hence, no real organization of the isolated units of tradition was undertaken in the early church until the theological redactions of the synoptic evangelists were accomplished. By implication, what holds for the framework of Mark holds for Matthew and Luke as well, for they are structurally dependent upon Mark and where they do differ their special theological interests can be traced.

Once again Bultmann's canon is dependent upon the historical work of others. But this canon also shows an acceptance of another type of historical reasoning which is quite common to historical science generally. Here Bultmann has been impressed by the careful literary analyses of scholars like Wrede and Schmidt. Their work showed that if the transitional statements that hold the individual units of the tradition together are examined with exactness, it is discovered that these links are often quite vague and general in nature. Sometimes they are perspicuously summary statements. At other times a specific theological bias is evident in such a transitional statement. Therefore, if the framework be removed from the units of the tradition, two things become evident. One is how unrelated the individual units really are. The second is how artifi-
cially continuous and theological the abstracted framework is.

7. Another canon that is less important but is sometimes employed by Bultmann is the "canon of the argument from silence." That is, when there is an absence of concrete evidence for a particular saying or event (or aspect of an event) in a given text, Bultmann will frequently argue that this fact demonstrates that the author (or community) knew nothing of that particular saying or event. This canon is used especially when a more primitive unit of the synoptic tradition omits an aspect of a saying or event which is included in a later, apparently parallel passage. In such a case, it is maintained that since the most primitive strand of the tradition knows nothing of the point in question, it probably has no basis in the original historical event at all.

This canon is actually based on the premise that any item of vital historical importance will be reported in the most original form of the tradition concerning an event and not in a secondary form thereof. Whatever one's judgment may be of the validity of this canon, Bultmann is by no means alone in using such a canon; for various forms of it are common among working historians.

8. Bultmann sometimes uses still another canon which serves a positive function in identifying the probable words of Jesus. As has been noted in setting forth the "canon of dissimilarity", Bultmann holds that any authentic saying of Jesus must reflect the newness of his eschatological and ethical message (especially in

23. Ibid., pp. 337-367; Rudolf Bultmann, Form Criticism, pp. 28-31.
24. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, p. 286. Here the canon is employed, for example, in order to show how Matthew has added legendary features to the more primitive Markan empty tomb story.
21. contrast to the eschatological and ethical teachings of contemporary Judaism and the early church. Therefore, once the essential characteristics of that distinctive message have been established by the strict employment of the "canon of dissimilarity", these various recurring characteristics themselves become a norm by which Bultmann will accept certain other sayings which have not definitely been ruled out as reliable Jesus' material by his several other canons; but which were questionable enough not to be accepted straight away. 26

For the purposes of this study, this positive canon will be deemed Bultmann's "canon of consistency", since by it he accepts material that is apparently consistent with the otherwise known content of Jesus' teaching.

This canon of Bultmann's is also common among historians working in non-biblical fields, for there too it enables historians to enlarge their knowledge of any past figure or event where their documents must at first be treated with such rigorous scrutiny (in order to separate fact and propaganda) that certain portions of those documents are initially questionable. 27

9. A further canon which is employed on occasion by Bultmann is one which can best be termed his "canon of internal coherence". In deal-

26. Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, pp. 125-130, especially pp. 126, 128; Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, pp. 12-15, especially p. 12; Cf. Norman Perrin, Rediscovering the Teachings of Jesus (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 43-44, wherein he describes this canon using the terminology of the "criterion of coherence". The present writer has not elected to use this terminology, however, because he believes that Bultmann also uses a "canon of internal coherence", in order to judge which parts of a given pericope are original and which are secondary. (A more detailed explanation of this canon will follow.) Therefore, since it would be rather confusing to refer to two different canons of coherence in this study, for the sake of clarity, then, the canon under present discussion will be termed the "canon of consistency."

ing with a primitive pericope Bultmann holds that in the original words or acts of Jesus, there must have been a logical coherence suitable to the apparent subject or primitive setting. Therefore, where the critical historian can detect elements (phrases or behaviour) which seem out of character with the main thrust of the pericope, Bultmann maintains that it is most likely that these elements represent some later, minor insertion. It is also necessary, then, for the historian to make judgments as to why, when and how these glosses were added to the original tradition. 28

While this canon may sometimes supplement Bultmann's "canon of the forms and growth," it is not really the same canon. The "canon of the forms and growth" is used to judge the overall primitiveness and normal growth of a given pericope, whereas the "canon of internal coherence" is used specifically to detect minor and apparently irrelevant or illogical, secondary accretions to an otherwise primitive unit of tradition.

Here again it is clear that Bultmann is using a type of canon which is otherwise common among the community of historians. 29

10. Bultmann also sometimes uses a form of the "canon of multiple attestation" as a supporting argument for the essential authenticity of a given saying or block of material. Yet in his use of this canon Bultmann does not argue as a number of British and American scholars have; that one can virtually trust a pericope as reliable Jesus' material if it appears in all, or most, of the literary sources which stand behind our completed gospels (i.e. Mark, Q, L and M). 30

29. Marc Bloch, The Historian's Craft, pp. 116f.; where Bloch is critical of a naive use of this canon by some historians.
He is more sceptical than most British and American scholars (at least of his generation) concerning the value of these literary sources as direct historical reminiscences. He thinks rather in terms of a multiple attestation of the general content of a saying or of a chief characteristic of Jesus, which is testified to in several forms within the oldest strand of the tradition, or testified to in the oldest strand of the tradition as well as in the later strands perspicuously produced by the church and the various gospel editors. This he believes is a multiple attestation which at least takes us to an earlier stage of the tradition than literary (or source) criticism alone is capable of doing and thereby produces a stronger claim to historical reliability.  

11. Bultmann, however, realises that the objective establishing of particular past occurrences by means of his several critical canons is not the real goal of the historian. He has no interest in merely reconstructing isolated events but wants to penetrate to the meanings of those events. The historian's first step in discovering meaning in events is to ask questions about the movement of history. In doing so, the historian is searching for causes and effects that not only link individual occurrences together but at least partially reveal the nature of events in the ongoing process of history. For example, by asking the right questions the historian may discover underlying economic meanings, political meanings or psychological meanings within given events and historical contexts. The various causes and effects which he discovers, however, can only be understood


33. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology, p. 50; Rudolf Bultmann, Essays, pp. 252–253.
if they are categorised by means of already known general laws of nature and human behaviour. These laws and tendencies ascribed to events in historical explanation are to be reckoned as canons of objective history as well. Yet it is impossible to enumerate these in any comprehensive way, since they involve so many possibilities and arise from the peculiar nature of the questions any given historian may be predisposed to ask concerning a given past event. Thus, here it is sufficient to note the place which these various causal explanations occupy in the structure of Bultmann's thought. So in asking the questions which lead to these discovered meanings, and in clarifying the meanings which he has found by categorisation, the historian has not yet probed any deeper than the objective level of history (Historie) because he is still merely ordering his isolated bits of reconstruction by means of external general laws.

II. Consequently, when Bultmann has clarified his understanding of objective history he has only just begun, for he well recognises that the true goal of the historian should be to interpret historical events in a way that will enable man to come to a fuller self-understanding as he probes the past of mankind in the light of the haunting questions of his own personal existence in the present. Indeed, what is necessary is to comprehend a historical event as being composed of and conveying a particular self-understanding (Existenzverständnis) to contemporary man; for history properly understood is really the study of man's existence. History in its more profound form deals with man as from moment to moment he grapples with his perplexing past in the light of his own uncertain future. Therefore, when the historian has critically evaluated and recon-

34. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, pp. 5-6.
structured his evidence on the historisch level he has not completed his task. Rather he must also engage in an encounter with his evidence so as to grasp, and be grasped by, its meaning for his personal existence. The historian must allow a specific self-understanding conveyed through a past event to challenge his existence as he also is one struggling with the meaning of his own personal historicity. Moreover, the historian has the responsibility of conveying a discovered past self-understanding as a challenge to those who will read his work in the present, for each of his readers too must wrestle with his personal historicity in the light of his own on-coming future. When Bultmann speaks in this way he is talking of a second level of history and of the historian's task. He generally speaks of this personal dimension of history by means of the German noun Geschichte or adjective geschichtlich. Likewise, he sometimes refers to this aspect of the historian's work as "existential interpretation".

At this level of history there is a definite kind of authenticity as well, although it is quite different from merely establishing the "facts" about a past event and organising them by means of general causal laws and tendencies of human behaviour. The meaning


36. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus, pp. 7-18; Rudolf Bultmann, Glauben und Verstehen, I p. 117ff.; Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology, p. 45.
of historical authenticity in this context has to do with whether or not the historian will allow his own existence and those of his readers to be questioned and challenged by the profound self-understandings contained in his critically reconstructed historical evidence. For there are some historians who never reach this level of understanding their own discipline and, therefore, never practice history at this deeper level. They remain mere antiquarians and are constantly seeking for "facts" and general causes for events. They may be expert in the scientific functions of historiography but they miss history's truly profound meanings. These scholars are practitioners in the science of historicism.

But if history is to be encountered in a personal way, there must also be canons or interpretative rules which guide the historian at this level, unless the process is simply an intuitive one which some historians and their readers mysteriously manage and others do not. Professor Bultmann's writings on hermeneutics make it quite clear that he is not speaking of a fortuitous, mystical encounter. Rather, he thinks of concrete principles of interpretation which might be deemed his "canons of historical (geschichtlich) authenticity".

Bultmann, of course, is ultimately concerned with interpreting biblical materials but his canons of interpretation are meant to apply generally to all historical documents. As has already been indicated, Bultmann refuses to apply "special Christian canons" in his scientific reconstruction of history (Historie). So consistently at this second level of historical understanding, he holds that biblical interpretation is just a specific application of generally valid canons of hermeneutics. For to interpret the Bible

37. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus, pp. 7-18.
differently than one would other ancient documents is precisely the false notion which has led to many misunderstandings of scripture. However, it is this conception of Bultmann's that has led him into sharp conflict with a number of other theologians, for his thoughts on hermeneutics surely lie at the heart of his entire historical and theological enterprise. What, then, are Bultmann's ideas concerning the correct canons of interpretation and how do they supply one with a reliable geschichtlich understanding of past events?

1. First, in addition to the critical work of the historian, which enables him to reconstruct something of what has happened in a past event, the historian engages in an analysis of the literary structure of his documents in order to grasp the meaning of that event. Using established rules of philology the historian seeks to understand the details of his documents from the whole and the whole from the details. In this case, as with his reconstructive work, the historian must work in a circular fashion. While objections have been raised to this procedure because of its circularity, it is ostensibly an inevitable procedure if a historian wishes to comprehend anything of the inherent meaning of a historical event. This is so because the historical interpreter has no other avenue by which to enter into the meaning of past events. Hence, this procedure is the historian's first canon of interpretation in Bultmann's view. The employment of this canon by itself, however, will never produce a geschichtlich comprehension of a historical event. This primary canon must always be used in conjunction with several others.


2. How does one account for the fact that three different historians may discover three different types of meaning in a single event? Why will one see an economic meaning, another a psychological meaning and the third a purely religious significance in an event? Are these discovered meanings of necessity contradictory? Is one historian absolutely correct in his insights and are the others quite wrong in their interpretations? Are there perhaps several layers of meaning in historical events?

Bultmann's answer to these questions is that each historian obviously has a special interest (or even several). One may be interested in economics, another in psychology and a third in religion. The interest of the individual historian then will dictate the kind of question he will ask of his documents. The kind of question which he asks will in turn shape the character of the answer that he will get. If he asks purely economic questions, he will arrive at a strictly economic interpretation in the end of the day. Therefore, no single historian will ever have a full interpretation of any historical event (even if he could be absolutely certain of all of his historical "facts", which he never can be). This is so because no one historian will be predisposed to put all the relevant kinds of questions to his reconstructed evidence for any given event. Thus, the fact that the Interpreter's own peculiar interests will dictate his "putting of the questions" and, therefore, shape his result accordingly may be deemed a second canon of historical interpretation for Bultmann. It depends on how this canon is used, however, whether it will lead to an interpretation that transcends the historisch. To ensure that a Geschichtlich interpretation is rendered, it is still necessary that this canon be used in connection with certain

3. This leads Bultmann to show that a given historian's personal interest does not arise *ex nihilo* within him but is dependent upon his total being and resulting life relationship (*Lebensverhältnis*) with the subject matter (*Sache*) of his text. This means that the historical interpreter must have a vital concern for, and a living relationship with, the specific possibilities and problems related in the subject matter by the author of his text in any given aspect which he may seek to interpret (i.e. whether economic, psychological, religious etc.). The interpreter must be able to enter into the world and experience of the author of his text. But it would be quite impossible to achieve such an "entering into" unless the interpreter had what Professor Bultmann calls a pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*) of the actual realities which the text intends to convey. It would be utterly impossible, for instance, to grasp the meaning of a particular musical text unless one already had some prior comprehension of, and relationship to, the general world of music. This relationship might be a simple or sophisticated one but without some such pre-understanding, there would be no interest at all in a specific subject. Likewise, there would be no ability to raise the appropriate questions in regard to the historical text because the necessary conceptions for questioning arise from one's pre-understanding. Some comprehension is possible for any historical interpreter on the basis of his common humanity with the author of his text. Still it is the very character of any interpreter's pre-understanding which determines the quality of his inquiry and his result. The interpreter with the most profound life relationship and pre-understanding will naturally raise the best questions and discover the richest meaning in the text. However, the interpreter's
prior comprehension is not to be understood as a methodological straightjacket, for in studying and questioning the text the interpreter should have his preliminary understanding enriched, enlarged and corrected.42 Thus, Bultmann’s third canon of historical interpretation can be summarised in his own words. “This is, then, the basic presupposition for every form of exegesis that your own relation to the subject-matter prompts the question you bring to the text and elicits the answers you obtain from the text.”43 Still this canon too must be combined with yet another in order to produce a geschichtlich interpretation.

4. By this point one could apply all three of Bultmann’s hermeneutical canons and yet not achieve a truly profound understanding of past events. With these canons alone a historian would still only produce a limited factual account (or historisch interpretation). There is still a missing link.

That missing link is to be found only when the interpreter uses his understanding of the above stated methodology in order to discover in his documents that which is of vital concern in human existence. Indeed, Bultmann often speaks of this as the “existential encounter” with history.44 The encounter can take place only when the historian himself personally realises that he too is a historical being with an unsatisfactory past and an uncertain future and so becomes agitated by questions of responsibility, truth and meaning in the depths of his own life. By virtue of this, his living historicity, the historian may discover that he shares in the deeper dimensions of the past he is studying, for he now knows that he has a

43. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology, p. 51.
44. Rudolf Bultmann, Eschatology and History, p. 119.
life relationship (Lebensverhältnis) at the most profound level with the persons and events he is researching. Because of this common historicity of man, then, the historian may have an existential (existentiell) pre-understanding of his subject matter, for in its profound aspects history is properly concerned with man's search for meaning and deals with the various self-understandings he has achieved in his struggle with existence down through the ages. This pre-understanding of the historian in turn allows him to put the truly appropriate questions to his text and so actually penetrate beyond the limitations of objective historisch methods. He may thus probe beyond the outside or external aspects of a past event to the "inside" of an event. This "inside" is the realm of personal intention or purpose within the lives of historical figures. These intentions cannot be grasped by means of general "laws" and tendencies. They can only be found by a historian in an "existential encounter" in which the historian is enabled to re-enact past intentions in his own mind. In this way the gap between the past and present is closed through an encounter of personal, historical beings.

Subsequently, such a re-enacted self-understanding of human existence should challenge the historian to re-evaluate his own present self-understanding and mode of existence. In short, each valid historical encounter will raise the question of whether the historian's own present life is being lived meaningfully or authentically. Additionally, the historian has the responsibility of attempting to convey this re-enacted self-understanding to his readers in order that their lives too might be challenged. Only when the historian achieves this goal will he have done his work fully.

45. Rudolf Bultmann, Essays, pp. 252-253; Rudolf Bultmann, Eschatology and History, pp. 119-122.
46. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, pp. 3-15.
Thus, the keystone canon of historical interpretation which draws together and completes all the others is what can best be described as "existential openness" to the past. Still it must always be remembered that Bultmann's several canons of interpretation are not meant to be used individually or in combinations of two or three as could be done with his critical canons. If one desires a reliable geschichtlich understanding of a past event, in which there will be genuine unveilings of life's profundities, and a challenge to present existence, all of Bultmann's hermeneutical canons must be used.

(Biblical Interpretation)

Yet Bultmann's real concern is the interpretation of scripture. Now, however, it can be seen that any adequate interpretation of the Bible and its central message must be undertaken by means of his canons of existential interpretation. It may be objected, however, that it is utterly impossible to have a life relationship with the subject matter of the Bible so that one may actually have a Vorverständnis of its theme. How could one know about the God of the Bible and His activity prior to some personal encounter with that God? Bultmann's answer is that we do not, in fact, have a proper revelatory knowledge of God prior to the Christian decision of faith. Nevertheless, man's being is restless until it finds peace in a true encounter with the living God (as Augustine realised and stated so well). Thus, insofar as a man senses a lack of ultimate meaning in his life, or struggles with the meaning of human history, he is grappling with the question of human existence (whether consciously or unconsciously) and thereby is having a preliminary experience of God. For whether a man comes to recognise it or not, it is God Himself who is troubling the existence of man. So Bultmann believes that this very wrestling provides a person with the necessary life
relationship and prior comprehension for properly interpreting the Bible. As he says, "The question of God and the question of myself are identical".

Therefore, the motive for interpreting the Bible is similar to that of any reliable geschichtlich interpretation of history. The hope is that by an existential understanding of this particular history one can gain a new self-understanding. Moreover, the Bible holds out the special promise of not only unveiling certain new possibilities but of offering the most genuine kind of existence to man as a gift. Still it is necessary that an individual must first understand the Bible in order for the gift to be received. Genuine existence is not generated in a vacuum. It comes via an authentic personal encounter with the central message of the Bible. In such an encounter one hears the challenge of the word of God itself.

At this point a clear distinction must be drawn between two varieties of biblical interpretation which surely belong to the same family in Bultmann's thought but are individual as well. In fact, in the English language they may both be rather confusingly referred to as "existential interpretations".

The one type is a purely personal interpretation of the biblical text wherein an individual who has been wrestling with life's meaning reads the Bible, discovers and responds in faith to the gift of authentic existence offered in its central message. This interpretation and its corresponding response is something beyond historical study. Yet it is surely the goal toward which all true historical interpretation should lead. This sort of interpretation normally does not employ the analytical categories of any academically formulated

47. Rudolf Bultmann, Essays, pp. 256-258.
48. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology, p. 53.
49. Ibid.
existentialist philosophy in raising questions to the biblical text. It is triggered simply by a man’s personal struggle with life’s deep questions and is described by the German adjective existential in Bultmann’s writings. Where this wrestling with life’s meaning meets and responds in faith to the central message of the Bible, God provides His revelation to the individual in the form of a new, personal self-understanding and the gift of authentic existence.

The second type of interpretation is that undertaken by the academic historical interpreter or exegete. His aim is to aid other individuals in their existential encounters with the Bible but his work is of a less directly personal and more general nature. He can only deal with the common human experience of existence. Yet he must do it in such a way as to aid other persons in their personal struggle with life and interpretations of the Bible. Therefore, he must find and use the best conceptions he can for putting his interpretative questions to the text. The right conceptions can only be drawn from some quarter wherein profound reflection has been undertaken with regard to the problems and possibilities of common human existence. Bultmann believes that the place where this has been done most adequately is in the existentialist philosophy of Martin Heidegger.50

Bultmann has often been criticised for his use of the philosophy of Heidegger. It has been maintained that his adherence to such a philosophy in the interpretative process might have aided him to interpret some biblical texts, but it has equally warped and limited his grasp of others. Bultmann replies that his critics also make use of limiting philosophical concepts either consciously or

50. Rudolf Bultmann, Essays, pp. 258-259; Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology, p. 54.
unconsciously when they interpret the Bible. So it is not that some interpreters bring foreign philosophical conceptions with them and others do not. That would be a most naive reading of the history of hermeneutics in the church. In light of this, it is all the more important that an interpreter should carefully reflect upon the conceptions which he does use in order to see if they are the best available in his own time (for, indeed, as times change so will the best philosophical tools). In Bultmann's time he has believed that the existentialist philosophy of Martin Heidegger has offered the most adequate conceptions, for in his philosophical thought the meaning of human existence is the exact subject of study. 51

A chief value of Heidegger's existentialist philosophy is that it does not pretend to give man a pre-packaged self-understanding (as some wrongly imagine) but rather reveals to him certain basic structures of his existence and makes him aware of the fact that true self-understanding must be personally apprehended in the concrete present of an individual's own life. As Bultmann says, "Existentialist philosophy, while it gives me no answer to the question of my personal existence, makes personal existence my own personal responsibility, and by doing so it helps to make me open to the word of the Bible. Thus, it follows that existentialist philosophy can offer adequate conceptions for the interpretation of the Bible since the interpretation of the Bible is concerned with the understanding of existence." 52 Bultmann likewise demonstrates the proper function of existentialist analysis by using the illustration of human love. It would be quite wrong, he suggests, to imagine that an existential-

51. Rudolf Bultmann, Essays, pp. 251-252, 258-259; Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology, pp. 45, 54-55.

52. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology, pp. 56-57.
1st analysis can enable a person to know how he must love in a specific situation. All that the analysis can achieve is to make one realise that he can only hope to understand love by the personal act of loving.  

Another advantage of existentialist analysis for exegetical interpretation is that it undertakes its analysis of human existence entirely without reference to God. This elimination of the God-man relationship is not at all a negative factor, as some have supposed. Rather it serves a positive function. Such neutrality is achieved because it is a formal analysis of general human existence; rather than the actual personal encounter of any individual's existence. For it is only within the individual's concrete life that encounter with God and His revelation may take place. The significance of this factor for interpretation is great because as Professor Bultmann says,

*If it is true that the revelation of God is realised only in the concrete events of life here and now, and that the analysis of existence is confined to man's temporal life with its series of here and now, then this analysis unveils a sphere which faith alone can understand as the sphere of the relation between man and God...it is grounded in the existential insight that the idea of God is not at our disposal when we construct a theory of man's existence. Moreover, the judgment points to the idea of absolute freedom, whether this idea be accepted as true or rejected as absurd. We can also put it this way: that the elimination of man's relation with God is the expression of my personal knowledge of myself, the acknowledgment that I cannot find God by looking at or into myself... In the fact that existentialist philosophy does not take into account the relation between man and God, the confession is implied that I cannot speak of God as my God by looking into myself. My personal relation with God can be made real by God only, by the acting God who meets me in His Word.*  

Another major objection has sometimes been raised against Bultmann's hermeneutical canons. This objection is that he is surely


indulging in pure subjectivity in the use of such canons. It is important, therefore, to be aware of Bultmann's answer to this criticism.

In the first place, Bultmann does not deny that his canons of interpretation exalt the subjectivity of the historian. Rather he maintains that he simply recognises a real aspect of the historian's work which was badly misjudged by those of the school of historicism who believed that the historian's whole task could be patterned on the work of natural scientists. The natural scientist treats the matter of his investigation as an object of study. Some have thought that the historian could function in the same way and thus treat his material with the same sort of objectivity. This is a false assumption for several reasons. One reason is that every historian has certain personal values which make up his own historical individuality and from which he can never free himself. These values will inevitably colour his historical interpretations. For example, every historian will (as we have seen) have special interests and thus focus on certain causal factors to the exclusion of others. Indeed, the entire notion of what is significant in historical events depends on the point of view of the historian. But in an even more important manner the subjectivity of the historian plays a decisive role. As Bultmann puts it, "History gains meaning only when the historian himself stands within history and takes part in history." 55 Thus, only the historian who has been agitated by the question of meaning in his own historical existence and thus has a life relationship with the self-understanding of the historical figures he is studying can properly grasp the meaning of that past, or re-enact

55. Rudolf Bultmann, Eschatology and History, p. 119.
those past self-understandings, or convey them to others through his own writings. In the last analysis, then, correct historical interpretation actually depends upon the specific existential life-relation of a historian to his subject.  

Bultmann does not believe, however, that the historian's necessary subjectivity means an end to all objective historical knowledge, if we understand historical objectivity aright. When the historian is conscious of the nature of his own peculiar viewpoint, he should more adequately realise its limits and not make it absolute. He should then recognise the corrective value of other historian's viewpoints in analysing the same material he has researched. Indeed, it is the very fact that each historian has a viewpoint, and so a special way of putting questions, that allows him to grasp a certain dimension of a past event as fully and objectively as he does. "Truth becomes manifest objectively to each viewpoint."

In this way, subjectivity actually contributes to, rather than detracts from, proper historical objectivity. Still more significantly genuine historical knowledge, since it deals with the self-understanding of man in his personal historicity, requires a personal aliveness on the part of the historian for true understanding. "Only the historian who is excited by his participation in history (and that means who is open for the historical phenomena through his sense of responsibility for the future) only he will be able to understand history. In this sense the most subjective interpretation of history is at the same time the most objective. Only the historian who is excited by his own historical existence will be able to hear the claim of

56. Ibid., pp. 117-122; Rudolf Bultmann, Essays, pp. 254-256.
57. Rudolf Bultmann, History and Eschatology, p. 118.
Hence, Bultmann claims that objectivity in historical research must be defined correctly in order to grasp these significant contributions of the individual historian's subjectivity. Consequently, any definition of objectivity along the lines of objectivity in the natural sciences will fail to comprehend the real nature of the historian's work. All of this has a quite obvious and special importance for the biblical exegete.\(^59\)

With the foregoing exposition of Bultmann's critical and hermeneutical canons in mind, it can be clearly seen that his much discussed programme of demythologising was already inherent within his thought and historical method before it became popular by that name. In fact, some of the misunderstandings of Bultmann's intentions which have come to light in the course of the debate concerning demythologising have revealed that certain of the critics simply failed to grasp the underlying concepts or canons of Bultmann's historical methodology.

Yet if those concepts and canons are understood, then the essence of demythologising can be understood as Bultmann's basic historical method applied especially to the New Testament kerygma. For the New Testament generally and the kerygma specifically, on Bultmann's critical understanding of history, are clearly interlaced with time-conditioned and culture-conditioned mythical features that do not any longer convey the New Testament's essential message to modern man, who must think scientifically. If, however, the kerygma is the means by which modern man is to encounter the living God, then there must be no chance of his turning his back on God's real challenge and gift of grace merely because the kerygma has become

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obscure and unintelligible to him by being presented in a language that is quite incredible today. A language which makes God's action appear visible in unusual events of this world, and, therefore, like human action on a grand and supernatural level, is simply beyond the literal comprehension of intelligent contemporary man, unless he is willing to sacrifice his intellect in order to believe. Consequently, those non-essential, time-conditioned and culture-conditioned mythological features of the kerygma badly need translating into categories that will enable twentieth century man to encounter the reality of God in personal judgment and grace. Bultmann believes that this is possible by means of his interpretative canons. They have been developed precisely for the purpose of allowing any ancient text to live today in its deepest meaning for modern man. The myth that is detected especially by Bultmann's fourth critical canon is not discarded (as the liberal critics mistakenly discarded it) but rather is interpreted via an existential encounter with the past so that the "inside" of the historical kerygma might challenge the personal existence of modern man and thrust him into a valid decision either for or against personal Christian faith. Hence, Bultmann's programme of demythologising is essentially his historisch canons (and especially his fourth critical canon) and his several geschichtlich canons applied specifically to the New Testament kerygma.

In all of this, Bultmann appears to give final pride of place to the geschichtlich method of understanding the past. Indeed, this is especially so when he is dealing with the kerygmatic sections of the New Testament. Where it is the exegete's task to interpret sections of the New Testament which directly proclaim Jesus as the Christ

60. Rudolf Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, pp. 1-44; 191-211.
or decisive salvation event, Bultmann's hermeneutical method has a straightforward value. For example, one cannot read the kerygmatic statements of Paul or John with the aid of Bultmann's interpretative canons, without being immediately confronted with a judgment upon one's own existence and a decision either for or against the sort of genuine existence proclaimed in these writings. Here Bultmann's hermeneutical method enables the claim of finality inherent within such writings to reach into the personal centres of living people today. It serves to mediate the challenge and claim of the salvation event to the present moment. Hence, it is of especial value to the preacher as he prepares his sermon on a kerygmatic text.

In light of the prime importance which Bultmann normally attaches to his geschichtlich method, one might be led into some confusion when reading his comments on its value for interpreting the critically established evidence for the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Here the method still has a very definite value and it can enable a modern person to encounter Jesus in a much more profound way for self-understanding than would be possible by means of historisch reconstruction. With the aid of Bultmann's hermeneutical canons the "facts" about Jesus and his message are transformed from mere information about an unusual figure of the past into a quite specific and challenging understanding of human existence before God. Indeed, this self-understanding gleaned from Jesus' past may personally challenge men even today.61 However, for Bultmann this geschichtlich challenge is not at all the same as that offered by an existential interpretation of the kerygma.62

61. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus, pp. 7-18.

How does Bultmann come to such an ostensibly confusing conclusion? The answer is obvious for Bultmann, but it has not been so readily comprehended by some who stand outside the context of his own theological development. As has been noted, Bultmann started his theological work under the influence of liberal biblical criticism and theology. While he later parted company with many of his former teachers on a number of theological issues, he never lost respect for what he came to consider a central and permanent gain of liberal theology. That gain was the recognition of both the autonomy and yet limitation of the historical method. For through his training in the historical method, Bultmann came to realise that the scientific historian can trace only natural or human causes for events. Even as the historian probes the inner life of a historical figure, he can do no more than describe the psychological dimensions of that life (and in such a case as the gospel accounts of Jesus, even that is virtually impossible because he has no real trustworthy evidence for Jesus' psychological development). This insight gained from his training in the historical method was joined by several other formative influences. Bultmann's early theological training in the History of Religions School not only made any grounding of faith in a portrait of the "historical Jesus" historically unlikely but above all theologically unnecessary, because in that school of thought Christianity was focused on Christ the Κύριος whose relationship to Jesus of Nazareth was historically doubtful and theologically irrele-

63. This is so because of the likely predominance of Church theology in just those sections that appear to refer to Jesus' self-consciousness. In this regard Bultmann's critical criteria discussed as canons one and six above have special importance for limiting the psychological value of the gospel material.
vant. This attitude toward the historical Jesus was made the more radical by Bultmann's teacher, Wilhelm Herrmann, who was concerned to demonstrate that faith is basically an encounter and not something built upon the false security of proof. This theological position was reinforced by a rediscovery of Kierkegaard among the early dialectical theologians. It is now well recognised that the influential Danish philosopher denounces the so-called security of a faith built upon the conclusions of historical research. Moreover, Martin Kähler's emphasis on the preached and Risen Christ to the exclusion of the historian's picture of the "historical Jesus" had a strong influence on Bultmann. Likewise, the existentialist philosopher, Martin Heidegger, with his warnings about the dangers of objectification, meshed well with Bultmann's own developing theological thinking. Finally, the central nature of the New Testament kerygma was increasingly recognised by a number of scholars as the proper source of Christian faith. All of these factors thus led to the conclusion that any foundation which the historian tried to provide for faith with his historical reconstruction of Jesus would really be irrelevant to the interests of faith and even theologically undesirable. Moreover, the sources simply could not provide that

foundation in any case.

Therefore, even if an historian were to interpret a past event in an existential manner with Bultmann's hermeneutical canons, he could only convey the human self-understanding which is inherent in that event. The historian, as historian, simply is not equipped to trace divine revelations or acts of God in a past event which he reconstructs and interprets. He has no historisch or geschichtlich criteria to judge such things. Thus, the historian is clearly not able to detect a decisive revelation of God in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. The most the historian can hope to do is show Jesus' probable self-understanding of human existence before God (Existenzverständnis) as a historian might also attempt to do with any prophet or other great religious teacher.69

What appears to be confusing to some is not confusion in the structure of Bultmann's own thought, then. This question just illuminates the limitation of the historical method, even in its best form. Yet the limitation serves a positive function for it clarifies the role of human freedom vis à vis God. The historian can never demonstrate, nor disprove, that a decisive act of God took place in the life of Jesus,70 but he can allow the early church's kerygmatic belief in the reality of such an act of God to challenge modern man existentially.71 In this case, the historian is not called upon to trace the hand of God in an event with the tools at his disposal, but merely to convey accurately and thus existentially what the ancient writer believed. Consequently, when the historian deals with the kerygma (in its various New Testament forms), he is not called

69. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology, pp. 60-85.
70. Ibid., pp. 61-62.
71. Ibid., pp. 36, 71; Rudolf Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, II, pp. 190-191.
upon to make a judgment regarding the truth or falsehood of its theological claims. His task is simply to interpret what the intention of that writer was, using his historisch and geschichtlich tools. Therefore, the intentions of Jesus and Paul, for example, must always be understood differently by the historian. Paul may make a kerygmatic claim concerning Jesus as the Christ and means of salvation, which it is not the historian’s job to verify or falsify. The historian’s proper task here is to interpret existentially Paul’s claim for Jesus as God’s act of salvation, which is decisive for human existence. This is the intention (or human self-understanding or Existenzverständnis) inherent in Paul’s kerygmatic writings.

Jesus himself, however, can be historically examined only as a human phenomenon with a human self-understanding (Existenzverständnis) contained in his message (and to some degrees his acts). Therefore, Professor Bultmann understands the kerygma to offer the means of salvation, which the historian can deal with helpfully for Christian theology and preaching via the geschichtlich method; whereas Jesus himself can never be historically understood (either by historisch or geschichtlich methods) as being the means of salvation.

III. Even if the geschichtlich method is of special value in interpreting and mediating the kerygma to the present, this method and the written kerygma are still not to be confused with the actual

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72. It could perhaps be argued that the one possible exception to the position stated above would be if a historian could critically demonstrate that Jesus had made a direct claim to be the decisive event of salvation. Then it might be maintained that the historian would not be obliged to verify or falsify such a claim by Jesus. Rather, in that case presumably the historian’s task would be to interpret such a claim as he now does the kerygma. However, Bultmann’s critical ‘canon of dissimilarity’ would seem to rule out this possibility from ever developing in sound historical research, because such a claim by Jesus would always have to be suspected of being church theology rather than an actual claim of Jesus of Nazareth.
event of salvation itself. Bultmann's hermeneutical canons may well serve revelation but the canons and the offer of God in the written kerygma are not the act of God itself. Therefore, if Bultmann's work regarding history and faith is to be understood correctly, one more category which he uses to express himself on history and its meaning must be examined. In English he calls this category the eschatological and in German he frequently refers to it with the adjective eschatologisch. 73

It has already been briefly noted that Bultmann believes that the New Testament kerygma contains the central message of the Bible, and if it is understood properly it offers man a new kind of existence. It is necessary now to take a somewhat more detailed look at the kerygma and its relationship to genuine (or authentic) historicity in human life; or "historical authenticity" in the most profound sense.

The kerygma claims that man is constantly losing his authentic existence. That is, man fails to gain the kind of existence which God intends for him because he is continuously trying to find security in the things and values of this world. This constant search for security in things apart from God engulfs man in an inauthentic form of existence which is described as sin in the New Testament. As man lives in this condition, he also is faced with the continual press of his unknown future upon him. When faced with such an uncertain future, man living apart from God, digs in more deeply and ever more frantically searches for some base of security within the world around him. The more frantically man searches, the more

engulfed he becomes in his inauthentic mode of existence. The tragedy of man's situation is that such inauthentic living can never provide him with either genuine security, or the gift of freedom toward his future and its possibilities. Bultmann gladly acknowledges that existential philosophy, and especially that of Heidegger, contains a similar analysis of man's situation. Yet secular philosophy fails to realise the true depth of man's inauthenticity and, therefore, it does not understand man's inability ever to take hold of his future in authentic living, no matter how fully he may understand his situation. Bultmann subsequently points out that the only way that man can ever be released from such inauthentic existence according to the New Testament kerygma, is by a redemptive act of God which has taken place in mankind's history and is now offered as a gift to individuals in the proclaimed New Testament kerygma itself. The kerygma claims to offer man's sole hope for freedom from his inauthentic past and for the possibilities of his unknown future.74

Yet how can this event of the ancient past, proclaimed in documents of long ago, actually change a man's existence today? It can only do so when it is grasped as a direct challenge to a man and a personal claim on his present life. This challenge and this claim call for the utter surrender of faith to the God who only can be encountered personally in response to the New Testament kerygma. Here Bultmann's interpretative canons are of great value in acting as the mediating bridge between the ancient past and the present moment. Still, this bridge is neither the past salvation event nor the present change of human existence. The geschichtlich canons may enable

74. Rudolf Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, pp. 17-41; Rudolf Bultmann, History and Eschatology, pp. 149-150.
the historical Christ event to come alive today, but these canons must never be confused with the salvation event itself, either in its past or present aspect. Indeed, confusion on this point has led some interpreters of Bultmann astray. In Bultmann’s understanding of the New Testament, the salvation event is only complete when the past salvation occurrence in Jesus Christ (which is witnessed to in the written kerygma of the New Testament) has been proclaimed and believed by an individual in the present moment. Only when the kerygma has been interpreted, proclaimed and responded to in faith, has the eschatological event fully and truly taken place. Thus, Bultmann’s hermeneutical canons serve the preacher interpretatively in his sermon preparation, and the preacher in turn acts as the vocal mediator of the past salvation event. Insofar as his sermon is kerygmatically based and translated by means of geschichtlich interpretation, it can become the word of God to present-day individuals in the present event of preaching. Yet one cannot properly speak of the eschatological event as complete until that word of God is personally received by an individual, the God of the gospel is trusted in, and a life is transformed from inauthentic to authentic existence in the moment of belief.75 Therefore, the preaching of the geschichtlich kerygma in the sermon, and the faith response of the believer, represent what might be called necessary canons of authentic historicity or "historical authenticity" at the eschatological (eschatologisch) level. Likewise, it has already been shown how this also may happen in personal wrestling

75. Rudolf Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, pp. 41-44; Rudolf Bultmann, Eschatology and History, pp. 151-152.
with life and a direct reading of the kerygma. Beyond this, it is not humanly possible to describe how the salvation event of the past changes a man's existence today. The dimension which cannot be described is the activity of God himself, hidden within the above described events.

But what is the character of this completed eschatological event that can be equated with authentic existence or "historical authenticity" at the eschatologisch level? The eschatological event brings an end to man's search for security. He no longer struggles and strains to find security in the things of this world apart from God. Consequently, it can be said that it is only in the eschatological event in the present moment that a person can claim his true historicity. Only as the eschatological event takes place within an individual's life does he become free from enslavement to his past and free for his future, as God's own future for his life.76 When this has taken place "historical authenticity" (or eschatological existence) has been reached in its most profound sense. This is not simply the kind of "historical authenticity" that comes by means of reconstructing objective past events on a historisch level. Nor is it merely another, unique self-understanding (Existenzverständnis) mediated to the living present by geschichtlich canons. Rather, this is the sort of "historical authenticity" wherein a person living today has found the ultimate meaning of, and actual experience of, genuine human historicity within the depths of his own personal existence. Hence, the level of the eschatologisch surely represents the

most profound level of "historical authenticity" in Bultmann's writings.

Yet two final points of clarification should be added. First, one might well ask why this past event of Jesus' life, and especially his death and resurrection, should be considered the sole and decisive event through which man may encounter the living God and gain authentic existence. Bultmann's answer is straightforward. He maintains that objectively it can never be demonstrated that this past event alone, proclaimed and believed in the present, is the "once for all" event of man's salvation. That it is so nevertheless can only be grasped in the faith of the believer where it is personally made known as such. It is only in the act of believing the kerygma and experiencing eschatological existence as "historical authenticity" or true personal historicity that one discovers the finality of the truth which has set him free. Secondly, it should be understood that when Professor Bultmann speaks of authentic existence (or "historical authenticity"), he never thinks of it as a static state. Even the man who has experienced the eschatological event, ever and again falls back into periods of inauthentic existence. Consequently, authentic existence (or "historical authenticity") is never a state of being which is finally won. It must be repeatedly renewed as a person hears the kerygma afresh and believes anew. It is of the very nature of man's true historicity that he cannot, as it were, hold it in his hand; but must be constantly deciding for it in every new moment as his future keeps coming upon him.


Thus far, then, we have reviewed Bultmann's canons of historical authenticity at three levels of historical understanding: the historisch, the geschichtlich and the eschatologisch. At each level Bultmann employs different canons and at each level 'historical authenticity' means something quite distinct.

Now it must be asked what Professors Bornkamm and Käsemann mean by historical authenticity and what canons they employ in constructing pictures of the historical Jesus? Moreover, where do they agree and disagree with Bultmann on the value of such constructions for Christian faith? While it is rare for two historians or theologians ever to agree entirely, Bornkamm and Käsemann are in such fundamental agreement concerning the matter at hand that it will be possible to treat their views together in contrast to their former teacher.

The views of Bornkamm and Käsemann are in perspicuous continuity with Bultmann's in many ways. They have learned much from their former teacher. Thus, these two scholars, along with a number of other currently influential German New Testament scholars, who were also formerly Bultmann's pupils, have frequently been referred to as "The Bultmann School". This title would not be possible if they did not all still hold a number of significant views in common. Yet the positions that Bornkamm and Käsemann hold in common with Bultmann have not kept them from developing important differences as well. Those similarities and differences must now be examined more closely.

I. Bornkamm and Käsemann, like Bultmann, stand within the tradition of German critical scholarship. Moreover, that tradition has been directly mediated to them through the specific form-critical work of their former teacher. Hence, in the first place, their work like Bultmann's shows a rejection of the use of special historical canons.
at the reconstructive level of New Testament research. While neither Bornkamm nor Käsemann has produced a form-critical study comparable to Bultmann's, their positions are discernible from their various statements and from the nature of their actual form-critical judgments within their several writings. Consequently, Bornkamm and Käsemann also refer to the critically reconstructed past as Historie and to the scientific fact-finding work of the historian as historisch la¬bour. As is the case with Bultmann, for Bornkamm and Käsemann, this aspect of history by itself has the qualities of pastness and distance from the personal lives of individuals living today.

At this historisch level of reconstruction, there are also can¬ons of historical authenticity for Bornkamm and Käsemann. Indeed, their critical canons are quite similar to Bultmann's and have been built directly upon the foundations which he has laid. These canons must now be discussed individually in order to focus the necessary attention on the similarities and differences involved.

1. Bornkamm and Käsemann agree with Bultmann on the primary impor¬tance and validity of the "canon of dissimilarity". However, they have understood it as a canon to be applied more generally, and not simply to the synoptic parabolic material.


81. It would seem that Bultmann actually did also, for in practice he eliminates material as inauthentic with regard to Jesus through¬out his work on this basis.
In fact, Kasemann's presentation of this canon has served as a broad methodological statement for all who would take up the present "quest for the historical Jesus." Kasemann has stated the criterion in the following manner: "In only one case do we have more or less safe ground under our feet: when there are no grounds either for deriving a tradition from Judaism or for ascribing it to primitive Christianity, and especially when Jewish Christianity has mitigated or modified the received tradition, as having found it too bold for its taste." Kasemann laments that this criterion is negative and that it will uncover only aspects of Jesus' life that are distinctive. Yet currently, with the paucity of our knowledge of the earliest stages of the primitive church, it is the best workable canon we possess. Hence, this canon, while having special value for reconstructing the authentic teachings of Jesus, can also be of value for analysing the synoptic narrative materials for the unique characteristics of Jesus' action. Bornkamm has well demonstrated this value in his book, Jesus of Nazareth.

2. Bornkamm and Kasemann also readily accept Bultmann's form-critical judgment that the forms of the gospel pericopae are primarily a guide to their Sitz im Leben in the early church. Neither scholar questions the creative and reshaping influence of the various sociological needs of the early church upon the pericopae as they circulated in the oral period.

83. Ibid., pp. 34-37.
84. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 79-81. Moreover, throughout this entire work Bornkamm employs this canon in judging both the synoptic sayings and activities of Jesus. The example of Jesus' activity cited above (pp. 79-81) is also an example of Jesus' uniqueness vis à vis Judaism, as (pp. 169-178) is an example of the use of the criterion to mark off Jesus from the church.
Indeed, as we have already seen, Kasemann's general endorsement of the "canon of dissimilarity" means that anything which can be attributed to church belief should not be considered primary, authentic Jesus' material.

Bornkamm modifies the use of this canon somewhat, however, when he notes that material which has been heavily imprinted with church influence because of some church need is not necessarily to be ruled out as being valueless for knowledge of the historical Jesus. For example, he says,

We should not, therefore, dismiss as mere fancy or invention what criticism might term 'inauthentic' and 'creations' by the church... Meanwhile we should ask ourselves whether the categories employed here really suit the case. Though one should not deny the part played by subjective experience and poetic imagination, the tradition which first grew out of the faith of the church is not to be dismissed by reason of its foundation and origin, as the mere product of imagination. It is an answer to Jesus' whole person and mission. It points beyond itself to him whom the church has encountered in his earthly form and who proves his presence to her as the resurrected and risen Lord. In every layer, therefore, and in each individual part, the tradition is witness to the reality of his history and the reality of his resurrection. Our task, then, is to search for the history (Geschichte) in the kerygma of the gospels and in this history to seek the kerygma.

By such a statement Bornkamm surely is maintaining that there is real value in the kerygma for the historical interpreter in his attempt to produce an authentic interpretation of Jesus. Yet he also appears to be arguing thereby for a critical historical authenticity of a secondary level. He maintains that the kerygmatically reshaped and created material of the synoptic tradition may indeed still be fruitfully analysed and used as a valid witness to both the essential characteristics and self-understanding of Jesus of Nazareth.

86. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 20-21.

87. Ibid., p. 11. This was further verified by the present writer in a personal interview with Professor Bornkamm at his home in Heidelberg on 9 May, 1972.
Therefore, the various sociological needs of the early church did not have the strongest, or even a basically distorting influence, in his opinion. Rather, an interpretative theological response to Jesus was the strongest influence upon the tradition, as it was adapted differently according to varying church needs. Just how this secondary level of authentic material is to be critically analysed and employed in historical reconstruction is not specifically discussed by Bornkamm, however. Apparently, this does not depend upon set critical canons but upon the general "critical insight" of the individual historian; and perhaps more importantly on his interpretative canons, as will be shown later. There can be no doubt, however, that this secondary level of historical reliability plays a very significant role in Bornkamm's reconstruction of Jesus. Moreover, Küsemann has recently shown clear agreement with Bornkamm on this matter. 88

It could be argued that Bultmann too openly uses material that may have been interwoven with the kerygma in his reconstruction of Jesus, for in the introduction of his book on Jesus he points out that he really uses the earliest layer of church tradition as his source for reconstructing his own picture. 89 Still there is an important difference here between Bornkamm and Bultmann, for Bultmann does not actually argue for the critical historical value of material that has already been combined with the kerygma in all strands of the synoptic tradition in the way in which Bornkamm does. He only maintains that the earliest layer of the tradition is the most authentic for reconstructing knowledge of Jesus. Hence, in this critical insight Bornkamm does go beyond Bultmann, and surely this is the factor behind a number of the vital differences in their respective portraits of Jesus. 88

89. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, pp. 13-14.
Jesus. It should be added that Bornkamm is not alone among historians in dealing with his sources thus, for other non-biblical historians frequently use 'inauthentic' sources in this manner in order to trace genuine reflections of an historical figure or event.90

Likewise, it should be noted that Käsemann points out in the case of the synoptic parables that a discovered Sitz im Leben der alten Kirche has not, and thus apparently need not, rule out a search for a Sitz im Leben Jesu. Unfortunately this discovery with regard to the parables has application with few other synoptic materials currently. Presently this is so because of the lack of detailed formal criteria for most non-parabolic synoptic materials that would enable historians to discern Jesus' own characteristics with any certainty. However, Bornkamm's use of this insight is evident in his treatment of Jesus' parables.91 Thus, even if this new use of form-criticism has only a limited application at present, at least Bornkamm and Käsemann have shown a willingness to use the form-critical method to push beyond a Sitz im Leben der alten Kirche where possible. This does mark a significant shift in attitude concerning the present and potential use of form-criticism on the part of Bultmann's pupils. Indeed, as more is known of the characteristics of Jesus, by means of other criteria, this revised "canon of the forms and Sitz im Leben" could play an increasingly important role.

These several historical insights all suggest a different notion of historical continuity between a founder and a movement than Bultmann would allow. Some New Testament historians, who are not directly of the "Bultmann School" have thus argued that Bultmann's pupils have broken through to a more profound grasp of the true nature of historical continuity than Bultmann himself. E. C. Colwell,

for example, has said, "To restrict the decisive period to the death—plus—resurrection is not only to clip off the 'wide' margins of sound periodization but also to deny any significant continuity. Moreover, it makes no use of the person of Jesus as the unifying force in the creation of the church." 92 In more explicit terms, this same scholar defines the position taken up by Bornkamm and Käsemann against Bultmann.

From the historian's point of view, this periodization seems undesirably sharp, the contrasts too extreme. Bultmann asks, if there was in the hearing of Jesus a demand for decision and the possibility of a new existence, why didn't the post-resurrection preachers just repeat this? This is an artificial question, in that it breaks the continuity of reality and after subdividing the saving event, demands a choice of one part or the other. One part led to the other part, the other was a modifying addition but did not exclude that one. 93

3. Bornkamm and Käsemann also do accept Bultmann's contentions with regard to the "canon of the forms and the growth of the tradition". For them, the growth of the literary gospel tradition (including the post-canonical tradition) demonstrates how the oral tradition must have developed and changed. This primary observation is reinforced, then, by the apparent growth patterns in other extra-biblical bodies of oral tradition. For the master and his pupils, however, these other oral traditions serve their main function for synoptic criticism by showing what the earliest form of a given unit of the tradition most probably was. This isolated primitive form serves as a norm, then, against which all three scholars make their various judgments of just how a given pericope has, in fact, developed. 94

93. Ibid., p. 32.
4. Bornkamm and Kasemann both appear to accept Bultmann's basic critical thought with regard to the historical analysis of miracle reports. For today's historian there can be no turning back from the working axiom of modern science concerning the closed causal nexus governing this world. The historian must surely operate with such an understanding in critically analysing his ancient biblical texts. No special supernaturalistic canons can be allowed for analysing this material.

Yet the biblical critic is bound to recognise that the authors of his texts did not see the world in this way. For them the world was a place where at any time or place an epiphany might occur. A miracle in this ancient view is an encounter with divinity and divine power, in which God (or one of the gods) attempts to reveal Himself (or themselves) to certain persons, and in various ways lay hold of their lives. However, for the ancient there was always the possibility of interpreting such experiences not as something merely extraordinary, but as the activity of the demonic rather than the divine. Only the person who was encountered could make the decision as to the source of his experience. No neutral observer could adequately pass judgment on the true origin of such experiences. In this way it required something like interpretative faith to discern the divine activity.

The New Testament critic must take both of these views of reality seriously in attempting to reconstruct the events of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. On the one hand he cannot treat the gospel miracle stories as objectively demonstrable divine interruptions of the closed causal nexus, but on the other hand he must make it clear that anyone is free to see the hand of God in such an event, which is also scientifically explicable (provided the event can otherwise be estab-
lished as probably authentic by other critical criteria). If the biblical historian fails so to understand his task, he will produce either a naive rationalistic or a naive supernaturlastic explanation.  

Käsemann summarises this position by saying,

Miracles in the New Testament are in their deepest essence signs accompanying the Gospel, a self-manifesta¬
tion in the sphere of our corporality of the God who ad-
dresses us; as such, they are intelligible only to the believer and do not remove the offence given to the un-
believer. In its own particular way, historical criti-
cism underlines this fact. By dissolving the historicity
of the majority of the Gospel miracle stories and by

demonstrating the questionable status of the remainder,
it forces us to acknowledge that in turn we are faced
primarily with the preaching of primitive Christianity —
the message of which is that in Jesus the divine love
has taken the field and showed itself to be a life-
giving power.

Thus we are now being asked to accept not the
breach of a law of nature, but the particularity of
God's revelation; and to allow our existence to be deter-
mined by that communication to us of divine love and
heavenly life which is thereby posited.  

In taking such a position Käsemann and Bornkamm appear to agree with Bultmann's critical canon, and yet they leave the door ajar for a somewhat different interpretation of miracle reports in the tradition. However, this difference with regard to interpretation will be dealt with more closely when their interpretative canons are examined.

5. Bornkamm and Käsemann are likewise in agreement with Bultmann in employing the "canon of the elimination of analogous material.

Wherever in the synoptic tradition the historian finds a striking formal and material parallel to materials found elsewhere in near eastern antiquity, he must suspect that that synoptic material has been borrowed from or modelled after such parallels. Therefore, any

such analogous material cannot serve as a reliable source for reconstructing the authentic historical characteristics or sayings of Jesus of Nazareth. 97

6. Another chief canon that is evident within the critical work of Bornkamm and Kasemann in their reconstruction of the historical Jesus, is their rejection along with Bultmann, of any attempt to trace the external and, therefore, the internal development of Jesus' historical life. Their critical reason for such a rejection is the same as Bultmann's. They too accept the form-critical conclusion that there is no reliable, detailed outline of Jesus' life to be found anywhere in the synoptic tradition. Rather, form-critical analysis has convinced them that the tradition was originally a number of isolated pericopae. Only the evangelists put the individual units together and each one did so according to his own theological interests. Thus, Bornkamm and Kasemann accept the "canon of the isolated pericopae" as well. 98

7. Likewise, Bornkamm and Kasemann are in the first instance at one with Bultmann in their use of the "canon of the argument from silence". Any reliable bit of historical information (of the first level of authenticity) must be discovered in the earliest form of the tradition. Later elaborations must, therefore, be distrusted as to their direct factual value and be treated as imaginative or interpretative accretions. 99 However, as has already been shown, Bornkamm maintains that these accretions may still be analysed fruitfully by the historian


for reliable historical impressions of a secondary level. Thus, again the methodological difference from Bultmann is perspicuous.

8. Professors Bornkamm and Käsemann also agree with Bultmann concerning the validity of his "canon of consistency". For there are features of the synoptic tradition which would be suspect as to their strict primitive reliability when tested by several of the foregoing critical canons, but which are not thereby necessarily ruled out as having some critical historical value as impressions or sketches of an aspect of Jesus' life or teaching (in the same way that a not entirely factual anecdote may be useful for giving valid insight into the character of a person). If this questionable feature from the tradition is affirmed to be nevertheless characteristic of Jesus in a general way, by being included in other texts which pass the testing of the "canon of dissimilarity", then that feature is deemed consistent with what is known of the historical Jesus and serves in creating a critically reliable portrait of him. In fact, Bornkamm and Käsemann make more use of this canon than Bultmann himself does in reconstructing a picture of the historical Jesus. 100

9. Bornkamm and Käsemann likewise accept Bultmann's canon of "internal coherence" for detecting and rejecting minor, later glosses that have been editorially added to an otherwise primitive pericope. 101

10. Finally, Bornkamm and Käsemann do also accept Bultmann's specific form of the "canon of multiple attestation". Like Bultmann they hold that a type of saying or characteristic of Jesus which is testified

100. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 67-69, 74-77, 79, 90, 130-131; Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, pp. 48-62; Ernst Käsemann, Jesus Means Freedom, p. 22, where these scholars apply this to the miracle tradition.

to in several forms within the oldest strand of the tradition; or testified to in the oldest strand as well as in later strands produced by the church, has a high probability of representing something characteristic from Jesus' actual life and/or teaching. It should be noted that this canon is often used with the "canon of consistency" by Bornkamm and Käsemann, and like that canon, they use it more frequently than Bultmann does. 102

II. Bornkamm and Käsemann likewise appear to agree with Bultmann that such historical explanations as can be categorized in general laws and tendencies, properly belong to the level of historisch reconstruction. Yet they have limited value apart from historical interpretation. What then, do Bornkamm and Käsemann mean by historical interpretation? 103

II. If Bornkamm and Käsemann both agree with and differ from Bultmann with regard to critical canons of historisch reconstruction, they do so also at the level of historical interpretation.

Like Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann often employ the German noun Geschichte and adjective geschichtlich to express a second level of history known through interpretation. For them as well, historical interpretation allows mere historisch information to become living or true history (Geschichte). 104 In this preliminary manner all

102. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 75ff., especially pp. 78, 85, 90-91; Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, p. 44; Ernst Käsemann, Jesus Means Freedom, pp. 17-42.

103. This can be seen by the way Käsemann refers to the enumeration of bare facts within a "causal nexus" as the realm of "mere history" or the historisch. Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, p. 20; cf. Ernst Käsemann, Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen, I p. 191; cf. Günther Bornkamm, What Can We Know About Jesus?, p. 86.

104. For their typical usage of Geschichte and geschichtlich see Günther Bornkamm, Jesus Von Nazareth (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag; 1957), pp. 14-33; Günther Bornkamm, "Geschichte und Glaube in Neuen Testament: Ein Beitrag zur Frage der 'historischen' Begründung
three scholars seem to be at one. However, when one asks about the exact nature of the interpretative canons of Bornkamm and Kasemann, and what value a geschichtlich interpretation of Jesus of Nazareth has for faith, one gets different answers from that which Bultmann would supply. Wherein are the similarities and differences?

Neither Bornkamm nor Kasemann has devoted extended discussions to the question of their hermeneutical canons in the way that Bultmann has. Perhaps this is because they are essentially exegetes while Bultmann also has a more reflective philosophical interest. In any case, as with their critical canons, one must glean their interpretative methodology from their several essays and from the manner in which they actually carry on their hermeneutical procedures.

It appears that Bornkamm and Kasemann agree with Bultmann on the validity of the canons of: 1. employing all the traditional philosophical criteria and then interpreting the whole of a historical text from its parts and the parts from the whole, 2. the specific interests of a given historian as the controlling factor in his historical questioning and in shaping his conclusions, 3. the necessity of a historian having a life-relationship to, and pre-understanding of a historical text and 4. the key significance of the historian's "existential openness" to "existential encounter" with the inherent self-understanding or understanding of human existence (Existenzverständnis) contained in his historical documents as the proper pre-understanding for all historical interpretation, but especially for theologischer Aussagen", Geschichte und Glaube (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1969), pp. 9-24; Günther Bornkamm, What Can We Know About Jesus?, p. 85; Ernst Kasemann, Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen, I, pp. 187-214; II, pp. 31-68.

On the face of it there appears to be strong agreement among all three scholars as to the correct interpretative canons.

If certain chief features of Bornkamm's book *Jesus of Nazareth* are examined, by way of example, the sort of agreement these scholars have reached can be further illustrated and illuminated. First, as has been noted, in dealing with the critical canon of "the isolated pericopae", Bornkamm and Kasemann agree with Bultmann that the critical evidence will not permit a reconstruction of the psychological development of Jesus. Thus, no attempt is made by Bornkamm to conjecture from Jesus’ *Umwelt* what he might have thought regarding his own status. Nor is there any attempt made to build a developing "messianic consciousness" theory upon such a conjectured foundation from the historically reliable evidence. Secondly, Bornkamm believes that it is equally impossible to establish any secure foundation for a "messianic consciousness" of Jesus from the synoptic pericopae wherein Jesus claims an exalted title, or one is ascribed to him by others. For in Bornkamm's and Kasemann's view, it is just such passages as these that cannot be judged authentic in a primary sense by the "canon of dissimilarity". These sayings must be suspected of an origin in the faith and kerygma of the early church. In both cases, then, Bultmann, Bornkamm and Kasemann all agree.

Therefore, all three scholars reject any historical-psychological attempt to plumb the mind of Jesus and thereby "scientifically" prove,
or seek to create a secure foundation for, the kerygmatic beliefs of the early church concerning Jesus' status. Such an attempt for Bornkamm and Käsemann would apparently amount to a seeking after an objective verification for faith in the realm of the historisch.

Fortunately, however, the proper critical canons themselves make this fatal theological error methodologically impossible. It is possible only to discover certain repeated themes that appear here and there amidst the authentic words and acts of Jesus. Hence, Bornkamm and Käsemann, like Bultmann before them, apply the canons of existential interpretation to the various isolated, reliable pericopae in order that Jesus' true self-understanding (Existenzverständnis) might emerge from the dead and distant past, and so encounter individuals today as living history (Geschichte). In all of this, Bultmann and his two former pupils do clearly share a common concern. They all desire to avoid the errors of historicism by means of existential interpretation.

However, if there appears to be entire agreement between these three scholars, it is an illusion, for Bornkamm and Käsemann do differ from their teacher on the exact meaning of "existential encounter", self-understanding and thus ultimately concerning a geschichtlich interpretation of Jesus. First, "existential encounter or openness" on the historian's part, in Bornkamm's and Käsemann's view, is a somewhat different phenomenon from what it is for Bultmann. "Existential encounter" for Bornkamm and Käsemann involves a living awareness on the part of the historical interpreter of all possible human intentions, and every dimension of a past self-understanding, which might be inherent within a historical event. Where a particular

philosophical analysis, such as Martin Heidegger's, can provide illumination, it is readily employed. Heidegger's teaching, by way of Bultmann, has proved especially useful to these scholars in their own efforts to avoid objectifications in historiography and in their understanding of the nature of faith. The concepts of man's life struggle for authentic historical existence in the light of his ever oncoming future and his enslavement nevertheless to his past, the world, and inauthentic existence are also useful to these scholars; but when they are used, they are rarely spoken of in precisely these terms. Where these insights into past events are employed, they are normally translated by Bornkamm and Käsemann into other less specifically existentialist terms. Moreover, Heidegger's existentialist analysis, via Bultmann, is not constitutive of all academic-historical or biblical interpretation for them. Where the critically reconstructed evidence appears to demand something other than, or in addition to, an existentialist interpretation, it receives such from Bornkamm and Käsemann. This specifically includes an explicit stress on any intention which a past historical figure may have had to live his own life out of transcendence or to understand his own existence as the eschatological crisis. Here a subtle but vital difference between Bultmann and his former pupils emerges, for traces of transcendence can never be directly unearthed within historical figures for Bultmann. For Bultmann, only later interpretative beliefs concerning such possibilities can be critically discovered and existentially interpreted. For Bultmann, any attempt to trace transcendent-

110. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, see especially pp. 60-63, 178, but also throughout this book openness to the totality of what can be known of Jesus' purpose through his words and action is apparent; Günther Bornkamm, What Can We Know About Jesus?, especially pp. 77-81; Ernst Käsemann, Jesus Means Freedom, especially pp. 24-41; Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, pp. 37-47.
ence (even indirectly) through the intention of a past figure, not only is actually impossible historically, but the attempt always leads to illusory and dangerous theological objectifications. 111 Bornkamm and Käsemann do agree with these limitations set by their teacher, but they maintain that in so tracing a historical figure's intention, the historian does not and cannot actually prove that that past figure lived out of transcendence or was the eschatological event (as Bultmann himself has shown). The historical method, therefore, can never create a secure, objective foundation for faith, because it cannot of itself detect the revelation of God. Yet for Bornkamm and Käsemann it surely can trace a historical figure's belief about the purpose of his own existence through the authentic evidence for his words and deeds (if the evidence is sufficient, of course) and should do so as fully as possible. This is what they maintain they are doing in their reconstructions of Jesus. 112 Here, then, are two similar but distinct views concerning the meaning of "existential openness" or "encounter", and thus also represent the point at which the limits of the interpretative historical method are actually reached. In short, Bornkamm and Käsemann see historical existence (especially with such a subject as Jesus) as too rich and many-sided to be restricted to an interpretation by means of any

111. Cf. pp. 41-45 above.

112. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 9, 15, 62-63; Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, pp. 46-47. Thus, the historian qua historian cannot actually demonstrate the "unmediated presence" (Unmittelbarkeit) of God in Jesus with his historisch or geschichtlich method; but the historian can show the nature of Jesus' beliefs about his own purpose and authority in his words and deeds, which in turn do appear to imply Jesus' belief that he was God's special agent in bringing the eschatological event. That this is what Bornkamm really means has been further clarified since the writing of Jesus of Nazareth in personal conversations with Professor Hugh Anderson. This, in turn, was shared with the present writer by Professor Anderson in a correspondence of 10 January, 1975.
single philosophical analysis or theological mould, no matter how generally superior and valuable the insights of these aids might often be.

What has been said with regard to 'existential openness' has its corresponding aspect in different conceptions of Jesus' self-understanding (Existenzverständnisse) in the works of Bultmann on the one hand, and his two pupils on the other. Bultmann's presentation of Jesus' self-understanding is one that has little to do with Jesus' own person or selfhood. Rather, in Bultmann's presentation the human self-understanding of Jesus is chiefly found and conveyed in a message about God's coming future (the Kingdom of God) and man's need for decision (both religious and ethical) against all forms of worldly security in the light of this fast-approaching future. In this presentation the Kingdom is still essentially future and Jesus is the eschatological prophet who announces the coming future and rabbi of an ethic of radical obedience. The focus is not placed upon Jesus' role but on his message. That message in turn, shows certain real affinities with Martin Heidegger's philosophy.113 Bornkamm and Kasemann, however, understand Jesus' self-understanding somewhat differently. They believe that the critical historical evidence points away from Jesus as simply the message bearer of a future reign of God. Instead, they see the evidence as more clear for a Kingdom that is already arriving with Jesus, and yet also future. Indeed, they do not slink past the present aspect of God's reign but give it a heavy emphasis. Likewise, they see the authentic evidence directing them toward an unparalleled ἑξουσία implied in Jesus' ethical teaching. Thus, they arrive at an interpretation of Jesus' self-understanding

in which his message (and actions) are bound up in an unseverable way with his person and only have meaning in that connection. Jesus does not directly point to his special status but to his mission. Yet that very mission points back to Jesus as the eschatological event. Here, then, Jesus' self-understanding is not so limited to an existentialist message concerning human existence for others, but also carries with it important Christological implications about Jesus' own person. Here traces of Heidegger may be found also but his strong influence is put aside if it is not adequate to interpret the full historical significance of the reliable gospel tradition, in Bornkamm's and Käsemann's view.114

These differences with Bultmann in the meaning of "existential openness" and "self-understanding" are paralleled by a somewhat different interpretation of the miracle reports of the synoptic tradition as well. As has been noted, at the critical level Bultmann and his pupils agree that a historian cannot accept any report of a divine interruption in the closed causal nexus without ceasing to be a scientific historian. They differ, however, at the interpretative level. Käsemann contends that even if the scientific historian cannot allow for divine intrusions in the natural order, that nevertheless as revelations to faith the gospel miracles speak everywhere of an event that did happen; at least in the particularity of a decisive revelation in Jesus' total existence. Hence, this "miraculous element" should not be interpretatively reduced to a mere belief of the believer. The synoptic tradition speaks of a reality within, and yet causally beyond, what can be critically discerned in the event of

Jesus' life; which must be recognised and adequately dealt with by historical interpretation. This is not to say the historical interpreter has some method in addition to the critical method for actually detecting the miraculous. But where it is so central to the apparent original meaning of his documents, the historian's interpretation ought to reflect not only that it was then a belief but what sort of reality was actually believed in, without limiting the nature of that belief by means of an existentialist (anthropological) interpretation. 115

Likewise, Bornkamm's treatment of the resurrection of Jesus is an instructive example of this interpretative process in practice. He agrees with Bultmann that the critical historian cannot establish a special intrusive act of God called Jesus' resurrection among the post-crucifixion events that gave rise to the church. Yet the historian can know, even through the often conflicting and fragmentary evidence of the gospels, that the entire New Testament church appears to have believed intensely in the reality of such an act of God which has led to the church's experience of the living Lord. For Bornkamm this belief is so central and constant in the New Testament documents that it must have some interpretative reference today beyond an anthropological interpretation of the disciples' faith. Yet Bornkamm's interpretation makes no attempt to demonstrate the miraculous element which cannot be detected with his critical method. He wishes only to give full play to the meaning of his texts. He does not wish to prove the unprovable (or even seem to do so with some critical or interpretative sleight-of-hand). 116


For both Bornkamm and Käsemann, then, "existential openness" means that the interpreter has to take the theological-miraculous dimensions of the gospel accounts just as seriously as the anthropological. This desire leads Bornkamm and Käsemann to agree with Bultmann on the historisch level, when dealing with such material; but to disagree at the geschichtlich level. Thus Bultmann's two pupils cannot demythologise in precisely the same way as Bultmann, for difficult as it is to speak of these theological dimensions of the miraculous element in the New Testament without falling into objectifications and uncritical literalism, the attempt must be made in their view.

What exact place, then, does the New Testament kerygma have for Bornkamm and Käsemann in reconstructing Jesus' life? For these scholars the kerygma was not a single form of proclamation in the early church but rather a variety of theological interpretations of Jesus that were expressed in the varieties of New Testament proclamation. Of course, there was also unity to the several kerygmatic forms because they all attempted to express the meaning of a single event, which they together held to be eschatologically decisive. Yet there was also a normal modification in the interpretative process from one situation to another (chronologically, geographically and sociologically). In this recognition of the kerygma as representing the earliest faith, and yet historical interpretations of Jesus, there is real significance for the historian working today. He is concerned to separate the historisch events from the earliest kerygmatic interpretations, but not in order to isolate them and thus play one off against the other (as had been attempted in liberal exegesis). Rather, Bornkamm and Käsemann see the historian's task as one of fully appreciating the earliest interpretations as a potential guide.
It had been Bultmann, himself, who really drew attention to the extremely close interweaving of kerygma and factual material in the synoptic tradition. For example, in the introduction to his book on Jesus he says,

"Of course, the doubt as to whether Jesus really existed is unfounded and not worth refutation. No sane person can doubt that Jesus stands as the founder behind the historical movement whose first distinct stage is represented by the oldest Palestinian community. But how far that community preserved an objectively true picture of him and his message is another question. For those whose interest is in the personality of Jesus, this situation is depressing or destructive, for our purpose it has no particular significance. It is precisely this complex of ideas in the oldest layer of the synoptic tradition which is the object of our consideration. It meets us as a fragment of tradition coming to us from the past, and in the examination of it we see the encounter with history. By the tradition Jesus is named as the bearer of the message; according to overwhelming probability he really was. Should it prove otherwise, that does not change in any way what is said in the record. I see then no objection to naming Jesus throughout as the speaker. Whoever prefers to put the name of 'Jesus' always in quotation marks and let it stand as an abbreviation for the historical phenomenon with which we are concerned is free to do so."

Here, in his own way, Bultmann demonstrated how form-criticism is faced with a question mark when it arrives at the earliest form of the synoptic tradition. How much of that primitive tradition is factual and how much is already kerygmatic interpretation? It is impossible to know since we have such a limited independent knowledge of Jesus on the one hand and the earliest Palestinian church on the other. However, in these circumstances Bultmann was willing to take the most primitive strand unearthed by historisch methods and interpret it existentially in order to allow the message of Jesus to live today.

Now Bornkamm and Käsemann agree with Bultmann concerning his basic insight into the extremely close interweaving of history and kerygma. Yet they apply the insight in another direction. For them, the interweaving of factual material and interpretation at every layer of the gospel tradition is itself the key to the solution of the problem. That is, if kerygmatic interpretations cling so closely to reports of real events throughout the entire tradition, then surely this indicates that the early interpretative beliefs which Jesus evoked are something that reflect rather than distort the essential and vital meaning of that event. This is why Bornkamm is concerned to seek history (Geschichte) amidst the kerygma and kerygma amidst the history. Those early kerygmatic statements must be taken seriously as containing Geschichte if we are ever properly to interpret the real Jesus for today. Indeed, the kerygmatic interpretations of the early church (even in the form of historicised myths) were their geschichtlich interpretations of Jesus' existence. 119

Once the earliest strands of the kerygma are appreciated in their true value, they may be employed by means of the existential canons as interpretative guides for presenting the reliable historisch evidence in a portrait of Jesus that will live and challenge modern man. In brief, existential interpretation for Bornkamm and Käsemann (but not strictly existentialist interpretation) makes use of the earliest kerygma not only as eschatological preaching but as a legitimate historical-interpretative guide to the fullness of Jesus' essential self-understanding. As the kerygma first interpreted the earthly events of Jesus' life in the gospels so does a kerygmatically

119. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 20-21; Günther Bornkamm, What Can We Know About Jesus?, pp. 81-82; Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, pp. 18-34, 45-47.
informed geschichtlich interpretation enable the historian to under-
stand his historisch information concerning Jesus in the present,
and so allow it to live for contemporary persons.

It must be remembered in all of this, that neither Bornkamm
nor Kasemann desires to prove the earliest kerygma true nor create
a foundation for faith by historical research; for as has already
been noted both scholars hold that however the kerygma is used, the
historian still does not have the tools to show whether the kerygma
is true or false. Whatever the historian may or may not establish
about Jesus' self-understanding he cannot show that he was in fact
the decisive revelation of God. Rather, the goal of these two
scholars (see especially pp. 65-69 above) is to avoid the possible
docetism that may be lurking in Bultmann's position; in that Bult-
mann is so convinced on a number of grounds (see pp. 41-45 above)
that the historian qua historian cannot trace God's revelation in
his historical reconstruction of Jesus, that Bultmann, in the view
of Bornkamm and Kasemann, actually presents a picture of Jesus of
Nazareth which has a rather problematic relationship to the Christ
of the kerygma. Bornkamm and Kasemann, therefore, set out to under-
stand more fully the nature of the continuity within the modification,
that took place between the event of Jesus and the first interpreta-
tions of that event in the kerygmata. This endeavour ought to serve
the theologian and the preacher, then, not as a false foundation for
faith, but as an illumination of the one who was already the church's
Lord before Easter and yet only fully came to be recognised as such
through the Easter experience. 120

120. Ernst Kasemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, pp. 45-47; Ernst
Kasemann, New Testament Questions Today, pp. 35-65; Günther Bornkamm,
Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 9, 15; Günther Bornkamm, What Can We Know About
Jesus?, pp. 82-86.
III. Bornkamm and Käsemann do not thus intend to depreciate the kerygma as the awakener of faith in persons living today. Indeed, they believe that it is only as the New Testament kerygma is preached and understood in its continuity with Jesus, with all its existential significance, that the true meaning of Jesus' history reaches individuals in our time. For it is this kerygma that thrusts a man into the decision of faith. Is Jesus of Nazareth the one through whom I gain my true life? Faith alone can answer that question and to faith alone comes the revelation of God's action in Jesus.  

In contrast to their understanding of Bultmann, however, these scholars refuse to limit the eschatological in any way that would tend to deny it either its past reference or its future fulfilment by an over-emphasis on the present moment. Indeed, the present moment in faith is a response to the eschatological event that emerged with historical particularity in Jesus' life and finds its fulfilment in his future.


SECTION II
If Professor Bultmann's historical method is to be properly compared and contrasted with the methods of Professors Bornkamm and Käsemann, it will now be necessary to examine these methods as they are actually applied to important representative sections of the synoptic gospels. The following section, then, will be set forth in three chapters.

First, the present writer has chosen to deal with certain representative texts and blocks of material which are considered "most authentic" on critical grounds by these scholars. These materials are also, therefore, central to their several presentations of Jesus as the eschatological proclaimer and teacher concerning God's will. The first of these chapters will deal with a number of those texts which Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann have found to be most representative of Jesus' actual message concerning the Kingdom of God. The second chapter will analyse "the antitheses" (Mt. 5: 21-48) of "The Sermon on The Mount" as representative of some of the most authentic material concerning Jesus' teaching about God's will and demand. After this examination of texts which are judged "most authentic", it will then be instructive to investigate some representative materials which also are central to an understanding of Jesus and his history; but are nevertheless in the judgment of these scholars, riddled with "vaticinia ex eventu" sayings of Jesus and mythological and legendary accretions. A chapter presenting an examination of the passion predictions and resurrection materials will serve this end. Thus, this section will serve the two-fold purpose of analysing representative types of material that call forth the use of all of the several critical and hermeneutical canons of these scholars, and also it will supply us with an overview of the most significant findings of these scholars concerning Jesus and his history.
The procedure in each chapter will be to set forth first the critical reasoning of Bultmann and then to proceed to a presentation of his interpretative judgments. This, in turn, will be followed by several general comments and critical observations by the present writer, which will be stated here in a preliminary manner (and which will be finally gathered up and carried further in the third and concluding section of this study). Likewise, the same basic procedure will be followed in examining the work of Bornkamm and Käsemann.
A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE CANONS OF HISTORICAL AUTHENTICITY USED BY RUDOLF BULTMANN, GÜNTER BORNKAMM AND ERNST KÄSEMANN IN ESTABLISHING THE EXOUSIA OF JESUS OF NAZARETH IN SELECTED KINGDOM OF GOD SAYINGS.
Mark's gospel opens the ministry of Jesus with the following words: (Mk. 1:14-15)¹

14 Μετὰ δὲ τὰ παραδοθήματα τοῦ Ἰωάννη ἤλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν κηρύσσων τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ λέγων ότι Πεπλήρωται διά κατηρα καὶ ηγικέν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ· μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ.

In discussing the origin of these words, Professor Bultmann maintains that the evangelist has here given his own summary of a number of the key sayings of Jesus. Bultmann makes this judgment because the Markan terminology shows the influence of the early church's missionary preaching. Nevertheless, Bultmann is prepared to suggest that Mark's summary is a fair characterisation of the essential content of the preaching of the historical figure, Jesus of Nazareth.² If this is so, then this Markan formulation raises further significant questions. How exactly did Jesus conceive of the Κράδια θεοῦ? How did he understand his own activity in relationship to this reality? Precisely how does Bultmann discern authentic historical information concerning Jesus' preaching on this theme from secondary church formulations and material borrowed from various contemporary sources? Finally, how does Bultmann interpret the authentic material he uncovers?

This discussion will attempt to answer the above questions by first examining texts which he sets forth as crucial to a historical understanding of Jesus and secondly by examining the interpretative conclusions which Bultmann has drawn from this material. Therefore, while the following discussion of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' teaching will not be a wholly exhaustive one, it should nevertheless be representative enough to provide accurate insights into Bultmann's positive historical procedures concerning the central theme of Jesus'


A Rudolf Bultmann's Critical Analysis of Representative Synoptic Texts

Professor Bultmann divides the dominical sayings into five categories or forms: the logia, the prophetic and apocalyptic sayings, the legal sayings and church rules, the "I" sayings, and the similitudes and similar forms. He also analyses certain other sayings of Jesus, which form the concluding focal point of synoptic narratives, under the category of the apophthegms. While the narrative settings of most of these apophthegms are deemed church creations by Bultmann because they appear to reflect conflicts and debates characteristic of church interests, the concluding sayings are sometimes judged primitive when they pass his "canon of dissimilarity". Bultmann does find some traces of reliable primary material among all of these several forms, but the most productive categories are the logia, the similitudes and especially the prophetic and apocalyptic sayings. Consequently, a brief description of these last named categories should serve as a useful general backdrop for understanding the majority of his following historical judgments.

The logia are sayings of the wisdom type such as might be found in Proverbs or the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach. A great number of the sayings which are attributed to Jesus in the synoptic gospels have parallels both in form and content in the proverbial wisdom of many nations, but especially within the body of Jewish wisdom literature. These parallels raise a serious question as to whether many of the synoptic logia originated with Jesus or elsewhere.

4. Ibid., pp. 11-68.
In light of this factor, Bultmann maintains that it is both possible and highly probable that the primitive Christian church placed many borrowed logia on the lips of Jesus. Consequently, very few of the logia are guaranteed as reliable words of Jesus. Generally speaking, only those logia which reflect a preaching of the coming Kingdom of God, a call to repentance, a demand for a changed heart, or a demand for non-resistance to evil and a love of enemies in place of hatred can be trusted as essentially authentic. These can be trusted because they reflect a material affinity with what Bultmann believes is otherwise known to be characteristic of Jesus’ message.\(^5\) Thus, with the wisdom type of sayings Bultmann chiefly employs his "canon of dissimilarity" in order to eliminate known parallels to Jesus’ teaching which can be found in contemporary Jewish sources and his "canon of consistency" in order to isolate sayings as probably genuine which may be paralleled in form in Jewish sources but are characteristic of the content of other sayings of Jesus which Bultmann has found to be reliable Jesus’ material (because of their unique eschatological or ethical flavor).

The "similitudes and similar forms" is Bultmann’s general category for the parabolic teaching of Jesus. Within this basic category he distinguishes between several further types. He, like most scholars (since Jülicher at least), distinguishes between simple figures (metaphors and similes), pure similitudes (a figurative saying expanded into a typical narrative) and proper parables (a further expansion wherein a particular example is presented and the past tense is employed). It is, of course, difficult to categorize certain borderline cases exactly, but it is usually clear which sub-type is the most suitable covering category. All of these parabolic teachings present

\(^5\) Ibid., pp. 69-108.
an analogy between some common experience (for a first-century Palestinian) and God, and aspect of His Kingdom, or a proper response of man to God’s rule. Critical analysis suggests that these teachings (like most of Jesus’ teachings) originally circulated orally as single units (or occasionally in pairs) and were only collected finally in various early Christian communities or by the synoptic editors themselves. Usually the introductory formulae also show signs of being the work of the evangelists. Likewise, other independent but somewhat similar sayings were sometimes blended with a primary similitude by the evangelists. These several factors often make it difficult for the interpreter today to be sure of the precise meaning of an original parable, although its broad meaning is usually discernible enough. Bultmann feels certain that allegorical features (which were common outside of Palestine) are due to later Christian interpretation by some community, and normally the specific interest of that community is clear as well. The fact that formal and material parallels have been discovered for certain similitudes makes Bultmann cautious about too quickly ascribing every synoptic parable to the historical Jesus. Bultmann notes that these parallels might have their causes in either community borrowing or Jesus’ own use of then familiar figures. Therefore, as has already been indicated in the first chapter, Bultmann can only feel really secure in ascribing a given similitude to Jesus wherein there is no trace of church influence and where Jesus’ typical eschatological interests stand in contrast to characteristic Jewish teachings on piety and morals.

Thus, Bultmann uses his "canon of dissimilarity" as his main standard for sorting out the truly authentic parables of Jesus. His

6. Ibid., pp. 166-205.
"canon of the isolated pericopae" is also used in order to isolate the original, independent parabolic units from their present synoptic contexts. Frequently, he will likewise question or eliminate given features of a similitude if secondary tendencies are suspected on the basis of his "two canons of the forms" and his "canon of internal coherence".

The prophetic and apocalyptic sayings are those which proclaim the coming Kingdom of God and call for repentance in light of its nearness. Bultmann holds that a number of these sayings must be Jesus' own, but here there is also the possibility that secondary sayings could have been placed on Jesus' lips by the primitive church. This is probable because the very appearance of Jesus as an eschatological prophet inspired others to "prophetic" activity in the early days of the church. Therefore, many sayings whose real history lay in this community prophetic activity could well have found their way into the tradition of Jesus' prophetic and apocalyptic sayings. Moreover, these community prophets were not above borrowing some of their material from contemporary Jewish oracles. This ostensible contamination (to the modern western mind) would not have seemed illegitimate to the primitive church because the additions would then have been believed to be entirely in harmony with Jesus' own prophetic ministry and thus could easily have been deemed actual utterances of the Risen Lord (spoken through the mouths of his living prophets). Hence, only where the historical critic can discern in sayings no previous history within Judaism, a lack of relation to the person of Jesus or the situation and interests of the early church, and where a specifically individual flavour is present, can he feel reasonably confident in attributing utterances to the historical
Jesus. So with the prophetic and apocalyptic sayings, Bultmann again chiefly employs his important "canon of dissimilarity" as his basic norm of historicity. This norm is also quite frequently undergirded with his other important "canons of the forms and the Sitz im Leben and the forms and the growth of the tradition" in order that a more precise source may be ascribed to any given saying.

What sort of figure was Jesus of Nazareth, then, in Bultmann's view? For Bultmann, there is no question that Jesus was a most extraordinary figure who appeared within the context of Palestinian Judaism in the early first century A.D. as an eschatological prophet and teacher of radical obedience to the will of God. Yet there were varieties of eschatological hope within the Judaism of that period and at least one figure who was a contemporary of Jesus' (that is John the Baptist) was surely an unusual eschatological prophet in his own right. It is essential, therefore, to understand those features which marked Jesus off from John and from all other contemporaries.

As with John, the dominant thrust of Jesus' message was the Reign of God (or Kingdom of God), and Professor Bultmann maintains that with such a central theme Jesus clearly stands within an already surging stream of expectation concerning the end of the present world conditions and God's new future. Still the hopes of the Jewish

7. Ibid., pp. 108-130.
8. Jesus' teaching on radical obedience will be the focus of the next chapter. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word; Rudolf Bultmann, Primitive Christianity, pp. 84-93, 102-110; Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, pp. 3-32.
people in Jesus' day can be divided into two broad types. The first category was especially determined by nationalistic hopes of a messianic king (a Son of David) who would bring God's Reign as salvation to Israel by destroying all her enemies and establishing a new world rule for her. However, this hope which was inspired by Old Testament passages played no real role in Jesus' preaching, contends Bultmann. Consequently he says, "No saying of Jesus mentions the Messiah-king who is to crush the enemies of the People, nor the lordship of Israel over the earth, nor the gathering of the twelve tribes, nor the joy that will be in the bounteous peace-blessed Land." Jesus' silence on this theme already sets him apart from a number of his contemporaries. Here Bultmann uses a form of his "canon of the argument from silence" and his "canon of dissimilarity" in order to gain a proper understanding of Jesus against his own historical background.

The second type of eschatological hope stood much closer to Jesus' actual preaching, Bultmann maintains. The apocalyptic literature of late Judaism spoke not of an historical upheaval in the political and social realms but rather of a divinely caused cosmic catastrophe which would completely end all the present conditions of this world. For the world was then thought to be under the influence of Satan's powers and it would require the supernatural activity of God to break Satan's hold on the world. When the world reached the end determined by God, there would occur a great tribulation and the final judgment of mankind by God's special agent, the Son of Man. Then the new aeon would begin with the faithful gathered into the glory of paradise. Jesus' message, as the historian is able to reconstruct it from the authentic evidence of the synoptic gospels,

11. Ibid.
clearly pre-supposes such a general apocalyptic picture, says Bultmann. Yet in one significant sense Jesus' message stands in marked contrast with these expectations. He avoids the fanciful speculations concerning the end time and calculations about God's time-schedule which were so characteristic of this mode of thought. In the few places where the synoptic tradition departs from this generally reserved tendency in reporting Jesus' teaching, Bultmann maintains that the church or an evangelist has introduced secondary features. Here Bultmann employs his "canons of the forms" in order to discern the most primitive tendencies in Jesus' recorded teaching and his "canon of dissimilarity" in order to detect probable accretions which the church borrowed from Jewish apocalyptic sources. Hence, Bultmann argues that Jesus himself was content with a few necessary apocalyptic details in presenting his eschatological message. 12

If Jesus shared a general apocalyptic outlook with a number of his contemporaries, the question still remains as to which features of his activities and message set him off as distinctive. At this point, it becomes especially useful to take a closer look at individual representative texts which Bultmann has found to be most primitive and so most likely to be representative of Jesus' own words and deeds.

I. Inbreaking of the Kingdom

1. Lk. 10:23f. (Mt. 13:16f.)

23 καὶ στραφεὶς πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἠκούσας, μακαρίου ἡ ἐκκλησία τῆς ἑλέων ἔλεης καὶ ἀληθείας γένεσιν. 24 λέγω γὰρ τοιούτῳ ὅτι πολλοὶ προφηταὶ καὶ βασιλεῖς θεόλογοι ἠκούσαν ἵδειν ἄνεμον ἀληθείας καὶ ὅπως εἴδαν, καὶ ἀκούσατε καὶ ἠκούσατε καὶ ὅπως ἠκούσατε.
Bultmann believes that the essential content of this saying as it appears in Luke is primitive and most likely has its origin in the words of Jesus himself. This is so because it is not paralleled in any known Jewish source, nor is it characteristic of the interests of the theology of the early church. Rather it has a distinctive eschatological spirit about it. Here Jesus' words do not point to his own person but to an acute consciousness of the inbreaking of the messianic age. The "canon of dissimilarity", therefore, is Bultmann's norm for determining the historical reliability of these words.  

Bultmann also argues for the more primitive nature of this saying as it appears in Luke's gospel because there it clearly refers only to the events of the messianic age, whereas in Matthew it seems rather to refer to the person of Jesus. Moreover, Matthew has deleted the reproof of the disciples in his Markan source (Mk. 4:13) and replaced it with a blessing upon the disciples for simply being auditors of Jesus' parables. Since both of these features (concern with the person of Jesus and a tendency to enhance the reputation of the apostles) are characteristic of the interests of the early church, the critical historian must assume that Matthew's version represents a later secondary reshaping of the most primitive tradition. Here the "canons of the forms and the Sitz im Leben and the forms and the growth of the tradition" are used in order to understand the specific church interests which influenced Matthew and how these interests caused the reshaping of the more primitive tradition (especially when comparative overall study has repeatedly shown these same tendencies at work throughout the gospel tradition, with increasing frequency in the later canonical and post-canonical gospel traditions, Bultmann maintains).

The "canon of the argument from silence" is also especially helpful and revealing in comparing the context of this saying in its earlier form in Mark with Matthew's later version. Finally, the "canon of the isolated pericopae" alerts Bultmann to watch for the varying ways redactors employed the same basic saying in order to suit their own individual, editorial needs. Thus the evidence here reaffirms the validity of this canon itself. 14

2. Lk. 12:54-56

54 Ἀλείγεν δὲ καὶ τοῖς ὄχλοις, ὦταν ἔστη [τὴν] νεφέλην ἀνατέλλουσαν ἐπὶ δυσμένην, ἐδόθης λέγετε ὅτι ὁμόροι ἐρχόταν, καὶ γίνεται οὕτως. 55 καὶ ὅταν ὅστου πνεύματα, λέγετε ὅτι Καθαρὰν ἔσται, καὶ γίνεται. 56 ὑποκριταί, τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος οἴδατε δοκιμάζετεν, τὸν καιρὸν δὲ τοῦτον πώς ὅσκ οἶδατε δοκιμάζετεν?

These verses represent Jesus' teaching concerning the decisive nature of the present time and thereby reflect an eschatological consciousness without parallel in Judaism. Likewise, they show no real traces of later church interests and have no reference to the person of Jesus. These considerations lead Bultmann to conclude that here too we are dealing with quite primitive material that makes most sense as having an original setting within the utterances of Jesus' own ministry. The "canon of dissimilarity" has again been employed and these words too pass muster as being authentic Jesus' material. 15

3. Lk. 17:20f.

20 Ἐπερώτηθεν δὲ ὅταν τὰς χαρισμάτων πότε ἐρχόταν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεκρίθην αὐτοῖς καὶ εἶπεν, ὅσκ ἐρχόταν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ παραπτάσεως. 21 εὐθείᾳ ἐροῦσιν, Ἴδος ὅσει ἦ, Ἐκεῖ ἴδος γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐντὸς ὅμων ἔστιν.

Bultmann maintains that the introductory wording in v. 20 shows a strong similarity to a species of Greek philosophic apophthegmata

15. Ibid., pp. 116, 126, 128.
and Luke's construction as a whole here is likewise Hellenistic in form. Moreover, the Pharisees are represented as the questioners, in spite of the fact that they had no particular interest in eschatological matters. Thus, in speaking of v. 20 (and several other similar examples) Bultmann says, "If we reflect on these examples, we see clearly that this is not a process confined to Palestine, but one which has affected the Hellenistic world, too, and there the historical relationships were no longer known, but Pharisees, Scribes, Sadducees and High Priests were all of them conceived as typical opponents of Jesus." Nevertheless, the dominical saying itself shows signs of being quite primitive. Unlike typical Jewish apocalyptic writings this saying dispenses with all human attempts to calculate the events of the end time and teaches that when the Kingdom comes suddenly, some miss it and go on calculating foolishly. It also lacks any reference to Jesus' person. Furthermore, close analysis suggests to Bultmann that these verses were not originally a single unit but rather a primitive saying of Jesus which was recast in the form of a scholastic dialogue in the Hellenistic church (perhaps by Luke himself).

In analysing these verses, Bultmann uses his "canon of dissimilarity" to establish the historical authenticity of the dominical saying itself. However, his canons of "the elimination of analogous material", "internal coherence", "isolated pericopae", and the "two canons of the forms" all contribute to showing how and why the scholastic dialogue form is really a secondary encasement.

16. Ibid., pp. 25, 53, 335.
17. Ibid., p. 53.
18. Ibid., pp. 54-55, 121, 125, 128.

In Bultmann's view these verses are simply a variant of Lk. 17:21f. The only real difference between them is that here the Son of Man is spoken of rather than the Reign of God. Although Luke understands the Son of Man to be Jesus, (as one can see from the Lukan context) the saying itself does not make this reference. Likewise, there is here the same rejection of apocalyptic calculation as in Lk. 17:21f. Consequently, the "canon of dissimilarity" indicates that this saying is primary and in essence probably goes back to Jesus himself. 19

5. Lk. 6:20f. // Mt. 5:3-9

Here Jesus pronounces a blessing and encouragement upon those who genuinely desire the Reign of God. Luke's version is simpler and thus more primitive than Matthew's. Bultmann believes: in spite of the fact that Matthew follows the usual third-person formulation and Luke editorially employs the second (probably in order to match vv. 22f, where the second person apparently already stood in the tradition). The primitive nature of these three beatitudes is guaranteed by their eschatological content and their lack of colouring by church interest or theology. This is especially clear when these beatitudes are contrasted with vv. 22f. where more detailed grounds

19. Ibid., pp. 122, 125, 152.
of blessedness are combined with traces of the ex eventu experience of the early church, and references to the person of Jesus.

Here Bultmann employs his "canons of the forms and the Sitz im Leben and the forms and the growth of the tradition" in order to discern the most primitive form of the beatitudes from secondary formulations, and again his important "canon of dissimilarity" is his norm for judging the three most primitive beatitudes probable Jesus material.

I. Interpretative Summary

According to Professor Bultmann, in these representative texts the distinctive newness of Jesus' message is clearly to be found. While John the Baptiser also proclaimed that the Reign of God was at hand and that its nearness required repentance from even the most religious of Jews, he apparently did not understand his own prophetic activity in precisely the same way as Jesus understood his ministry. For Jesus, his own ministry represented the proleptic sign of the coming Kingdom. This is why Bultmann sometimes says that Jesus spoke of the Reign of God as still impending and yet at other times (somewhat confusingly) speaks of Jesus' consciousness of the dawn or inbreaking (Anbruch) of the Kingdom with his own activity. In both cases Bultmann holds that Jesus' "mission-consciousness" is properly to be found in such texts as the ones we have just examined above, and in all of these texts a single note concerning the decisive eschatological significance of the present moment is struck. Additionally, Bultmann argues that one cannot seriously doubt that Jesus did appear in such a role as is reflected in these verses, for the origin of the church itself is too completely tied-up with its consciousness of the certain and imminent end of all history. This fundamental

church consciousness, Bultmann concludes, surely cannot itself be a later community product but rather must be the historical source of the community. The movement which Jesus evoked and his resulting crucifixion surely indicate that he did appear in the role of the decisive eschatological prophet. 21

If such a decisive consciousness can be assigned to Jesus with a quite high degree of historical probability, a significant question remains as to why, and more precisely how, Jesus thought of his own activity in this way. What specifically was there about the activity of Jesus that commended it alone as "the sign" of the dawn of the 

Δισσιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ?

Bultmann believes that it is possible to find some sound historical evidence of Jesus' thoughts on these matters as well. Consequently, we shall next examine Bultmann's historical reasoning concerning several key texts wherein he discovers the precise nature and the grounds of Jesus' eschatological consciousness.

II. The Nature and Bases of Jesus' Eschatological Consciousness

1. Mk. 8:11f.

11 Καὶ ἔξηλθεν οἱ φαρισαῖοι καὶ ἠρέματο συνηθεῖν αὐτόν, ἤφησάν τε ἄνευ σμηνόν ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, περιβάλλοντες αὐτόν. 12 καὶ ἀναστηνάξας τὴν πνεύματος αὐτοῦ λέγει, Τί ἡ γενέα αὕτη ζητεῖ σμηνόν; ἄμην λέγω ὅμως, εἰ δοκήσεται τῇ γενέᾳ ταῦτα σμηνόν...

Bultmann believes that the use of the Pharisees in v. 11 must be considered a typical secondary device to launch the saying of Jesus in v. 12b. Nevertheless, the saying itself reflects the situation precipitated by the ministry of Jesus, shows a characteristic indi-

individual spirit and reflects no church interest nor actual reference to the person of Jesus. Hence, Bultmann thinks that the essential content of this saying must be characteristic of the historical Jesus.

The "canons of the forms" isolate the setting here as a typical secondary one. The "canon of dissimilarity" indicates that the saying itself is surely not a church creation, however, and could possibly fit into the unique situation of Jesus' ministry (in contrast to Judaism). Finally, the "canon of consistency" is employed in order to accept the saying as fully in harmony with other sayings of Jesus that have clearly met all the standards of the "canon of dissimilarity".

2. Mt. 11:5-6/Lk. 7:22-23

This utterance concerning Jesus' ministry is set within an apophthegm (Mt. 11:2-6//Lk. 7:18-23) and Bultmann judges the narrative setting (the Baptist's question) a community product wherein John is typically used as a witness for Jesus' messiahship. Bultmann has several supporting reasons for this judgment. First, nothing is said of John's reaction to Jesus' answer, as one would expect in an authentic historical account. Second, if the saying is really an answer to John's question, then Jesus is making an appeal to his miracles as a proof. However, Bultmann believes that it is evident, "that the saying is intended simply to take the colours of (Second) Isaiah and use them to paint a picture of the final blessedness which Jesus believes is now beginning, without any need to relate particular

statements with particular events that have already happened." So Bultmann maintains that what probably happened historically was that the disciples of John denied the messianic character of miracles of Jesus, and Jesus' followers replied by claiming that messianic prophecy was indeed fulfilled in Jesus' ἀργα. Therefore, the narrative setting most likely has its history in the life and interests of the church, but the saying itself is of an earlier origin.

Bultmann judges that the utterance of Jesus (vv.5-6) must be a unity, however, because the description in v. 5 has no real point of its own. While these verses do clearly refer to Jesus in some sense, they are most probably authentic Jesus' material none the less because of their distinctive eschatological content, (in contrast to Judaism) and because the reference here is not to Jesus' person, nor even to the messianic character of his activity (see above), but rather to his prophetic preaching concerning the inbreaking Reign of God.

Here Bultmann uses his "two canons of the forms" and his "canon of internal coherence" in order to discern that the narrative setting of this apophthegm is likely not as primitive as the eschatological utterance of Jesus. Likewise, these canons assure him that vv. 5 and 6 are a more primitive, independent unit. Finally, the "canon of dissimilarity" supplies the standard by which vv. 5 and 6 are deemed probably Jesus material.

3. Mt. 12:28/Lk. 11:20


23. Ibid., p. 23.
25. Ibid., pp. 110, 126, 128, 129, 151.
The context of this saying as it appears in Q is surely historically inaccurate, Bultmann contends, because if Mt. 12:27/Lk. 11:19 did originally precede Mt. 12:28/Lk. 11:20, then Jesus would have been maintaining that other Jewish exorcisms equally demonstrated the coming of the Kingdom (which position is not supported by other reasonably reliable sayings of Jesus). Hence, Mt. 12:28/Lk. 11:20 must have been an independent saying in the most primitive stage of the tradition and only later been linked to other sayings concerning the coming of the Kingdom (perhaps even before Q was composed). Nevertheless, the saying itself is one that can claim the highest degree of authenticity as original Jesus' material, because it is unparalleled in Jewish sources, does not show church influence, and it reflects just the sort of unique eschatological consciousness which elsewhere has been shown to be characteristic of Jesus. It should also be noted that this saying does point to the works of Jesus as indicative of the fact that the Kingdom is dawning. 26

Here Bultmann uses his "canons of internal coherence and isolated pericopae" in order to detect that Mt. 12:27 and 28 (and parallels in Lk.) were not originally a single unit. He also uses his "canon of dissimilarity" to discern that Mt. 12:28/Lk. 11:20 is certainly authentic Jesus material.

4. Mk. 3:27

27 ἀλλ' οὐ ἔδωκατι ὀδός εἰς τὴν οἰκτίαν τοῦ ἱσχυροῦ εἰσελθὼν τῇ σκέψει αὐτοῦ διαπέφαγεν ἑαυτῷ μὴ πρῶτον τὴν ἱσχύραν δήσῃ, καὶ τότε τὴν οἰκτίαν αὐτοῦ διαπέφαγεν.

The form of this saying is that of the Jewish Mashal. Yet in spite of the fact that mashalim commonly circulated as independent

26. Ibid., pp. 14, 162.
units, the Markan context of this saying seems essentially correct, for its meaning surely does have to do with a consciousness of eschatological exaltation at the defeat of Satan. Bultmann, therefore, judges that the content of this saying could not derive from church theology nor other contemporary Jewish sources. So the "canon of dissimilarity" and the "canon of internal coherence" indicate that it must be attributed to Jesus himself.  

5. Mk. 8:38

Bultmann believes that this verse stands in marked contrast to those verses which identify Jesus as the Son of Man or Messiah. Here no church interests are to be found for Jesus does not identify himself with the coming Son of Man. Rather, the same prophetic self-consciousness emerges which can be seen in other authentic sayings of Jesus. Moreover, sayings of this sort (content-wise) are to be found in several places in the synoptic tradition. Thus, this primitive saying could and likely does go back to Jesus himself.  

Here Bultmann uses his "canon of dissimilarity" to discern that this saying surely belongs to the primary tradition and could very well be authentic Jesus material. This possibility is further reinforced by Bultmann's "canon of multiple attestation" and his "canon of consistency."

II. Interpretative Summary

Bultmann believes that Mk. 8:11f. (and similar texts) indicate

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27. Ibid., pp. 75, 81, 98, 105, 168f.

that the Jesus of history rejected pressures placed upon him to validate his own activity and mission by means of spectacular miraculous works. He was not interested in attempting to prove that the eschatological, mission-consciousness implicit in his preaching was correct and that he, therefore, was entitled to a certain title or status. "God does not expose his doings to tangible criteria. They cannot be discovered by calculation, however ingenious, but only by an inner receptivity for Jesus' words and works. He himself, his appearance on the stage of history, his words and his deeds--they are the signs of the times." 29 Yet Mt. 11:5 shows that the total ministry of Jesus was surely an indication to his own mind that the important prophecies of scripture concerning the events of the end time were actually beginning to take place in his activity. Likewise, Mt. 12:28 and Mk. 3:27 show that Jesus specifically believed that his exorcisms and healings represented the breaking of the power of Satan as the apocalyptic writers had predicted. These texts, therefore, are indications of the significant bases of Jesus' eschatological consciousness. In fact, Jesus was seemingly so confident of his unique role that he could publicly declare that when God's special agent (the Son of Man) came, he would specifically judge men by their response to Jesus' present ministry (Mk. 8:38 and similar texts). These few representative texts, then, do tell us a great deal concerning both the precise nature of Jesus' eschatological consciousness and its chief bases within his own mind. It should be noted, however, that Bultmann here says nothing psychologically conjectural about Jesus' "self-consciousness" or its development. He limits himself to what he can learn from

those specific texts which his critical canons will allow as most authentic. Still it is quite wrong to think that Bultmann completely rejects the notion that a historian may probe into the mind of the historical Jesus. He only rejects the idea that a historian is able to trace Jesus' mental processes or development (because of the canon of the "isolated pericopae") or discern an actual "Messianic consciousness" within Jesus (because of his critical "canon of dissimilarity") and that even if a historian could detect such a "Messianic self-consciousness", that historical fact would still not eliminate a potential believer's personal decision of faith as to whether Jesus truly was and is God's Messiah and decisive means of salvation. What Bultmann sees as truly important in Jesus' "mission-consciousness" is that it led to a situation where men were thrust into the crisis of an ultimate decision before God as we shall see shortly in more detail.30

III. The Kingdom as "Wholly Other" Deliverances

1. Mk. 4:26-29

26 Ἠλεγεν γάρ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ θελείᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ ὡς ἄνθρωπος θαλῆ τὸν στόχον ἐπὶ τῇ γῇ, 27 καὶ καθιένθη καὶ ἐγείρθη νῦν καὶ ἐγέρθην, καὶ ὁ στόχος ἐλαττώθη καὶ μηκούρπας ὡς ὁ ὁδὲ οἶδεν ἀλήθεια. 28 αὐτομάτη ἡ γῆ καρποφόρη, πρώτον χρόνον, εἶτεν σταύρον, εἶτεν πλήρη γίτου ἐν τῷ στάχυ. 29 ὅταν δὲ παραστῇ ἡ καρπὸς, εἴδοτα ἀποστέλλει τὸ δρέπανον, ὅτι παρέστηκεν ὁ θερισμός.

In v. 26a the introductory words ὁτὲς ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ are deemed likely secondary material by Bultmann. He gives two reasons for reaching such a conclusion. First, he thinks it is diffi-

cult to relate this similitude to the Kingdom of God in Jesus’ teaching. This is apparently so because he doubts that Jesus’ authentic sayings (as a whole) reflect an understanding of the Kingdom as a human community which will grow. Secondly, it is formally similar to a number of other introductory formulae which he has already judged secondary. The similitude itself (v. 26b-29), however, is judged more primitive by Bultmann. Still, it could have been borrowed from a Jewish source by the Aramaic speaking church rather than having had its source in Jesus’ authentic teaching because there is some evidence extant of possible parallel Jewish material. Nevertheless, in his interpretative writings on the teachings of Jesus, Bultmann does accept this parable as characteristic enough of Jesus’ message concerning the Kingdom to treat it as authentic.\(^{31}\)

Hence, Bultmann seriously doubts the historical authenticity of the introductory formula here, because he believes it fails to satisfy his "canon of internal coherence" and his "canon of the forms and growth" reveal that such formulae are otherwise characteristic secondary features of the tradition. Moreover, there is some question as to the true source of this similitude because of the strict application of the "canon of dissimilarity". Yet finally Bultmann feels free to accept it as characteristic of Jesus on the basis of his "canon of consistency", because its content does fit with otherwise established sayings of Jesus.

### III. Interpretative Summary

The meaning of this parable is to be found in the key words αὐτομάτη ἡ γῆ καρποφορεῖ. With these words Jesus rejected the view

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that man could in any way bring the Kingdom into existence or control its coming by his own activity (whether militarily and politically as the Zealots thought or by penitential exercises and ethical behaviour as the Pharisees believed). The Kingdom that dawns with Jesus' ministry is like the miraculous (to the ancient mind) growth and ripening of a seed. (A similar parable recorded in I Clement 23 shows this when it is placed beside Jesus' parable.) Indeed, it is God's supreme miracle and must not, therefore, be classified as even the "highest value"; for such a value would still be considered the pinnacle of what men determine as good, and this does not catch the vast distance which separates the Reign of God from every human value. Rather, the Kingdom is a radical eschatological concept and reality which stands in marked contrast to all such relative values. Thus the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ as Jesus proclaimed it is a "wholly other" deliverance, given supernaturally by God. This is the meaning of αὐτοῦ in this context.32

IV. The Call to Repentance and Decision

1. Lk. 11:31ff. // Mt. 12:41-42

The above verses were originally independent of the context in which they stood in Q, says Bultmann (that is, Lk. 11:29-30 was originally a separate pericope). No doubt the two pericopae were joined

in Q because of the references to Jonah in each and in combination Jesus appears to proclaim himself as the church was then doing. Matthew even strengthens this already existing Q association and makes the reference to Jesus' person stronger by placing upon Jesus' lips a prediction of the later experience of the church. If, however, Lk. 11:31-32 is again isolated from this Q context by the historical critic, it becomes clear that this saying itself contains no actual reference to Jesus' person nor does it reflect other church interests but was originally a minatory saying spoken against the Jews of Jesus' generation who failed to discern the decisive nature of Jesus' ministry. Thus, the words πλευτων ὀδε originally referred only to the message of Jesus. Likewise, the unique immediacy of the eschatological consciousness seen in this saying rules out the possibility that its origin can be found in Judaism. Hence, the content of Lk. 11:31-32 (considered by itself) must be considered authentic Jesus' material. 33

The "canon of the forms and the Sitz im Leben" and the "canon of the isolated pericopae" enable Bultmann to understand the motives and process by which Lk. 11:29-30 and Lk. 11:31-32 were merged by the early church. These canons also give him the tools to reverse the process as a historical critic and thereby recover the original setting of vv. 31-32. The "canon of dissimilarity" in turn assures that vv. 31-32 must have come from Jesus himself in the first instance.

2. Lk. 9:62

επευ δε Ἰησοῦς ὤριζεν καὶ ἑλέων τὰ δύο των εὐθείας οὕτων ἐστιν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ.

This logion is accepted as authentic Jesus material, because it contains something which is new and unlike Jewish wisdom and piety. It does not show traces of scribal, rabbinic or apocalyptic influence. Rather, it is prophetic and calls for repentance. Consequently, it fits well with other authentic sayings of Jesus. Finally, it shows no particular church interests or theology. Therefore, by use of his "canon of dissimilarity" Bultmann again isolates an authentic saying of Jesus.

3. Mk. 10:23b, 25

23b Πᾶς δυσκόλως οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἐχοντες εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελθονταί.
25 εὐκοπτάρισθαι καὶ κάλυπλον διὰ τρυμαλίας σφίδας διελθέντα καὶ πλοῦτον εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελθέντα.

It is clear to Bultmann that Mk. 10:23-27 has been added to the apophthegm of "the rich young man" (Mk. 10:17-22) because literary analysis of this section of Mark's gospel reveals the generalised editorial links in 23a, 24 (vv. 26, 27a are likewise editorial and serve the purpose of introducing the new saying in 27b). However, this same analysis indicates that vv. 23b and 25 are more primitive. These verses are accepted as characteristic of the historical Jesus because they show no church influence, they reach beyond anything known in Jewish sources and reflect the distinctive eschatological consciousness which otherwise has been shown to be characteristic of Jesus.

Here the "canon of the isolated pericopae" is employed in order to separate the original primitive material from later accretions.

34. Ibid., pp. 74, 81, 105, 119.
35. Ibid., pp. 75, 81, 105, 117, 329.
and the "canon of dissimilarity" is used in order to determine that the more primitive saying may confidently be ascribed to Jesus himself.

4. Lk. 14:28-32

Bultmann believes that v. 33 must be secondary because it is meant as an application of the point of these similitudes but fails. The point of the parables has to do with self-examination before an undertaking but the application speaks rather of sacrifice of possessions. Even if the exact nature of such self-examination is not entirely clear, the redactor here has missed the point. There is no particular reason to question the authenticity of the parables themselves, however, as they are not properly paralleled by known Jewish sources nor do they show church influence. Moreover, they fit well with Jesus' consciousness of an eschatological crisis which demands a decision. Therefore, they are most likely Jesus' own parables. 36

Here the "canon of internal coherence" is used to eliminate the application as secondary, and the "canons of dissimilarity and consistency" assure that parables are probable words of Jesus.

36. Ibid., pp. 170f., 199f.
Bultmann contends that the introductory words Πάλιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν ὄφρων in v. 45 are probably not as primitive as the following similitude, since Matthew uses the same formula to introduce the parable of the fish net which has a different theme. If the formula in v. 45 is secondary, then these two similar parables originally circulated as separate units and were only joined here by the editor of Matthew's gospel. 37

Whether the parable concerning treasure is to be considered reliable Jesus material is questionable, as this theme is paralleled in a known Jewish source. However, there is no evidence of church influence here, and the point of both parables fits well with Jesus' other teaching. Thus, Bultmann accepts both parables as characteristic enough of Jesus' message to be treated as his own. 38

Here the "canons of the forms and growth of the tradition and the isolated pericopae" enable Bultmann to say that each similitude was a unit unto itself in the oral stage of the tradition. The "canon of dissimilarity" assures that the parable of the hidden treasure did not originate in the church but raises a question as to whether it might have a Jewish origin. Nevertheless, Bultmann finally accepts it as belonging to Jesus because it satisfies his "canon of consistency" (and especially since the "canon of dissimilarity" does not 37. Ibid., p. 173.

IV. Interpretative Summary

Bultmann maintains that since Jesus was so vividly aware of his own vocation as the proclaimer of God's in-breaking Kingdom, it is not surprising that a chief mark of his preaching should have been a call for repentance and decision. Jesus typically spoke of the urgency of making a positive decision for God's Reign in the present moment, for by such a decision a person would be ultimately judged (i.e., Lk. 11:31f. and as has previously been noted Mt. 11:6 and Mk. 8:28). This could obviously not be a casual or wavering decision. Therefore, it must not only be a positive decision, it must also be a radical (either/or) decision wherein the whole man wills one thing and so consistently acts upon it (Lk. 9:62, Lk. 14:28-32). A man must value the Kingdom above all else and be willing to make any sacrifice for it. One must desire God and His Rule rather than succumb to the corrupting influence of the transitory things in this world (Mk. 10: 23b, 25). Still Jesus was not a teacher of asceticism. He taught that life's most important meaning is to be found in a total readiness to do God's Will (as we shall see more fully in the next chapter). Consequently, Bultmann believes that Jesus understood man's will as his essential aspect, for it is the will of man by which one determines and acts freely. It is the will which either gives man's whole existence meaning or renders it meaningless. So man is not a dual being wherein "spirit" and "flesh" war with each other but a unitary being whose decisions constitute the direction of his existence for good or evil. This emphasis on decision also shows that Jesus did not teach the liberal, humanistic doctrine that man possessed something divine within himself and thus had an innate, natu-
ral claim on God and His Kingdom. On a man's decisions everything of ultimate significance depends.39

V. The Relation of Future and Present

1. Mk. 4:30-32 or Mt. 13:31-32/Lk. 13:18-19

30 Καὶ ἐλεγεν, Ἡ ἐν τίνι αὐτὴν παραβολὴ θὰμεν; 31 ὃς κάκκῳ σινάστενε, ὅσ ὦταν σπαρῇ ἐν τῇ γῆ, μικρὸτερον ὁν πᾶσι τῶν σπερμάτων τῶν ἐν τῇ γῆ, 32 Καὶ ὦταν σπαρῇ, ἀναβάσθει καὶ γίνεται μείζον πάντων τῶν λαχών, καὶ ποιεῖ κλάδους μεγάλους, ὡστε δύνασθαι ἄπε τὴν σκιάν αὐτοῦ ἐν πετεινᾷ τοῦ ὀδρανοῦ κατασκηνοῦν.

A comparison of the three synoptic texts of this similitude indicates to Bultmann that Luke essentially reproduces the Q version of the parable while Matthew combines Q with Mark's version. The parable is accepted as Jesus' material by Bultmann because it passes the standards of his "canon of dissimilarity."40

2. Mt. 6:10

10 ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου, γεννήσω τὸ θέλημα σου, ὡς ἐν ὀδρανῷ καὶ ἐν γῇ.

Lk. 11:2b

2b ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου

Bultmann believes that the synoptic contexts in which the "Lord's Prayer" now appears are largely secondary formulations of the early church, wherein the church is especially conscious of her peculiar piety in contrast to that of Judaism. Moreover, John the Baptist's disciples apparently possessed a specific prayer which they claimed was given to them by their master. Therefore, by the standards of the "canon of dissimilarity" it is quite possible that the "Lord's Prayer" was created by the church or that its essential content was


borrowed from contemporary Jewish sources. Nevertheless, specific church theology is not present within the prayer, and its content could well fit with other known teachings of Jesus. Thus Bultmann, by means of his "canon of consistency" accepts the content of the above words as probably characteristic of Jesus himself.\textsuperscript{41}

V. Interpretative Summary

While the stress of Mk. 4:30-32 is clearly on the decisive significance of the present moment, (that is the time of Jesus' ministry) the parable does indicate that this ostensibly small beginning will produce an unexpectedly great consummation. So it would seem that while Jesus' main emphasis was upon the importance of the right decision in the present, he clearly believed that the Kingdom had not properly arrived with his activity but was in some sense still coming.\textsuperscript{42} As we have seen, this note is to be found in other reliable sayings of Jesus as well (i.e., Mk. 8:38, Lk. 11:31f., etc.). Additionally, this same emphasis would seem to be confirmed by the eschatological petitions (or petition?) in the prayer of Jesus' disciples.\textsuperscript{43} Therefore, two significant questions are set before the historian: Precisely how did Jesus conceive of the relationship between the present time of his ministry and the future coming of the Kingdom? How can one properly understand his total message concerning that Kingdom today?

We have seen already that the Jesus of history, insofar as the historian may come to know him from the authentic evidence that passes his strict critical canons, was a man who possessed a keen and unusual

\textsuperscript{41} Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, pp. 132f., 146, 149, 324; Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, pp. 42, 155f., 180.


\textsuperscript{43} Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, p. 155f.
eschatological consciousness. Indeed, Bultmann thinks that this consciousness, while materially distinctive in several ways in its particular perception of the Kingdom, was nevertheless not wholly unique. Rather Jesus' type of consciousness is known already to historians who have studied the prophetic movement of the Old Testament. Typically, the prophets tended to telescope world events because of their sharp awareness of God and his purpose. In contrast to such ultimate reality, the details of world events were of much less significance. Hence, if one is to understand Jesus, he must be seen against this background; as a man with a quite distinctive message concerning the Kingdom but yet as one possessing a typical prophetic type of consciousness.

Was Jesus, then, mistaken to see his own time as the decisive hour of decision before the fast approaching end of the world? Bultmann answers:

"Of course, Jesus was mistaken in thinking that the world was destined soon to come to an end. His error was similar to that of the ancient prophets who believed that God's redemptive act was immediately impending, or like Deutero-Isaiah, who thought it was already dawning in the present. Does his message therefore stand or fall with that misconception? It would be better to reverse the proposition and say that this expectation springs from the conviction which lies at the root of his preaching. The prophets are so overwhelmed by their sense of the sovereign majesty of God and the absolute character of his will that they foreshorten the divine act of judgment. Contrasted with God and his will, the world seems such a trivial place that it is already as it were at an end. This sense of crisis in human destiny expresses itself in the conviction that the hour of decision has struck. So it is with Jesus. He is so convinced of God's will and determination, and that it is his business to proclaim it, that he feels himself to be standing on the frontiers of time. His eschatological preaching is not the outcome of wishful thinking"

or speculation, but of his sense of the utter nothingness of man before God. The understanding of human life implied thereby clearly does not stand or fall with his expectation of an imminent end of the world. It contains a definite judgment upon the world. In other words, it sees the world exclusively sub specie Dei.

So while the Jesus of history did believe that his own time was the dawn of the θαυμάζω τοῦ θεοῦ which he mistakenly believed was shortly to be consummated; his understanding of human existence, which is really the very essence of that proclamation, Bultmann believes is still of value today if it is understood aright by means of his hermeneutical canons. What, then, is that understanding of human existence? Bultmann presents a concise statement concerning the living (geschichtlich) meaning of the Kingdom in Jesus' teaching in the following words:

The future Kingdom of God, then, is not something which is to come in the course of time, so that to advance its coming one can do something in particular, perhaps through penitential prayers and good works, which become superfluous in the moment of its coming. Rather, the Kingdom of God is a power which, although it is entirely future, wholly determines the present. It determines the present because it now compels man to decision; he is determined thereby either in this direction or in that, as chosen or as rejected, in his entire present existence. Future and present are not related in the sense that the Kingdom begins as a historical fact in the present and achieves its fulfillment in the future; nor in the sense that an inner, spiritual possession of personal attributes or qualities of soul constitutes a present hold on the Kingdom, to which only the future consummation is lacking. Rather the Kingdom of God is genuinely future, because it is not a metaphysical entity or condition, but the future action of God, which can be in no sense something given in the present. None the less this future determines man in his present, and exactly for that reason is true future—not merely something to come "somewhere, sometime", but destined for man and constraining him to decision.

The coming of the Kingdom of God is therefore not

really an event in the course of time, which is due to occur sometime and toward which man can either take a definite attitude or hold himself neutral. Because Jesus sees man thus in a crisis of decision before God, it is understandable that in his thought the Jewish messianic hope becomes the absolute certainty that in this hour the Kingdom of God is coming. If men are standing in the crisis of decision, and if precisely this crisis is the essential characteristic of their humanity, then every hour is the last hour, and we can understand that for Jesus the whole contemporary mythology is pressed into the service of his conception of human existence. Thus he understood and proclaimed his hour as the last hour.  

So Bultmann contends that Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God is not to be understood as an event of world history (Weltgeschichte) or as the ethical development of the inner life of man (as the theological liberals thought), because the former view takes the mythology of Jesus' world too literally and the latter view cannot really be supported by the historically reliable teachings of Jesus (but rather finds its basis in idealistic philosophy). Jesus thought in terms of, and employed much of (but not all of), the Kingdom mythology of his own day and place because he clearly saw man as standing in a crisis of decision before God. Therefore, Jesus' eschatological message is at root a message about human existence before God which calls into question man's normal and habitual self-interpretation. Hence, the Jewish eschatological mythology which Jesus used is only a time-conditioned outward means of expression for Jesus' more fundamental conception of man. In light of this, Bultmann explains that this is why Jesus does not really give a description of the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, for such a description would simply mean a projecting of man's "spiritual experiences" and ideals into "the beyond". The Kingdom is not such a product of human existence.

46. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, pp. 51-52.
imagination for Jesus, says Bultmann. Rather it is known in constant-
ly renewed decisions for God and his Will in each present moment of
life. More of the meaning of the "Will of God" in Jesus' teaching
will be explored in the next chapter, but first we must turn to sev-
eral other matters.

Overall Conclusions From This Analysis of
Representative Authentic Synoptic Texts
Concerning the Kingdom of God in
Jesus' Teaching

Before turning from the work of Professor Bultmann to that of
his pupils, three matters must be dealt with in a concluding summary
fashion. The first is that of Bultmann's overall use of critical
canons. What has this review of his critical historical reasoning
indicated concerning the importance and function of his several
canons for establishing positive results?

(a)

First, it is evident from the foregoing review that by far the
most important and frequent canon employed by Bultmann in establish-
ing Jesus' genuine teaching is his "canon of dissimilarity". Second
in significance is his closely related "canon of consistency". Both
of these critical canons, it should be noted, are material ones. That
is, both canons really determine probable Jesus' material on the basis
of the content of Jesus' recorded words rather than on considerations
of form.

Next in importance are the "two canons of the forms" (Sitz im
Leben and growth). While these canons are obviously formal (that is,

47. Ibid., pp. 55-56.
they deal with the form of the tradition in its most primitive and later, secondary stages), they also blend with the material canons in Bultmann's hands. For it is finally on the basis of material considerations in combination with the initial formal observations that he determines whether a given unit of the tradition is actually authentic Jesus' material or church created or borrowed material. That is, if Bultmann discovers by means of the "canon of the forms and growth" that a particular pericope is not in a primitive form, he will also employ his "canon of the forms and the Sitz im Leben" in order to discern the probable, specific church influence which must have been at work in the development process. It is, then, ultimately both formal manifestations and material "traces" of church interest (and not the forms alone) which cause him to reject suspected material as not original with Jesus. Hence, what actually happens is that secondary formal indications go hand in hand with material considerations, so that the "canon of the forms and Sitz im Leben" is used jointly with the "canon of dissimilarity" in order to detect church interests. Likewise, if a unit of the tradition is in a quite primitive form, it must still meet the material standards of the "canon of dissimilarity", or at least the "canon of consistency", in order to be finally accepted as reliable Jesus' material. Thus, it can be seen that in practice it is often difficult to separate Bultmann's several critical canons completely.

Next in frequency of use and importance here is Bultmann's basically material "canon of internal coherence" which he uses to sort out subordinate secondary features from otherwise authentic pericopae. Likewise, his formal and material "canon of the isolated pericopae" plays a large supporting role in enabling him to separate pericopae
from their various present synoptic contexts. Less frequently used with the texts under discussion at present, is his formal and material "canon of the elimination of analogous material". This canon is obviously relatively unimportant in dealing with Kingdom of God material because it is Bultmann's norm for sorting out material that was added to the tradition by the later non-Palestinian churches from various Hellenistic sources. Another formal and material canon infrequently employed here is the "canon of the argument from silence". Where it is used here, it is once seen in conjunction with the "two canons of the forms" and serves the minor purpose of determining the relative age and form of a unit of the tradition. The only other instance of its appearance here is more significant. Then it is used in conjunction with the "canon of dissimilarity" in order to understand Jesus in contrast to the nationalistic eschatological hopes of many first century Palestinians. Finally, the "canon of multiple attestation" is used only once here, and there it is in a supporting role. Bultmann uses it together with his "canons of dissimilarity and consistency" as an additional basis for accepting a unit of the tradition as Jesus' material. In this context Bultmann uses the "canon of multiple attestation" in a material sense to show that other sayings of a quite similar content are found in several places in the synoptic tradition and, therefore, the chances of genuineness are increased for this saying.

One further and final observation concerning Bultmann's critical historical reasoning must be made here. When he is defending those texts which indicate that Jesus historically appeared as the proclaimer of the eschatological dawn, he additionally argues that the fundamental church consciousness of the imminent end of history must surely owe its origin to Jesus himself, for such a community consciousness
could not have been self-induced. The community could not have arisen from an entirely unknown cause and then simply have created its eschatological consciousness ex nihilo.\textsuperscript{48} It is interesting that Bultmann should argue in this manner, however, for while his argument seems to support the point under discussion at an initial reading, it is nevertheless contrary to the normal manner in which he reasons historically. Usually he contends that one can only trust the recorded beliefs of the founder of a movement when they differ significantly from the later beliefs of the movement which he induced. Here, however, Bultmann appears to be arguing in the reverse direction, and one wonders whether it is possible to accept both the strict "canon of dissimilarity" and this sort of (supporting?) reasoning. If it is, it is not sufficiently clear how Bultmann intends to relate the two. At present, it is sufficient to note this seeming reversal in the manner of his critical, historical reasoning. We shall return to consider it in more detail, however, in the final chapter of this study.

(b)

The second general matter which calls for summary comment here is Bultmann's use of his interpretative or hermeneutical canons. Bultmann's procedure requires some further clarification and critical comment.

The first matter which requires a clarifying comment is that of Bultmann's preliminary interpretation of the meaning of those authentic texts which indicate that Jesus saw his own ministry as the present sign of an imminent but essentially future Kingdom. Here it should be noted that Bultmann is apparently not yet employing all of his hermeneutical canons together, as would be necessary

\textsuperscript{48} Cf. pp. 92-93 of this study.
for existential interpretation of the "living meaning" of Jesus' message. Rather, in the first place Bultmann simply seeks to show how Jesus himself (against his own Palestinian background of nearly two thousand years ago) conceived of the temporal aspects of the Kingdom. Here it might be maintained that Bultmann is using just his first hermeneutical canon (that of seeking to understand the whole of an historical situation from the parts and the parts from the whole of his valid evidence). However, it appears rather that Bultmann's second hermeneutical canon plays a quite determining role here and thereby his third and fourth canons are already most influential in a subtle manner as well. That is, one suspects that the "specific interests" of Bultmann (his second canon) the existentialist interpreter (his third and fourth canons) have a strong influence in his so strongly stressing the essentially future and promisorial nature of the Kingdom and under-playing the full significance of the present moment as in some sense a fulfilment for Jesus himself. At least this would seem so in light of the tendency toward recognition of the full significance of both the present and future aspects of the Kingdom in New Testament scholarship generally since Bultmann.49

Secondly, it will be remembered from the foregoing discussion that Bultmann believes that the authentic historical evidence shows that the Jesus of history taught about a Kingdom "dawning" which would

49. Norman Perrin, The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus (London: SCM, 1963), pp. 115-206. Of course, it might also be argued that Bultmann is just reflecting the most important conclusions of the advocates of konsequente Eschatologie (J. Weiss and A. Schweitzer) in his own day and not pre-judging the case because of his existential hermeneutics. However, it seems most likely that the interpretation of Bultmann offered above is more likely and that he did not attempt to probe beyond the fundamental conclusions of konsequente Eschatologie because those conclusions fit so well with Heidegger's analysis of Zunkunft.
bring history to its conclusion. Furthermore, in interpreting the meaning of the essentially future nature of that coming Kingdom, Bultmann suggests that every hour should now be understood as this "last hour". If Bultmann's interpretation is to be understood, then, it is also necessary to recall the discussion of the several levels of historicity in his thought (in Section I of this study) wherein it was indicated that he is not ultimately interested in historisch reconstructions of "facts" concerning past happenings, however accurate such reconstructions might be. He wants to probe into the living meanings of those "facts" by means of all of his geschichtlich hermeneutical canons, so that the self-understandings (or understandings of human existence) that surface in and through historical events might challenge and contribute to the individual historicity (Geschichtlichkeit) of persons living today. This means that such a reality as the Βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ can never be properly understood if it is treated literally as an event of world history (Weltgeschichte) but can only be grasped if its meaning is spelled out in terms of personal history (Geschichtlichkeit). If one were to treat the Kingdom as an event of world history, Bultmann thinks, that person would become preoccupied with abstract and external questions of chronology and the structural nature of the Kingdom, so that the objectifying realm of the historisch would not be transcended. Rather, Bultmann interprets the Kingdom by means of his specific hermeneutical canons so that its relevance for man's personal self-understanding (Existenzverständnis) will come to life. This is why he translates Jesus' (modified) apocalyptic proclamation into the language of present, personal history. The mythology which Jesus used to express himself is not to be mistaken for his true and lasting message, in
Bultmann's view. So, according to Bultmann, the end of history which Jesus taught about must be seen as an "end" in one's personal existence. That is, it is an end of attempting to find security in this world rather than in the Will and purpose of the God who is very near. Jesus' ancient call to decision, therefore, is really a call to every man either to accept or reject this particular understanding of human existence. Moreover, the future aspect of the Kingdom, in Bultmann's hermeneutical translation, means that every hour must now be understood as the final hour because as the present moves into the future, a person is ever and again personally faced afresh with this basic decision concerning his life. So in this sense, the ἐποίησις τοῦ θεοῦ is always coming!

It must first be admitted that Bultmann's hermeneutical canons surely do enable him to translate certain key elements of Jesus' nearly two thousand year old message into strikingly contemporary terms. It seems clear that much of Jesus' authentic Kingdom teaching did deal specifically with an impending crisis which demanded of his generation a personal re-evaluation of human existence and a concrete decision either for or against the Rule of God. Bultmann's canons do give him a special insight into the stress which Jesus actually laid upon the importance of human self-understanding and decision before God, rather than on teachings about man's nature in the abstract or formal descriptions of the nature of the Kingdom. Thus, it must be gratefully granted that Bultmann's hermeneutical procedures have served a very significant function in recovering a central thrust and intention of Jesus of Nazareth at a time when the exegetical practices of liberal scholars were leading many astray from these valid insights.

Still, there remains the bothersome question of whether Bultmann's canons likewise fail to grasp the full meaning and lasting intentions
contained in Jesus' message. That is, do they tend to lop off possible meanings prematurely which do not appear to have immediate translation value in terms of man's self-understanding, freedom and life-shaping decisions? For example, one wonders why Jesus of Nazareth could not have significantly meant to say some things about the Kingdom, the primary reference of which, was (and still should be) to God's purpose and activity rather than just to man's self-understanding and decision.\(^{50}\) Moreover, while Bultmann's hermeneutical translation of the temporal element in Jesus' Kingdom proclamation surely does convey Jesus' "prophetic" concern with the future as a time of fulfillment rather than as a simple linear development, it is not clear (to the present writer at least) why Jesus' teachings could not also have some reference to a future fulfilment for world history as well as personal history.\(^{51}\) Indeed, this raises the further question as to how far Bultmann's "existential-transhistorical" interpretation of the Kingdom represents an accurate translation of Jesus' meaning. That is, is the Kingdom as Jesus thought of it, and taught about it, something that can be adequately described as a reality which does not come in world history? Is world history, then, a concept and a reality which can be so neatly separated from personal history; or do they, in fact, always interpenetrate one another?\(^{52}\)

In setting forth his third hermeneutical canon, Bultmann himself underscores the point that the interpretative historian should

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strive to be fair to the intentions of the author of his text and so allow those intentions to correct his own biases. (In the present context the "author" would have to be understood as Jesus himself.) Yet by his fourth hermeneutical canon, Bultmann appears to limit the "true" intentions of past figures to understandings of human existence and existential challenge. Thus, only "existential openness" will provide "the key" of pre-understanding necessary to comprehend "the real intention" of a historical text. The danger inherent in this method, it seems, is that anything which does not readily fit the mould of this particular pre-understanding must be either ignored or treated as an irrelevant, external, time-conditioned husk which can be discarded once the germinal seed of existential truth is reached. The only factor, then, that appears to rule out other possible meanings (other than clearly existential ones) is Bultmann's delimiting use of his fourth hermeneutical canon. Hence, it would seem that Bultmann has not himself sufficiently appreciated his own stated concern for the corrective value of the richness of the text itself in showing the intentions of past figures. It is not that the present writer is unappreciatively suggesting that Bultmann's interpretation of the Βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is false, but rather that it too may well represent only a partial understanding. There may yet be treasure buried in the field which Bultmann's hermeneutical tools have failed to unearth.

Finally, a further brief observation also seems appropriate here. We have seen previously that Bultmann allows that such a hermeneutical treatment of the authentic Jesus' material as his own is of more value to persons living today than a mere recital of the historisch "facts"

which have been uncovered. However, he does not allow that Jesus' understanding of human existence (or any other historical figure's understanding of existence for that matter) can actually be the means by which a person living today can gain an authentic sort of existence. Thus, one is hard pressed to see the concrete value in such a hermeneutical exercise (aside from its interest value for scholarship). In what precise sense is Jesus' gesichtlich proclamation of human existence before God of value for one's personal existence, if one is yet unable to respond to such a proclamation in any significant way for faith? If one must always hear the church's kerygma via John or Paul in order to be able to respond to and experience authentic existence, it is still unclear what real advantage exist- tential historiography has for the life of an individual over historisch reconstructions of Jesus' life and message. Could it simply be that Bultmann has failed to understand the hidden kerygmatic possibilities that lie within his own picture of Jesus? We shall return to this question as well in the final chapter of this study.

The third matter which requires an additional clarifying comment is that of Jesus' self-consciousness. It has often been maintained that Bultmann has no interest in Jesus' "self-consciousness" and thinks that it should not legitimately concern any serious historian, because this term applies to the self's own quite personal experience, reflection and process of decision-making. To reach this sort of "private" understanding of a person would require a psychological probing of the various mental processes of the mind

54. Cf. Section I, pp.30-33 of this study.
of Jesus for which our authentic historical evidence is inadequate. Moreover, even if we had reliable bits of psychological evidence, such an insight into the mind of Jesus would have to assume that Jesus' mental processes were analogous to those of other persons for whom we have more detailed psychological information and that would be only an assumption. Thus all such attempts at probing Jesus' self-consciousness are largely conjectural. What we do have reliable evidence for is Jesus' own "self-understanding" (Existenzverständnis), which is a term that refers to both Jesus' general understanding of human existence (which is most important for Bultmann) and to his basic understanding of the purpose of his own existence (which is important for Bultmann only as it serves Jesus' understanding of human existence). We have already discussed Jesus' general understanding of human existence above (as our second matter calling for summary comment). Here, however, our focal concern is Jesus' fundamental understanding of his own existence. As we have seen in our discussion of "The Nature and Bases of Jesus' Eschatological Consciousness," Bultmann does think that there is evidence available for some valid historical statements about Jesus' basic estimate of his own mission. Moreover, it is even possible to discern what several of the bases of this awareness probably were. These things can be known from the content of several authentic sayings of Jesus which have been recovered by Bultmann's critical canons. Still, these sayings do not tell us about the actual mental processes that led Jesus to his basic estimate of his own role. However, the problem that arises is that Jesus' general estimate of his own role (and even several of its bases), and the mental processes which led to such a conclusion can similarly be referred to as "Jesus' consciousness" or
"self-consciousness" in English. Thus, it might appear to some that Bultmann is engaging in double-talk when he denies that the historian can probe Jesus' "self-consciousness" and yet goes on to talk about Jesus' "eschatological consciousness" or self-understanding (Ereignisverstehen). However, if the above distinctions are kept in mind, it will be clearer throughout this study in just what sense Bultmann believes it is legitimate to discuss the mind of Jesus with regard to his own understanding of himself.\(^56\)

Before departing from this matter entirely here, however, a critical observation must be made. When Bultmann, in the interests of laying the foundations for his existential interpretation of Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom, says that Jesus' consciousness involved a prophetic telescoping of present and future, is he not engaging in the very kind of psychological speculation concerning Jesus' mental processes which he otherwise condemns and tries to avoid? How can Bultmann know that this was really what went on in the mind of Jesus from his reliable evidence?\(^57\) Thus, the further fundamental question must be raised as to whether the historian can legitimately avoid

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57. Cf. Hugh Anderson, Jesus and Christian Origins, p. 166, where he classifies R. H. Fuller's similar procedure as a probing of Jesus' "psychological consciousness." The problem here noted with regard to Bultmann is not new to New Testament scholarship. Albert Schweitzer lucidly demonstrated the dangers of such psychological speculation in the "lives of Jesus" produced by liberal scholars in his influential book The Quest of the Historical Jesus. Yet it is an open question whether Schweitzer himself went beyond his authentic historical evidence in his own "thorough-going apocalyptic" portrait of Jesus, where Jesus is presented as being possessed of an overwhelming "apocalyptic consciousness."
some psychological speculations based on the more solid bits of evidence at his disposal? If the historian must avoid all such speculations, then Bultmann himself seems to have ceased to function as a sound historian here. But if it is legitimate to offer some speculations, what criteria should set their limits? To these questions we shall return in the final chapter as well.

Gunther Bornkamm's and Ernst Käsemann's Critical Analysis of Representative Synoptic Texts Concerning the Kingdom of God

As has been noted in the initial section of this study, it is often difficult to establish Bornkamm's and Käsemann's precise historical reasoning because they have neither written thorough-going histories of the synoptic tradition nor discussed their hermeneutical canons in the extensive manner in which Bultmann has. In fact, as one attempts to discern the critical bases of the interpretative statements of these scholars, he sometimes experiences several frustrations. First, Käsemann only directly discusses a few of the possible relevant texts in his writings, but his broad statements about our knowledge of the earthly Jesus imply that he accepts rather more material as being critically reliable. This means that in the following presentation Bornkamm will be cited more frequently than Käsemann, in spite of the fact that Käsemann presumably accepts much of the same material as Bornkamm. Second, Bornkamm directly discusses many more of these texts in his book on Jesus, but sometimes he omits statements as to precisely why he has accepted these texts as authentic and not

certain others. Finally, on occasion it is difficult to know whether Bornkamm is quoting a text because he holds it to be an actual utterance of Jesus or because he thinks that the text is a church formulation which nevertheless reflects certain accurate insights into the characteristics of Jesus of Nazareth. These several difficulties do not exclude an understanding of the fundamental critical reasoning of these scholars but they do make for a somewhat less extensive and precise treatment of their work than for Bultmann's. Still, what can be unravelled from their writings is comparatively instructive.

Bornkamm begins by showing close agreement with Bultmann that Mk. 1:14ff. and Mt. 4:17 must be considered the first two evangelists' summaries of the entire message of Jesus, because each of these statements shows definite church influence. In spite of the fact that they are the evangelists' formulations, Bornkamm also believes that these summaries reliably reflect Jesus' characteristic message: that God's Kingdom is near! Why he thinks that this is so when the "canon of dissimilarity" indicates church influence will become clearer from his further critical judgments.

First, however, Bornkamm, like Bultmann before him, sets out to define the more exact meaning of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ in Jesus' proclamation against his own background. Bornkamm agrees that Jesus' message shows no traces of the nationalistic form of Kingdom expectation which was popular with many of Jesus' contemporaries. This Bornkamm likewise discerns by applying the "canon of the argument from silence" to the synoptic tradition of Jesus' sayings as a whole. Moreover, Bornkamm agrees with Bultmann that

59. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 64-95.
60. Ibid., pp. 64, 200, 201.
61. Ibid., pp. 64-66.
Jesus' authentic teachings show a closer relationship to the apocalyptic, cosmic expectations of Jesus' time but that Jesus' reticence about speculating concerning the end time (in these authentic teachings) surely differentiates him from other Jewish apocalypticists. Thus, again the "two canons of the forms" are employed in order to recover the most primitive form of Jesus' teaching and the "canon of dissimilarity" serves as the norm for eliminating church-borrowed, Jewish apocalyptic features from the several synoptic texts which now stand in a more secondary form. While Käsemann does not spell out the process of his reasoning in such perfect parallel to Bultmann's as Bornkamm does, he is yet in close agreement with them both on this matter. Furthermore, Käsemann on largely interpretative grounds thinks that Jesus surely was unlike other contemporary apocalypticists in rejecting the classical notion of demonology in the ancient world and thereby clearly departing from any form of apocalyptic dualism.

I AND II

The Inauguration of the Kingdom and Jesus' Mission Consciousness

Bornkamm discusses and accepts as most authentic nine of the ten texts which were discussed under categories I and II for Bultmann (i.e. I. Lk. 10:23f.; Lk. 12:54-56; Lk. 17:20f.; Lk. 6:20f.; and II. Mk. 8:11f.; Mt. 11:5-6; Lk. 11:20; Mk. 3:27; Mk. 8:38). Käsemann discusses just five of these texts (i.e. I. Lk. 10:24; II. Mt. 11:5; Mt. 12:28; Mk. 3:27; Mk. 8:38) and accepts only three of these as

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62. Ibid., pp. 66-67, 201.

truly authentic. The canon which is used as the essential norm throughout in judging the critical authenticity of these texts is the "canon of dissimilarity". That is, all of the reliable texts are so designated because on the one hand they are materially unlike anything found in the Judaism of Jesus' day and on the other hand unlike the content of the typical theological emphases of the early Christian communities, in the judgment of both Bornkamm and Kasemann. Like¬wise, using the same canon Kasemann rejects Lk. 10:24 and Mk. 8:38 as genuine sayings of Jesus. His comments on Mk. 8:38 illustrate his reasoning process.

For this saying has preserved the peculiar character of the speech of the Palestinian Christian prophets, which utters maxims of holy law for the guidance of the community and attaches heavenly promise or divine curse in the eschatological future to the fulfilment or non-fulfilment here on earth of certain conditions. This means, then, that Jesus was not reckoning on the coming of a "Son of Man" other than himself, as Bultmann assumes. Indeed what would be the position of such a figure if the Baptist has already ushered in the turn of the aeons and yet, for his part, still stands in the shadow of Jesus? The predication "Son of Man" must have reflected the Christology and the apocalyptic of post-Easter Christianity and from there must have found its way into the Jesus tradition which today includes so many pronouncements of Christian prophecy, originally uttered as the voice of the exalted Lord. But if this really was the case and Jesus never expressly laid claim to the Messiahship, it would be extraordinarily characteristic of him. He would have differentiated himself equally from late Jewish expectation and from the proclamation of his own community.

Thus, what can be seen in this case is Kasemann's more stringent application of the "canon of dissimilarity" than either Bornkamm or Bultmann have thought necessary.

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Interpretative Summary

For Bornkamm and Kasemann, however, these several most authentic texts do indicate that Jesus saw his own ministry as the dawn of the Kingdom, but in a different sense than Bultmann. Additionally, these scholars see a mark of real individuality interwoven with Jesus' Kingdom message in the note of unique authority (ἐξουσία) with which Jesus personally proclaimed its inbreaking. While John the Baptist similarly proclaimed the nearness of the coming Kingdom in an authoritative manner, there is still a difference between his message and that of Jesus. Bornkamm puts it thus, "between these two and their preaching, there is a difference like that between the eleventh and twelfth hours. For Jesus calls: the shift in the aeons is here, the Kingdom of God is already dawning." Kasemann does not see the "shift in the aeons" as having come precisely between Jesus and the Baptist but rather understands the Baptist as "the introducer" of the Kingdom (on the basis of his interpretation of Mt. 11:25f.). Nevertheless, Kasemann is still in quite basic accord with Bornkamm because he believes that Jesus alone proclaimed that in his own word the Βασιλεία was actually arriving for his auditors. So Kasemann, like Bornkamm, believes that Jesus' final significance must be judged by those representative, authentic sayings in which the Kingdom is spoken of as already initiated in a very real sense. Here a significant interpretative difference from Bultmann emerges but in a manner

68. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 68; Ernst Kasemann, Essays On New Testament Themes, pp. 42-44.
which can be rather deceptive for a casual reader of these three scholars. As has been shown, Bultmann also emphasises the decisive nature of the present time of Jesus' ministry when he interprets Jesus' genuine sayings but what is decisive for Bultmann is Jesus' call to decision in the present, in light of the imminent but still future Kingdom. The present time of Jesus' ministry for Bultmann, then, is not the actual arrival of the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (cf. pp. 87-93, 108 of this chapter). Bornkamm and Käsemann, however, maintain that the Kingdom was, in fact, present with the very words and deeds of Jesus and in the positive decisions of his followers. Texts such as Lk. 10:23f.; Lk. 12:54-56; Lk. 17:20f.; Mt. 11:5-6; Lk. 11:20; Mk. 3:27; Mk. 8:38 are perspicuous evidence of this in Bornkamm's view and texts such as Mt. 12:28; Mk. 3:27; and Mt. 11:5-6 serve the same function for Käsemann. Moreover, Bornkamm notes that while Lk. 6:20f. undoubtedly points toward a future aspect of the Kingdom, that it nevertheless lays unquestioned stress on the present as the beginning of the eschatological fulfilment by means of the repeated refrain "Blessed are you." Hence, the nearness of God and His salvation activity makes itself felt already in and through Jesus in a most extraordinarily real and authoritative way. Furthermore, Bornkamm notes that while Mk. 8:11f. shows that Jesus characteristically would not allow his own miraculous healing abilities to be used as a prerequisite for faith in God's presence and power within him (since that would be the reversal of the true meaning of faith), nevertheless Jesus did view his healings and exorcisms as signs of the dawning Kingdom to those who had "eyes of faith" already (as can be seen from the majority of the authentic texts cited immediately above for Bornkamm and Käsemann). Hence, a keen insight into the more precise nature of Jesus'
"mission consciousness" (Sendungsbewusstsein) is provided by these texts as well. Jesus' preaching and healings are indications to his own mind that the centuries-old prophetic hope is even now being fulfilled. Likewise, Jesus' exorcisms are signs to him that he is fulfilling the late Jewish apocalyptic hope of the breaking of Satan's power in the time of salvation. Consequently, even if Jesus did not directly claim messianic titles and status, he surely must have awakened such thoughts in others by his authoritative activity and provocative utterances, and, moreover, he personally saw his own words and works as the inauguration of the time of eschatological fulfilment.

III. The Kingdom as "Wholly Other" Deliverance

Käsemann does not discuss Mk. 4:26-29 but Bornkamm does. First, Bornkamm begins by showing how the "canon of dissimilarity" actually indicates that Jesus' use of parables is quite distinctive when they are seen in contrast to contemporary Jewish parables on the one hand and church reapplications on the others. The rabbis also frequently employed parables in order to clarify religious issues, but in their hands parables were interpretative guides in the process of unveiling meanings already contained in the authoritative texts of Scripture. For Jesus, however, "the parables are the preaching itself and are not merely serving the purpose of a lesson which is quite independent of them." Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 69.


70. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 69.
life. Therefore, it does not matter if some of Jesus' parables show certain content similarities to other parables from his own time (as some indeed do). Even if a historian thus suspects a borrowing process, it must have been done by Jesus himself for no other known teacher in Judaism used such material in the manner in which Jesus reportedly did.71 Jesus used his parables to proclaim that, "God's Reign is hidden from us, and must be believed and understood in its hiddenness. Not in the way the apocalypticists thought, beyond the heavens, in the bosom of a mysterious future, but here, hidden in the everyday world of the present time, where no one is aware of what is already taking place."72 Likewise, Jesus' use of parables can be distinguished from later church reapplications, for where the church (or an evangelist) has been at work the interpretation offered in the tradition is an allegorical exposition that has meaning for some discernible situation in the life of the early communities (rather than fitting the circumstances of Jesus' ministry).73

Hence, Bornkamm here applies the "canon of dissimilarity" with a new twist. As has been shown Bultmann uses this canon in a material sense (as do Bornkamm and Käsemann usually) but here Bornkamm uses it in a more formal sense as well. That is, some of the parables of Jesus could be suspect by means of a purely material application of the canon to just the basic content of the parabolic material itself (as we have seen with Bultmann on pp. 99-100 of this chapter). However, if the canon is applied throughout the synoptic parabolic tradition to the introductory formulae as well, it becomes

71. Ibid., pp. 69-70. Moreover, Bornkamm says that many of Jesus' parables begin with the unique formula "which of you...?", which also shows his distinctive directness (p. 70).
72. Ibid., p. 69.
73. Ibid., p. 70.
clear from this formal and material consideration that many of the parables are specifically used in a distinctive and direct manner to proclaim the Kingdom (and not to expound Scripture), which use is not characteristic of either contemporary Judaism or early church theology. In a like fashion, a formal application of this canon to a total parable unit makes perspicuous Jesus' typical, concise manner of telling parables from the fuller church (and sometimes rabbinic) allegorical expositions. Jesus' parables make essentially one point (or sometimes a two-pronged single emphasis) while the allegorical expositions make numerous comparative points. Additionally, the actual content of the several points made in synoptic allegorical expositions leads to the conclusion that church expositors were the originators of these synoptic interpretations. So, while material considerations are thus also crucial for spotting church influence here, the chief point for our attention at the moment is that this rather more formal use of the "canon of dissimilarity" does provide a stronger basis for accepting most of the basic synoptic parables as authentic Jesus material than Bultmann was able to set forth. Moreover, it would appear that Kasemann, too, accepts this procedure. 74 It is on this basis, then, that Bornkamm accepts Mk. 4:26ff. as a trustworthy portion of the message of Jesus. 75

III. Interpretative Summary

With regard to the interpretation of Mk. 4:26ff. Bornkamm is fundamentally at one with Bultmann. He too resists any attempt to understand these words of Jesus as implying that the Kingdom will develop naturally through man's religious and ethical efforts. Thus,

75. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 73.
he rejects the various liberal interpretations of the Kingdom as falsely deriving from Kantian influence rather than the synoptic text. Indeed, the point of the text is that, "just as the earth 'of itself' brings forth fruit, so the Kingdom of God comes by its own power alone, a miracle for man which he can only await with patience." Bornkamm, however, goes a step beyond Bultmann by suggesting that the obvious original occasion for this teaching of Jesus is to be found in Jesus' response to those of his own day who wanted to coerce God into bringing the Kingdom more rapidly by some concrete act on their part (whether religious, political, or both).

IV. The Call to Repentance and Decision

Bornkamm discusses and accepts the essential portions of the five sayings discussed under this category as authentic for Bultmann (Lk. 11:31f./Mt. 12:41-42; Lk. 9:62; Mk. 10:23b, 25; Lk. 14:28-32; Mt. 13:44-46). Bornkamm accepts these texts also as authentic Jesus' material on the basis of the "canon of dissimilarity" used in a material sense, for he believes that the sayings show a new feature when they are compared with similar calls to repentance in the Judaism of Jesus' day. To be sure, numerous rabbinic words also speak of the importance of repentance and teach that such should represent a genuine renunciation of former sins and an embracing of a new order of existence. But Jesus links his call to repentance specifically with his announcement of the inbreaking of the Kingdom

76. Ibid., pp. 73, 201-202.
77. Ibid., p. 73.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid., pp. 69, 82-84, 147-148. However, it is rather unclear as to precisely how much of Lk. 11:31f. he would argue for critically but he does accept at least Lk. 11:31. Also, he cites Mk. 10:23b, 25 in the form in which it appears in Mt. 19:23f.
and in this regard his call to repentance is most closely paralleled by John the Baptist's message. Yet even in comparison with John's preaching, Jesus' call to repentance is unique, as is his proclamation of the Kingdom. As Bornkamm puts it, "Repentance now means: to lay hold on the salvation which is already at hand and to give up everything for it." Likewise, Bornkamm believes that these sayings can be distinguished from others where later church theology concerning discipleship in relation to the church's life have been clearly interworked with what purports to be Jesus' material.

It is significant also to note that Bornkamm treats most of these texts in the context of his chapter on "Discipleship," which he sees as a correlate of the Kingdom in Jesus' message (Lk. 9:62, Mt. 19:23f., Lk. 14:28-32, Mt. 13:45f.). In Bultmann's reconstructive work these texts were seen as illustrative of Jesus' teaching about repentance and decision in light of the coming future Kingdom, but Bornkamm again goes one step further by showing that this demand of Jesus' cannot be taken in abstraction from either his proclamation of an inaugurated Kingdom or the concrete response that it produced in many of his hearers during his own lifetime. At the moment what is of chief interest is the critical manner in which Bornkamm achieves his expansion on the approach of his former teacher. Here the use of two critical canons clearly emerges that have become important for Bornkamm, and which existed in the work of Bultmann too, but in a more embryonic form. The first canon is the "canon of multiple attestation." It will be remembered, however, that for Bultmann this canon is used somewhat differently than by most British and American

80. Ibid., p. 82.
81. Ibid., pp. 151f.
scholars of his generation. That is, Bultmann sees a characteristic of Jesus in the tradition as probably authentic if it is testified to not only in the several literary sources which stand behind the synoptics but in several forms within the oldest strand of the tradition, or in the oldest strand of the tradition and in the later strands of the tradition produced by the church and the evangelists as well. Here Bornkamm picks up this canon and uses it to sketch in probable features of Jesus' activity and the response which he induced. He begins by arguing that the gospels repeatedly give the impression that Jesus stirred up "a movement" during his Galilean ministry (i.e. in editorial sections, within primitive and secondary paricopae, in sayings, etc.). But they do not equate this popular preliminary following with discipleship as such. Discipleship to Jesus was dependent upon the prior decision and invitation of Jesus and the proper repentant response of the one called. This, too, is attested to in many ways (i.e. in example stories concerning the call of an individual disciple [which are probably church creations if they are judged solely by the "canons of dissimilarity and the two canons of the forms"], in primitive sayings and parables [such as the texts we have considered above], in probable secondary sayings, and in sections that may be suspected of editorial influence, etc.). Thus, here Bornkamm uses the "canon of multiple attestation", as Bultmann conceived of it, to expand the pioneering work of his teacher. Moreover, what is shown as probable by means of the "canon of multiple attestation" is surely "consistent" with those texts which pass the "canon of dissimilarity", for if Jesus called for such

82 Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 144-152; cf. Bultmann's prior use of this canon (pp. 22-23 of Section I of this study). For examples of Bultmann's embryonic use of the canon on similar material, see Jesus and the Word, pp. 34, 37.
radical decision, it is likely that he did produce such a body of disciples. Finally, it is interesting to note that Bultmann has not quarreled with this critical expansion but now apparently allows for its possibility.  

Käsemann, unfortunately, discusses only one of the several texts discussed under this category for Bultmann (Mt. 12:41f.) and he suggests that this text does show signs of having its origin in church prophecy and theology when measured strictly by the "canon of dissimilarity" and the "two canons of the forms". He argues this way because he believes that it is possible to demonstrate that early Christian prophecy typically spoke of an apocalyptic judgment as salvation in the future dependent upon a person's all important religious decisions in the present time. Furthermore, when a parallel to a saying or story of the Old Testament is drawn in order to present the story of Jesus in a synoptic pericope, the likelihood of church influence is increased, since we know this to be a characteristic mode of thought in at least some early Christian communities.  

Finally, the artificial parallel construction here suggests the strong possibility of a history in church liturgical or catechetical usage. So again we see Käsemann's rather more stringent use of several critical canons in order to eliminate material that both Bultmann and Bornkamm have found trustworthy.

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83. Rudolf Bultmann, The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, p. 23.
85. Ibid., pp. 85-95.
86. Ibid., pp. 95-96.
IV. Interpretative Summary

Bornkamm sees Jesus' call to repentance as very significant. He agrees with Bultmann that by such an emphasis Jesus was clearly underscoring the central importance of human decisions in a man's encounter with God and his Reign. However, there are significant new departures in Bornkamm's interpretation as well. With Bornkamm's interpretation of an inaugurated Kingdom rather than a wholly future Kingdom (as with Bultmann), the place of repentance has been likewise altered in his presentation of Jesus. For Bornkamm, "This very call to repentance speaks, too, of a decision and action on God's part first, which comes before all action and decision on the part of men." For Bultmann, however, repentance in Jesus' message was called for in order that one might show himself ready to receive God's coming Reign. While Bultmann does not want to indicate that Jesus demanded a right decision as the pre-condition of salvation, he does at least suggest that Jesus' call to repentance and his ethical and eschatological messages merge in their united appeal to human decision.

But Bornkamm makes a different emphasis because he believes that Jesus saw man's decision as clearly a response to God's prior decision which had taken the field of human history in Jesus' own activity and proclamation (and this he supports critically as has been shown, by citing the Kingdom texts judged most reliable by the "canon of dissimilarity" and demonstrating that this emphasis is found also in numerous forms and strands of the tradition by means of the "canon of multiple attestation").

87. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 83.
89. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 82-84, 144-152.
No less important, is Bornkamm's expansion on Bultmann's presentation in stressing that Jesus' call to decision produced a very real response of discipleship during his own lifetime. And while this movement that Jesus induced cannot properly be called a "church", Bornkamm does imply by his handling of the evidence that Bultmann presents Jesus too one-sidedly as the preacher of the Word only and not enough as the one who did, in fact, generate a historical movement by his words and deeds, whose rudimentary aspects at least can be traced critically to a pre-Easter date. Thus, again Bornkamm establishes a greater continuity between the earthly Jesus and the early Christian church.  

V. The Relation of Future and Present

Once again Bornkamm discusses the two texts that concern us under this category but Käsemann does not. Bornkamm here repeats his normal reasoning in accepting these two texts as authentic Jesus material. First, he accepts the parable of the mustard seed (Mt. 13: 31-33) because it passes his formal and material "canon of dissimilarity". That is, the form of this parable is sufficiently like numerous others in the synoptics for us to believe that it too came from Jesus rather than Judaism and the content of the parable, as Jesus uses it, surely fits well with his proclamation of the dawning Kingdom rather than the various known theologies of Judaism or the early church. 91 Second, while the second petition of the Lord's Prayer (Mt. 6:10) could be suspected of being a church creation because of its obvious liturgical history, it is accepted by Bornkamm

90. Ibid., pp. 144-152.
91. Ibid., pp. 69-71.
as being a trustworthy part of Jesus’ message because the synoptics indicate through several forms of various ages that Jesus did indeed proclaim a dawning Kingdom which was nevertheless to be consummated at some time in the future (i.e., in primitive sayings, parables, more questionable sayings, and in extended apocalyptic sections in the gospels which are most probably in large measure church-borrowed Jewish materials). Thus, the "canon of multiple attestation" here serves as Bornkamm’s chief norm in accepting Mt. 6:10 as authentic.92

V. Interpretative Summary

Bornkamm begins by showing his interpretative agreement with Bultmann but he then moves on to some disagreement as well. He holds that Mt. 13:31-32 and Mt. 6:10 (and other similar texts which can be accepted as typical of Jesus’ message) do indeed speak of a future consummation and that Jesus himself believed in the imminent end of the world. Thus far he agrees with Bultmann. However, this feature of Jesus’ overall message must not be torn apart from those texts which speak of the Kingdom’s arrival with Jesus or singled out as Jesus’ "true" proclamation at the expense of Jesus’ stress on the decisiveness of the present, Bornkamm contends. Nor can explanations be legitimately offered which pretend to penetrate Jesus’ psyche and so suggest that he was subject to changes of mind, or had prophetic periods of foreshortening of time, or developed different emphases at various stages of his ministry. Nor is it possible to maintain that Jesus himself preached only a present Kingdom, and it was the later church which first introduced future elements by employing borrowed Jewish apocalyptic material. Nor can one accurately say

92. Ibid., p. 90.
that the future element of Jesus' message was meant to be taken symbolically. For the present and future elements are both critically verified too strongly in the tradition and both elements must be interpreted equally. All of these mistaken attempts at explanation simply exceed the valid critically established historical evidence and fall into the realm of speculative conjecture. Indeed, the present and future aspects of the Kingdom actually are interwoven in the tradition and cannot be severed. Mt. 13:31-33 is a perfect example of this phenomenon, "For beginning and end, however wonderful and incomprehensible the end may be, stand in very definite relationship, one to another. The end comes from the beginning, the fruit from the seed, the harvest from the sowing, the whole leavened loaf from the leaven."\(^93\) Thus, any honest interpretation must take proper cognisance of this interrelatedness of present and future. So Bornkamm also maintains that the key to grasping the meaning of Jesus' message hinges on a proper understanding of Lk. 17:20, for the Kingdom of God is not a world phenomenon which can be observed. The misleading factor for some lies in the fact that Jesus did speak of the Kingdom in the language and imagery of his own time and, therefore, much popular interpretation since has tried to chart definite events in history and in the future as the exact coming or consummation of the Kingdom. Bornkamm, however, suggests how the time element in Jesus' Kingdom message should be correctly understood.

We must not separate the statements about future and present, as is already apparent from the fact that in Jesus' preaching they are related in the closest fashion. The

\(^{93}\) Ibid., p. 72.
present dawn of the Kingdom of God is always spoken of so as to show that the present reveals the future as salvation and judgment, and therefore does not anticipate it. Again, the future is always spoken of as unlocking and lighting up the present, and therefore revealing today as the day of decision. It is therefore more than a superficial difference, more than one of degree, concerned, so to speak, only with the quantity of colour employed by the apocalyptic painter, when one notes that Jesus' eschatological sayings do not describe the future as a state of heavenly bliss nor indulge in broad descriptions of the terrors of judgment. Hence in Jesus' preaching, speaking of the present means speaking of the future, and vice versa.

The future of God is salvation to the man who apprehends the present as God's present, and as the hour of salvation. The future of God is judgment for the man who does not accept the "now" of God but clings to his own present, his own past and also to his own dreams of the future. We might say with Schiller: "What we have refused from the minute, no eternity gives back." Only here it applies in a new and fulfilled sense. In this acceptance of the present of God, as we have tried to make clear, pardon and conversion are one in the words of Jesus.94

Thus, in the above interpretation of the relation of present and future in Jesus' message, Bornkamm appears to differ with Bultmann in stressing the importance of the inaugurated (or partially fulfilled) Kingdom for Jesus and by refuting any attempts at explanation which would seek to probe Jesus' psyche (as even Bultmann attempts to do in a limited manner with his statements about Jesus' prophetic tendency to foreshorten time). Yet in the end he is also in major agreement with Bultmann, for the ultimate significance of the present Kingdom is that it represents the crucial time of decision in the light of God's future and so the future judgment as salvation of man is thus intimately related to his all important decisions in the present. Moreover, in Bornkamm's view as well, the Kingdom can only rightly be understood if it is not treated as a precise world phenomenon and falsely charted and scheduled from some supposed stand-

94. Ibid., pp. 92-93.
point above history, as if man had either the criteria or knowledge for such perception. Both Bultmann and Bornkamm, then, want to stress the salvatory significance of the existential interrelatedness of the present and future in Jesus' Kingdom message rather than stressing chronological factors which lead to false theological objectifications. Yet, Bornkamm himself does not appear to disregard chronological factors completely which would relate the Kingdom to world history, if they are grasped from the point of view of personal faith in Jesus' message. For he does believe that Jesus spoke of an actual beginning of God's Reign in the history of mankind (starting with Jesus' own ministry) and its real consummation in that sphere, even if one errs if he should become preoccupied with detailed chronological and descriptive considerations concerning the future consumption. 95 Finally, in spite of the fact that Käsemann does not discuss these several problems in relation to the texts treated under this category, he does yet stand in quite close agreement with Bornkamm in interpreting the overall relation of the present and future time element in Jesus' Kingdom message. 96

Additional Features Concerning Jesus and the Kingdom

VI. The Miracle Tradition and the Kingdom

In addition to the material judged genuine in the five categories above, Bornkamm and Käsemann also use the two canons of "consistency" and "multiple attestation" for recovering further authentic characteristics of Jesus in certain other materials which would otherwise have to be suspected of church influence by the measure of the

95. Ibid., pp. 90-95, represents Bornkamm's basic thinking on this entire matter and pp. 94-95 show his faith concern with the history of mankind.

"canon of dissimilarity" and the several other canons. As was the case in reviewing Bornkamm's treatment of "decision and discipleship," the canons of "consistency" and "multiple attestation" are commonly used in a close relationship.

For example, when Bornkamm and Kasemann deal with the miracles of Jesus they are, of course, keenly aware that a number of the synoptic miracle stories are individually suspect by means of the strict employment of the "canon of dissimilarity," the "canon of elimination of analogous material," and the "two canons of the forms" because they show rather strong formal and material similarities to certain known Jewish and Hellenistic miracle stories as well as a growth development from earlier to later forms. Nevertheless, several of the most authentic logia of Jesus (as judged by the "canon of dissimilarity") do indicate that Jesus was, in fact, a miracle worker (i.e., especially Mt. 11:5-6, Mt. 12:28//Lk. 11:20; Mk. 3:27) and within these authentic logia Jesus' own interpretation of his healings and exorcisms is utterly central to his proclamation of the Kingdom. Hence, by the "canon of consistency", Bornkamm and Kasemann can allow that the general impression of Jesus as a healer and exorcist conveyed in the gospel miracle tradition is most likely a valid one, even if the various individual miracle stories should be deemed questionable singly. These questionable pericopae serve in the tradition as "example stories" of an authentic feature of Jesus' earthly life and so can be treated by the historical critic as reliable "portraits or sketches" of Jesus even if they are not true photographs. Furthermore, what is ostensibly affirmed by the "canon of consistency" is given further support by the "canon of multiple attestation." For this same miracle tradition is to be found not only in all of the
various literary sources (including John's gospel), but in individual miracle stories of relatively primitive and materially unparalleled forms, by direct reference (in those texts mentioned above) and by indirect allusion (i.e., Lk. 10:23f.; Lk. 12:54f.; etc.) among the most trustworthy sayings of Jesus. Finally, it should be added that the "canon of the closed causal nexus," while placing the "nature miracle stories" in serious doubt, does not properly rule out the possibility that Jesus was a healer of body and mind on any scientific grounds. In fact, as more and more is known of psychosomatic relationships in the healing processes, Jesus' healing activity becomes more probable by this very canon. Consequently, all of these considerations taken together lead to an affirmation of the critical authenticity of the healing miracle tradition of a secondary level. So these scholars are able to include this feature of "Jesus as healer" in their historical reconstructions of his earthly life and even use individual miracle stories as illustrative of specific interpretative points.  

VI. Interpretative Summary

What purpose, then, does the miracle tradition play for Bornkamm and Käsemann in understanding Jesus and the Kingdom? As has already been noted with regard to Mk. 8:11ff., Bornkamm especially stresses that Jesus characteristically rejected any attempts made by his contemporaries to base their faith in God's activity through him on the prerequisite performance of miracle. For faith, as Jesus understands

97. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 67-69, 74-77, 79, 81, 90, 129-137, 208-209 (the present writer also discussed this question with Professor Bornkamm in a personal interview at his home in Heidelberg on 9 May, 1972); Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, pp. 48-62; Ernst Käsemann, Jesus Means Freedom, p. 22.
it, is not assent to a prior empirical demonstration of God's power and presence. Nevertheless the miracle tradition does have to do with God's power and presence working through this same Jesus who proclaims the inauguration of God's Reign. As Bornkamm says, "All those who turn to him in faith count on the power of Jesus which knows no bounds, and on the miracle which he can work where all human help fails. The miracle stories in all the Gospels are meant to show that Jesus does not disappoint these expectations, and that he has been given this power." So faith is trust in the power and presence of the God whom Jesus otherwise teaches as very near and the miracle stories of the gospels are meant to show the effective realisation of the nearness of God to those who trust in Jesus' words and deeds in their physical and mental needs. True faith, therefore, is not dependent upon miracle but simply is open to the reception of miracle as God's help to human need, whereas unbelief fails to perceive and trust God's Reign which enters human history with Jesus.

In this interpretative understanding of Jesus' miracles, Kasemann is at one with Bornkamm, even though he does not expound his general interpretative understanding with regard to individual texts as fully as Bornkamm.

VII. Jesus' Ministry To the "Poor in Spirit"

A similar use of the two canons of "consistency" and "multiple attestation" can also be found in the works of Professors Bornkamm

98. Bornkamm holds that this is the interpretative significance of the legendary (as judged from a critical viewpoint) temptation story (i.e., Mt. 4:iff.); also Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp.73, 133.
99. Ibid., p. 130.
100. Ibid., pp. 129-133.
and Kasemann when they deal with the synoptic tradition of Jesus' ministry to "the poor in spirit" (or religious outcasts), who were nevertheless apparently more open to the reality of God's Reign than many within the religious establishment of Jesus' time. Here again the work of Bornkamm is most illuminative. Bornkamm agrees with Bultmann that surely the "old beatitudes" as they appear in Lk. 6:20f. must go back to Jesus himself when they are judged on the basis of the 'canon of dissimilarity.'  

102 Furthermore, Mt. 11:5, which passes the "canon of dissimilarity," speaks of Jesus' ministry to the παπάχοι. Thus again, Bornkamm believes that he discovers references to a significant aspect of the earthly Jesus' activity woven into the very core of some of the most trustworthy Kingdom sayings. In part, then, on this basis Bornkamm feels justified in accepting the "portrait value" (or critical authenticity of a secondary level) of the several narratives and sayings of the synoptic tradition which depict Jesus' ministry to responsive tax collectors, people of poor moral reputation, and "the people of the land" who were thus considered ritually unclean by many within the Jewish religious establishment. In fact, even several of the "conflict apophthegmata" which Bultmann had deemed most likely church creations (because they ostensibly justified the activities and attitudes of the early Christian communities against the Jewish establishment of that time) are now accepted by Bornkamm as being quite "consistent" with Jesus' ministry to the "poor in spirit." In addition, what is found to be probably trustworthy by means of the "canon of consistency" is given further

102. Indeed, Bornkamm appears to go beyond Bultmann and to suggest that the essential content of Matthew's beatitudes may be attributed to Jesus as well. Gunther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 75ff., pp. 202-203, footnotes 20-24.
weighty support by the "canon of multiple attestation." That is, this ministry of Jesus to religious and social outcasts, which has as its chief earmark Jesus' assurance of divine forgiveness and acceptance is found in all of the literary sources, in forms of a primitive and secondary nature, in individual sayings, in apophthegmata and this same message of God's unexpected grace is also perspicuous in several of Jesus' parables (which do pass the "canon of dissimilarity"). Thus, the authenticity of this general impression of a characteristic of Jesus' ministry is witnessed to in so many strands and forms of various ages in the tradition that its inclusion could not have been due simply to a later desire to justify church behaviour, in Bornkamm's view. Finally, Bornkamm's reasoning indicates that while this use of the "canon of consistency" and the "canon of multiple attestation" allows for an acceptance of this aspect of the tradition as most likely prior to the church's beliefs concerning Jesus, the "canon of dissimilarity" assures that this feature of Jesus' ministry was not patterned on any current Jewish source, for Jesus' behaviour in this regard stands out in marked contrast to other known religious leaders and sectarian views of his day. 103

Unfortunately, again the critical processes which stand behind Käsemann's general judgments in this matter are not as open to analytical inspection as Bornkamm's but his critical conclusions and several of his statements regarding proper critical methods would surely indicate that he both endorses the essential procedure and result which Bornkamm uses and achieves. 104

103. Ibid., pp. 75-81.

104. Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, p. 44, where he maintains that starting with the critical recovery of the most distinctive elements in Jesus' preaching his other activities, traits and ultimate destiny must be understood. Also Käsemann's own sketch
VII. Interpretative Summary

What do these scholars make of this critically established aspect of the tradition, then? As Bomkamm explains, the whom Jesus speaks of and ministers to are not simply members of a religious group or social stratum. Rather, "As Jesus uses the words, poverty and humility have their original meaning. The poor and they that mourn are those who have nothing to expect from the world, but who expect everything from God. They look towards God, and also cast themselves upon God; in their lives and in their attitude they are beggars before God. What unites those addressed in the beatitudes and pronounced blessed, is this, that they are driven to the very end of the world and its possibilities. . . ." Thus, those whom Jesus calls and ministers to are not primarily those traditionally included among God's elect in late Judaism. Indeed, it is just these "unclean" and "undesirable" persons, normally excluded by the religious standards of late Judaism (in its several forms), that Jesus accepts as God's children: receptive tax collectors, Samaritans, prostitutes, gentiles, those possessed of demons and illness caused by sin (in the popular belief), women and children who count for nothing by society's measure and those who know that they are guilty of violating God's Will are all accepted by Jesus as ones to whom God's love is concretely reaching out. Yet Jesus does this in a manner that does not indulgently overlook moral guilt but rather forgives it and so transforms it into a new commitment to the God who is near. What, in fact, happens in this peculiar behaviour of Jesus is that he presumes to

of Jesus' earthly characteristics in Jesus Means Freedom, pp. 17-42, show that he too accepts this aspect of the tradition as not only critically authentic but absolutely central to any adequate grasp of Jesus' meaning.

105. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 76.
act for God. He does what is God's prerogative in a way that is nevertheless not self-authenticating, but by its very audacity demands a personal decision on the part of his contemporaries as to the source and rightness of his words and deeds of grace.

**VIII. Jesus' Authority**

Finally, Bornkamm and Käsemann both accept Jesus' ἕξωσις in proclaiming the Kingdom and its correlates in his ministries to the sick in body and mind and to the "poor in spirit", as a reflection of an actual trait of his earthly life, by means of a general use of the "canon of dissimilarity." That is, Jesus' authority in proclaiming the inauguration of the Kingdom, in healing persons as a sure indication of that inauguration and in his forgiving acceptance of religious outcasts is sufficiently unlike any other known figure within Judaism to be judged distinctive. Likewise, this multi-located authoritative activity of Jesus is surely not yet a full-blown kerygmatic or self-conscious church description of him, as the later Christological titles and historicised myths surely appear to be. Hence, the "canon of dissimilarity" would seem to assure that Jesus' earthly life must have actually contained within it something very like the ἕξωσις of Jesus of Nazareth as it appears in the most critically authentic strand of the Kingdom of God tradition (even if here and there a more or less primordial kerygmatic influence has already been imposed on some individual, ostensibly authentic pericope). Moreover, what can be asserted by means of the important "canon of dissimilarity" is reinforced by the "canons of consistency

and multiple attestation." That is, because this trait of Jesus' life can be critically recovered in the most authentic logia (i.e., Lk. 10:23f., Lk. 17:20f., Mt. 11:5-6, Mt. 12:28// Lk. 11:20, Mk. 3:27, etc) and also in materials judged critically authentic in at least a secondary "portrait" sense (i.e., the miracle and ministry to outcast traditions), wherever this feature is attached to the person of Jesus in other texts which are not so certainly authentic, the historian may yet accept and use these more questionable texts as containing a true-to-life (or "masterful reproduction") of a feature of Jesus' actual life which yet has a strong claim to general critical authenticity. So, this rather more suspect category of texts is "consistent" with an otherwise highly probable feature of Jesus' earthly life. Additionally, this feature appears in too many strands and forms of the tradition (i.e., in all the literary sources, in forms of all ages and kinds) for Bornkamm and Käsemann to attribute this phenomenon to mere fortuitous causation or an occasional community or editorial influence. Thus, one can perceive here a cumulative critical process in the historical reasoning of Professors Bornkamm and Käsemann which leads to the practical result that wherever these scholars discern the Εὐθυγραμμή of Jesus in the tradition, they believe that they are "in touch" with a trait of the earthly Jesus. Consequently, once this Εὐθυγραμμή is so established as a prime feature of Jesus' life, it becomes almost a "super-canon of critical historical reliability" in itself.107

VIII. Interpretative Summary

What interpretation do Bornkamm and Käsemann derive from the critically established ἐςουσα of Jesus' Kingdom proclamation and its correlates? Both scholars hold that herein are united the innermost secret of Jesus' person, his understanding of human existence, and the basic continuity factor between the earthly life of Jesus and the several kerygmata of the early Christian communities. Jesus' earthly authority then resides in the fact that he presumed to act on behalf of God in several concrete ways: in proclaiming God's nearness and man's need for a decision of trusting openness to Him in the present and oncoming future, in acting as the mediator of God's healing will and power for restoring brokenness in body and spirit in the lives of those who would trust God's presence as Jesus proclaimed it, and in acting as the mediator of God's love and forgiving acceptance of his repentant, sinfully impoverished children. Yet in all of this Jesus' earthly ἐςουσα only created a crisis of decision for those who encountered it (then and now) and was not obviously self-authenticating to objective verification (then or now). That is, Jesus' ἐςουσα thrusts men into the decision of faith which has always within it a risk factor for any would-be believer. 108

Overall Concluding Summary From This Analysis of Representative Authentic Texts Concerning the Kingdom

(a)

The foregoing discussion has shown several critical-historical causes for Professor Bornkamm's and Professor Käsemann's rather fuller historical reconstructions of Jesus' Kingdom proclamation than Bult-
mann was able to present. First, the "canon of dissimilarity" has become an even more productive tool in their hands than in Professor Bultmann's, so that the distinctive traits of Jesus' probable earthly life have become even more vivid in their writings. In concrete results this has led to a recognition that Jesus did, in fact, teach about God's nearness in terms of not only a coming ἕ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ but an inaugurated Kingdom as well. This would seem, on the surface of it, especially significant in light of the fact that Käsemann (at least) sometimes applies the "canon of dissimilarity" more stringently than Bultmann. Furthermore, it should be underscored that especially with the parabolic material of the synoptics, Bornkamm and Käsemann have agreed with the later critical insights of Professor Jeremias by applying the "canon of dissimilarity" in not only a material sense but a formal manner as well. This represents a movement beyond Bultmann's initial critical method in the use of this canon with one block of material. Finally, however, with regard to the "canon of dissimilarity", it must be noted that Bornkamm and Käsemann, like their teacher Bultmann, have found this basic canon to be their chief tool for uncovering the most authentic strand of the synoptic tradition. Secondly, however, while Bultmann did recognise and sometimes use the "canons of consistency and multiple attestation" (i.e., multiple attestation in the special way that is common to all three of these scholars but not to many British and American scholars), Bornkamm and Käsemann have surely moved beyond their former teacher and expanded upon his basic critical insights in applying these canons to the call and response of disciples, the miracle, and the ministry to

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outcasts traditions. Moreover, the general critical validity of this expansion, significantly, has not been criticised by Bultmann but apparently is now accepted by him as a proper development of his own methods. 110

A preliminary caution concerning the "canon of dissimilarity" must be registered at this point, however, which will concern us increasingly throughout this study. That is, while the "canon of dissimilarity" surely is of value in recovering elements of Jesus message which are distinct from the teachings of late Judaism (in its various manifestations) and the specific theological emphases of the early Christian church; it is of no value where Jesus may have held views in common with either of these groups. Moreover, generally speaking, it is not historically unlikely that he did hold some views in common with each of these groups since he was reared as a Jew within late Palestinian Judaism and was the founder of Christianity in some sense. Thus, a false impression could be created by a too rigid use of this canon (and indeed may be by Professors Bultmann, Bornkamm and Küsemann), that whatever does not pass the "canon of dissimilarity" clearly did not have a place among the actual words and deeds of the earthly Jesus. Yet if Jesus did hold some things in common with Judaism and the church, certain of the apparently "un-authentic" materials might have formed a part of his actual life and teaching, nevertheless. 111

110. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, pp. 22-23, where he endorses the results of his students gained by these canons.

By way of example, one thinks of Bultmann's and Bornkamm's denial that Jesus ever spoke of the Kingdom linguistically using descriptive apocalyptic details and, therefore, these (when found in the tradition) must always be considered later church additions borrowed from contemporary Jewish apocalyptic writings. The apparent grounds for this conclusion are that since Jesus spoke of the Kingdom's inauguration in the unapocalyptic events of his ministry and also demonstrated a reluctance to predict the exact time of the consummation in his seemingly authentic logia, and, moreover, in these logia did not speak of the consummation using descriptive apocalyptic detail, he must never have done so. Thus, here we see a blending of the use of the "canon of the argument from silence," the "two canons of the forms" and the "canon of dissimilarity," by Bultmann and Bornkamm. However, the hidden underlying assumption here is that Jesus must always have spoken in precisely the same manner throughout his public life. No allowance is made for the fact that when speaking specifically of the final consummation, Jesus may have been more "Jewish" than these modern western scholars imagine and himself (consciously or unconsciously) borrowed some of the descriptive language of his apocalyptic Umwelt without being apocalyptic in a wholly traditional sense. This, of course, cannot presently be demonstrated to be so but neither should it be ruled out as an impossibility (except where such specific descriptive details are so closely interwoven with known historical events that they can be dated to the time of the church with some confidence rather than Jesus' time).

A similar point could be made with regard to Küsemann's critical interpretative conclusion with regard to Mk. 7:15, that Jesus consciously destroyed the classical ancient belief in demonic possession by declaring that the source of evil comes from within man's
heart, not from without, as was assumed by those believing in demons. Hence, he uses this text (established by the "canon of dissimilarity") as his norm for generally assuming that Jesus surely did not hold to a typical belief in demons. Yet this same "canon of dissimilarity" would seem to indicate that Jesus did on other occasions accept (or allow to pass unchallenged?) the popular belief in demons. Does Käsemann then mean by this that Jesus demythologised belief in demons but on some occasions continued to use traditional language concerning demon possession nevertheless (as do some preachers today) because he himself grasped the "deeper" theological truth about the "possessive" nature of evil contained in the standard language and thought forms of his day and did not want to destroy that deeper insight? If so, Jesus remains very much a Jew of his own time but simultaneously was in advance of his time (as are all men of genius). If this is Käsemann's true understanding, however, why could Jesus not have sometimes done this sort of thing with traditional apocalyptic language as well? 112

The aim here, then, is not to discredit the "canon of dissimilarity" entirely but illustratively simply to set forth a cautionary warning as to its limits by noting that too rigid an application of this canon might make Jesus appear too immediately distinctive in relation to his own time and culture, wherein the critical evidence is not really that certain. Thus, in a rather subtle critical way the true Jewish humanity of Jesus might be improperly shortchanged.

The essential point to be noted presently is that the "canon

of dissimilarity" is not as precise a tool as may sometimes be imagined (in spite of an apparently emerging consensus among a number of current New Testament scholars as to its general validity). For even these three scholars (who agree broadly about its nature) do apply it differently from time to time. With certain of the material which has been reviewed in this chapter, it would indeed appear that Käsemann is the most stringent in his use of the canon. However, the present writer believes that Bultmann is really the most stringent where it would seem to matter theologically. That is, Bultmann's reluctance to ascribe an announcement of a fully inaugurated Kingdom to the earthly Jesus may (at least in part) rest with his keen sense that the kerygmatic beliefs of the later New Testament writers surely assumed and proclaimed such an inauguration with Jesus, even if they did not make their proclamations in the same precise words (how could they?) as are ascribed to Jesus in those synoptic texts which appear reliable by Bornkamm's and Käsemann's use of the "canon of dissimilarity." Consequently, if the early church generally held such a correlative theological belief concerning Jesus as the initiator of the Kingdom (which belief is unquestionably a distinctive departure from any other known form of Judaism) how can the


114. Cf. Howard Clark Kee, Franklin W. Young, Karlfried Froelich, Understanding The New Testament (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), pp. 52, 56-58, wherein these scholars point out that scholarship since C. H. Dodd's The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development has increasingly recognised the diversity of Kerygmata in the New Testament but that one constant feature of these several kerygmatic expressions is a recognition that in Jesus, God has acted for man's redemption by bringing in the New Age (i.e., ἰησου̃σια το θεο ημών).
historian ascribe its origin to the earthly Jesus' specific announce-
ment with complete certainty? So, again it becomes a seemingly cir-
cular question whether historically Jesus or the church first unequiv-
ocally proclaimed the inbreaking of the θεοσ είνα τού θεοο. All we
can know for sure is that Jesus was in some sense the initiator of a
religious movement which indeed saw him as the agent of the Kingdom's
arrival. Hence, the "canon of dissimilarity" can be said strictly to
show only a rather formal distinction between the messages of Jesus
and the church; since materially (i.e. in theological essence) both
messages see Jesus as God's special salvation agent in inaugurating
the New Age of the Kingdom. But if this is so, while it might be
argued that even this formal difference makes it thus historically
more probable that Jesus himself consciously announced the Kingdom's
arrival, it remains a historical probability which has somewhat
shaky foundation. It is not the sort of probability which would
rank extremely high on a cautious historian's probability scale, since
such formal warrants can provide for only qualified conclusions.
Therefore, the conclusions which should be drawn seem rather less
assured than Bornkamm and Kösemann want to make them on the basis of
their use of the "canon of dissimilarity".

However, it must be added that Bornkamm's and Kösemann's crit-
cical recovery of Jesus' miracle and forgiveness ministries by means
of the additional warrants provided by their particular use of the
"canon of multiple attestation" does in turn provide independent
critical support for the notion that Jesus probably did consciously
inaugurate the Kingdom in word as well as deed; for the one authori-
tatively acting on God's behalf in these traditions would seem quite
consistent with the one who thought himself able to announce the
Kingdom's arrival. Moreover, the notion that the Kingdom did arrive with Jesus historically arose somewhere specifically in the Jesus-church complex of events and Bultmann himself thinks it unlikely that such a church belief could be entirely self-induced. However, what is being suggested here is a reversal of the critical reasoning heretofore detected in Bornkamm's and Käsemann's writings, whereby the "canon of multiple attestation" and general probability reasoning about the origins of movements now carry the greater burden of support and the weaker formal indications discovered by the "canon of dissimilarity" hold a secondary supportive role. Of course, even with this arrangement of warrants, final certainty has not been reached for further research might come to suggest that the influences of the kerygmatic beliefs of the church (whose precise origins could be yet unknown) have so heavily shaped the total gospel tradition that even such "multiple attestation" only demonstrates the all pervasive influence of the church's beliefs about Jesus. Then, of course, one would be left with the even more perplexing question as to where and why such a distinctive theological departure from Judaism arose at all and why it was focused so squarely upon Jesus. All of this simply brings us to a position wherein it would seem that the cautious historian today can conscientiously affirm that Jesus was quite probably the originator of the essential gospel picture of him as initiator of the Kingdom and as the mediator of God's forgiving and healing presence, but this historical probability is surely not above further historical doubt and testing. Thus far then, Bornkamm and Käsemann are right to believe that they have presently established a reasonably probable and sufficient historical cause for the church's several kerygmata about Jesus from the most critically reliable Kingdom proclamations and their correlates. Yet they are also correct when they
agree ultimately with Bultmann's emphasis that faith does not really
depend upon, or wait upon, the results of historical research con-
cerning Jesus' earthly life but is a response in the present moment
to the kerygmatic proclamations of the church concerning Jesus. For
in the end, whether Bornkamm and Käsemann demonstrate that there is
a probable, sufficient basis in Jesus' earthly life for the church's belief, it is that belief itself which normally and repeatedly has
called for faith since Jesus' death. 115

(b)

A further concluding observation must be made with regard to
Bornkamm's and Käsemann's interpretative treatment of Jesus' self-
hood. In the foregoing analysis it has been evident that each of
these scholars carefully avoids temptations to conjecture about the
inner life of Jesus and its development. 116 Where they speak of
Jesus' "self-understanding", it is only with regard to his general
understanding of human existence and his mission purpose (i.e. as
the one who thought himself able to make God and His Reign come
near to man) and not as certain others within the Bultmann School
have attempted to do by seeking to probe the inside of the faith of
Jesus (or some such aspect of Jesus' inner life) which Professor Van
A. Harvey has rightly shown is a historically dubious procedure,
because the proper data and warrants are lacking for such an inves-
tigation. 117 However, even this restrained treatment of Jesus' self-
hood significantly provides for a probable historical basis for later

115. If the present writer is correct on this matter, then Van A.
Harvey has overstated his case with regard to Bornkamm and Käsemann
194-196, and Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 9; Günther Born-
kamm, What Can We Know About Jesus?, pp. 85-86; Ernst Käsemann, Essays

116. As we have seen, Bornkamm especially is more cautious than even
Bultmann to speak of Jesus' "prophetic consciousness."

church Christology within Jesus' own mind. 118

Finally, it must be stressed that Bornkamm and Käsemann also avoid another perennial interpretative temptation of questers after the historical Jesus. They avoid the temptation of making Jesus' authority in his proclamation and his deeds appear clearly self-authenticating. They have shown only that the earthly Jesus probably possessed such an έξουσία that he apparently thrust his contemporaries nearly two millennia ago into the decision of faith and that he is still capable of thrusting those who read of the probable nature of his earthly life into that same sort of decision today. Is God's nature as gracious as Jesus proclaims? Is God as near to man as Jesus said? Who then is this Jesus who presumes so confidently to speak and act for God? As is true of any venture of trusting commitment, there is enough inherent, preliminary evidence present so that it appears as if the one who invites trust could be trustworthy, but whether he is so cannot be proven outside of the experience of the one who decides to take the venture and this experience can be tested against the experience of others who may have ventured to trust. Consequently, there may be critical-historical "grounds" which encourage faith in the earthly Kingdom message of Jesus (and its correlates) but just as surely these "grounds" are not an objectively demonstrable foundation which remove the risk factor from faith. So the intrinsic trustworthiness of Jesus and the God whom he presumes to make known are likewise not herewith denied either, but only

shown to be beyond the range of man's objective criteria (today or yesterday) to completely demonstrate. Significantly, this holds equally for the historian's probable critical picture of Jesus (insofar as Bornkamm and Käsemann have been able to reconstruct it) or for the kerygmatic beliefs about Jesus preached by the church in any age, or for an existential interpretative blending of the two; which is finally what we really have in the work of Bornkamm and Käsemann. 119

119. The present writer herewith believes that even as much of Jesus' ministry as we have thus far analysed in the works of Käsemann, and especially Bornkamm, shows that they have attempted to present his earthly life as more than mankind's theologian, for Jesus' person itself (i.e., his word, deed and self-understanding insofar as that can now be critically and existentially historically reconstructed) present us with the question of faith in God. Cf. Hugh Anderson, Jesus and Christian Origins, pp. 169-184; Otto Piper, "A Unitary God With Jesus as His First Theologian," Interpretation XV (Oct., 1961), pp. 473ff.
A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE CANONS OF
HISTORICAL AUTHENTICITY USED BY
RUDOLF BULTMANN, GÜNTER BORNMANN AND ERNST KÄSEMANN
IN ESTABLISHING THE EXOUSIA OF
JESUS OF NAZARETH IN MT. 5:21-48.
Matthew's gospel concludes the Sermon on the Mount with the following words:

Mt. 7:28-9

28 Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἔτελεσεν δ' Ἰησοῦς τοῦς λόγους τούτους ἐξετάσασθαι ὃς ὁ λόγος ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτῶν. 29 ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοῖς ὃς ἐξομολογεῖτο ἐκεῖνος καὶ ὅλη ὁς ὁ γραμματεύς αὐτῶν.

In discussing the origin of these words, Professor Bultmann points out that this summary of the crowd's reaction is surely a terminal formulation, which was inserted by the editing evangelist. Moreover, this formulation is in some manner dependent upon Mk. 1:22. This formulation, however, immediately raises a host of questions with regard to the material that is included in the Sermon, and its corresponding implications. Here the discussion will be limited to dealing with several of those questions which are raised in connection with that section of the Sermon which is generally referred to as "the antitheses" (Mt. 5:21-48). Perhaps the most obvious issue which comes to the fore here, is that of Jesus' ἔξουσία. To what degree is this formulation a reflection of an actual reaction to Jesus' teaching in the days of his flesh? In what sense did the earthly Jesus possess an authority that differed from that of the scribes? Therefore, how far can the antithetical teaching of Mt. 5:21-48 be said to represent the content of an authoritative teaching of the historical figure Jesus of Nazareth? Before one can hope to suggest answers to all of these complex questions, however, he must further undertake an investigation of that fundamental question of the origin of Jesus' teaching as it is presented in Mt. 5:21-48, and its relationship to contemporary Judaism. Only as that origin and relation—

ship are clarified will proper light be shed upon the question of the authority of the historical Jesus.

This discussion will, therefore, proceed by first examining the work of Professor Bultmann with regard to the antitheses. The examination will follow a two-fold pattern. First, Bultmann's basic critical analysis of Mt. 5:21-48 will be set forth. Secondly, an examination will be undertaken of the interpretative implications that Bultmann has drawn from this block of material, with regard to the historical Jesus. Hence, this picture should also serve as a necessary backdrop for any further discussion of the nature of Jesus' authority.

A

I. Bultmann's Critical Analysis of Mt. 5:21-48

As we have seen previously, Professor Bultmann divides the dominical sayings into five categories or forms: the logia, the prophetic and apocalyptic sayings, the legal sayings and church rules, the "I" sayings, and the similitudes and similar forms. All of the material found in Mt. 5:21-48 is treated under one of the first three forms (except for vv. 25-26). Since the borderlines between these forms cannot always be drawn with perfect precision, certain of the sayings here are treated under more than one category. Basically, however, it is quite evident which sayings belong to a given form.

The only major category here not previously discussed in an overview manner is that of the legal sayings and church rules. The legal sayings and church rules are of several origins. Some are dominical sayings which were gathered in the tradition of the primitive church and given a new form or even enlarged upon by the Christian community. Some are simply Jewish sayings which were adopted and fitted into the

2. Ibid., pp. 69-179.
Christian tradition. Still other sayings were created by the church from its consciousness of having a new possession. These sayings were then ingeniously placed upon Jesus' lips in the tradition. These were, of course, originally attributed to the Risen Lord as he was understood to have addressed his church with special community regulations. Still other sayings are called "debating sayings" by Bultmann. These served polemical and apologetic purposes in the church's debates with Jewish opponents. Both in open conflicts and in academic dialogues, scripture was used in the course of the argumentation.

The essential framework and the bulk of the supplementary material of Mt. 5:21-48 actually falls into this category. Bultmann argues that this is so because it makes little difference whether the opposing idea is put in a dialogue form on the lips of the opponent, or Jesus is made to give utterance to it himself. Moreover, it is of little matter whether the "debate" can be traced to a controversy dialogue or a school dialogue. In either case the material used goes back primarily to the Palestinian church debates. Obviously, with a type of saying where church interests are so strong, it is very difficult to be certain about accepting any sayings as absolutely authentic. Basically, therefore, where rules for the discipline and mission of the church are recorded, the critic has to be sceptical of their originating with Jesus. It is far more likely that these sayings are community creations, adaptations or developments. Likewise, the critic must be extremely sceptical of those sayings which express faith in Jesus' person or work, for these sayings surely reflect the church's theological interests. The "canon of dissimilarity" is Bultmann's chief canon here and the "two canons of the forms" serve
the function of placing age and exact church influence. 3

With this brief overview of the basic forms represented in Mt. 5:21-48 in mind, we shall now turn to a general examination of the antithetical structure which is here employed by Matthew. First, Professor Bultmann argues that on any careful analysis it seems clear that 5:21f. (murder), 5:27f. (adultery) and 5:33-37 (false witness) are the older antitheses which the evangelist found in his tradition source. Whether these are church constructions or not, is a matter which cannot be settled with complete certainty. This question will be dealt with in more detail below, but here it is sufficient to point out that Bultmann holds that these three antitheses were the more primitive ones which the evangelist found before him in the tradition. On the basis of these he constructed three other antitheses by using other old material which was not in an antithetical form in the tradition. 4 Secondly, Bultmann admits to the possibility that the antithetical form of ἡκούσατε ὅτι ἔρρεθεν... ἔγῳ δὲ λέγω ὅτι... could be a representative form of speech, which goes back to the actual preaching of Jesus. To the contrary, however, he argues that there is no essential difference between the form of ἡκούσατε ὅτι ἔρρεθεν in Mt. 5, or the ὅμιλα δὲ λέγετε of Mk. 7:11, or the ἕκαστον τῶν λέγουσιν of γραμματές of Mk. 12:35, or the ὅτι δὲ εἰσαν of Mk. 10:4, or even the words of the opponents in Mk. 2:27 and 7:5. 5 Moreover, Bultmann mentions the work of Dalman, who pointed out that the words ἔγῳ δὲ λέγω ὅτι... are paralleled in rabbinic usage. The

3. Ibid., pp. 130-150.
5. Ibid., p. 146.
rabbinic style would sometimes set its point of view against its opponent with just such a phrase as "But I say". Hence, Bultmann contends that, "We must be content to affirm a genuineness only in the sense that the church's new possession, from which these sayings derive, goes back to the preaching of Jesus." Therefore, on the basis of Bultmann's analysis it is by no means certain that the older antithetical sayings as they now stand, or this form itself, were precisely characteristic features of the message of the historical figure Jesus. It is equally possible that the antithetical form was a convenient device which was introduced at some time early in the oral history of the synoptic tradition, and the "older antitheses" might even be community products which arose out of the church's consciousness of its unique possession. The above general picture should act as a clarifying factor in the following more detailed analysis of the various separate units.

The First Antithesis, Mt. 5:21-22

(I, opposing standpoint)

21 ἰδοὺ δὲ τὰς ἀποκαλυφθέντας τιμήσεις τοῖς ἀδικοῦσιν, ὥσπερ ἵν' ἐν φανερῷ ἐσται τῇ κρίσει.

(II, new standpoint)

22 ἰδοὺ δὲ τὰς ἀποκαλυφθέντας τιμήσεις τῷ λαλόμενῳ, ἐνοχὸς ἐσται τῇ κρίσει. ὥσπερ δὲ ἐν εἴπῃ τῷ λαλόμενῳ ἡ ἰδία ἐνοχὴ ἐσται τῷ συνεδρίῳ ὥσπερ δὲ ἐν εἴπῃ. Μωρὲ, ἐνοχὸς ἐσται εἰς τὴν γενναίαν τοῦ πυρᾶς.

First, Bultmann argues that the εἰκή which appears in ὩΘ and in most other manuscripts in verse 22, is clearly a secondary addition, which was later introduced to reduce those extreme demands to a more conventional morality. Secondly, he contends that perhaps

verse 22b is likewise a secondary addition. This contention is supported by the argument that verse 22b is without analogy in similar sayings, and it also reduces the striking impact of the antitheses. Moreover, if verse 22b should be original, the κρίσις in verse 21 must be understood as judgment in a general sense, while the κρίσις of verse 22a would refer to the local court. In this way a building climax would be achieved by the words: κρίσις, συνέδριον, γέννα. Bultmann argues that this notion of a building climax collapses, however, when one realises that the Sanhedrin would not really have been a clear example of a court higher than the local court. Finally, he maintains that it is not at all evident why a term of abuse such as ἀπατή or ἁμαρτία should be more strictly punished than anger, when the main thrust of verse 22a appears to be concerned with rejecting merely external standards. Thus, he suggests that the critic should reckon verse 22b to be an additional juridical formulation. Here Bultmann uses his "canon of the forms and growth", with its norm of conciseness in primitive traditions, as his criterion in judging the relative age of the various parts of this unit of the tradition. He also uses the "canon of internal coherence" in order to determine which segments must have been original and which are likely superfluous and, therefore, later additions.8

Supplementary Material Mt. 5:23-24

23 ἐὰν δὲν προσφέρῃς τῷ δάρῳ σου ἔπι τῷ θυσιαστήριον καὶ τίς μηδέν ὁ ἄδελφός σου ἔχει τι κατὰ σοι, 24 ὥσε ἐκεῖ τῷ δάρῳ σου ἐμπροσέχει τῷ θυσιαστήριος, καὶ ὃπαγε πρῶτον διαλλαχῆς τῷ ἄδελφῷ σου, καὶ τότε ἐλθὼν προσφέρει τῷ δάρῳ σου.

Here Matthew is simply following the editorial principle of subject arrangement. In verse 23-24 the exhortation to forgive is placed

8. Ibid., p. 134.
so as to follow upon the condemnation of anger in the first antithesis. Bultmann also claims that these verses represent an old type of saying within the basic category of legal sayings and church laws. In his view these verses received their legal form essentially from the primitive church, and are in this sense a church construction. This does not mean that the church freely created the content of the saying, however. Rather, the church used older material in its legal formulations. This type of saying is termed a rule of piety, because in such a saying the church was conscious of its peculiar piety in contrast to Judaism. Thus, the church here shows an awareness of its unique piety rather than an awareness of some special duty. Bultmann believes that the editing evangelist has placed this saying in an alien setting. Moreover, Bultmann believes that these verses are a variant of Mk. 11:25 and Mt. 6:14. The form of the saying in Mt. 5:23 would appear to be the most primitive, however, for it presupposes the existence of the sacrificial system in Jerusalem and, therefore, gives evidence of being earlier. The form of the saying in Mk. 11:25 is universalised and referred to prayer in general, while in Mt. 6:14 the evangelist edits and adjusts the saying in order to use it as commentary upon the forgiveness theme in the Lord's Prayer. In this unit of the tradition the "canon of dissimilarity" indicates that the saying is genuine in substance, for it reflects a distinctive ethical emphasis in contrast to contemporary Judaism; while the "two canons of the forms" indicate that the present use of the saying by Matthew is nevertheless an adaptation from a more original setting. Moreover, Bultmann's use of Mk. 11:25 and Mt. 6:14 (in a way that surely would be questioned by a number of scholars)
shows a use of the "canon of multiple attestation" as a supporting argument for authenticity.  

Supplementary Material Verses 25-26

These verses Professor Bultmann first mentions under the classification of the logia. He shows, however, that while they appear in Mt. 5:25-26 simply as an exhortation to reconciliation, originally these verses were in the form of a similitude. Therefore, this saying is not a proper logion. In this context Matthew presents the saying as a "rule of piety", and inserts it as supplementary supporting material under the first antithesis. Originally this "rule of piety" was a perfect example of a similitude which grew out of a 'figure'. A 'figure' in Bultmann's terminology is where an image of some sort is juxtaposed to the object of comparison without any connecting particle. Here, there is no comparative conjunction or application. Thus, this similitude in time came to be no longer considered as such, and was taken rather as a warning to be reconciled with an opponent before the law in this world. In its original form the meaning was most likely that: just as one at times considers it of greatest importance to take proper care in order not to fear an accuser before the civil judge, so should one take steps to put things right while he can, lest he have cause to fear before the heavenly judge. Hence, in the first place this pericope was a parable of the Parousia, which was later transformed into a "rule of piety". It is not fully clear how Luke understood this saying, but his version would appear to be the older form, and reflects a

9. Ibid., pp. 132, 146-147, 149, 324.
basically eschatological interpretation (cf. Lk. 12:58). Again the "canon of dissimilarity" assures the substance of the saying as probably authentic Jesus' material, while the "canons of the forms" indicate an adaptation in the use of the material from its most primitive setting to a later use in the church of Matthew's time.

The Second Antithesis Mt. 5:27-28

(I)  
27 Ἡκούσατε ὅτι ἔφησαν, Οὐ καθαρίσεις.

(II)  
28 οὐκ ἔδει λέγειν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ βλέπων γυναῖκα πρὸς τὸ ἐπιθυμῆσαι αὐτὴν ἢ ὁ ἐνοιχεύσαι αὐτὴν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ.

Bultmann argues that this second antithetical saying is certainly one of the original antitheses (along with Mt. 5:21f. and 33-37). It is certain here, as it is with all of the original antithetical sayings, that the antithesis plainly never circulated as an isolated unit. This can be asserted with the original antitheses, because here the antithesis is only intelligible when it stands in relation to the thesis. Moreover, this saying appears in the form of a mashal, as do all of the original antitheses. Furthermore, here, as with 5:21f. and 33-37, the thesis is put in the form of a prohibition which is not swept aside, but surpassed. In the case of the later antithetical formulations, there is no prohibition, but an instruction or a concession which is not really surpassed; but rather completely abolished. Finally, this saying is similar to the other old antitheses in still another way. In their original forms Mt. 5:21f., 27f., and 33-37 were all polemical in character. Here they have been changed into legal forms, and they now appear as "rules of better righteousness" by which the church is compelled to judge its life and practice. As with the other "old antitheses", the general content of the

10. Ibid., pp. 96, 99, 149, 167, 172.
saying is an indication of its origin from a distinctive source. Therefore, with regard to Mt. 5:27-28 Bultmann uses his "two canons of the forms" in order to discuss the most primitive form of the tradition and its adaptation by Matthew due to a new situation in the life of the church in his day and the "canon of dissimilarity" assures the original form of the saying as essentially true to Jesus' message. 11

Supplementary Material, Verses 29-30

29 εἶ δὲ ὁ δέθαλος σου ὁ δεξίον σκάνδαλεῖ σε, ἐξελε αὐτὸν καὶ βάλε ἀπ' σοδος συμμετεί γαρ σοι ἁπληται ἐν τῶν μελῶν σου καὶ μὴ ὅλον τὸ σώμα σου δειηθεὶ εἰς γενναν. 30 καὶ εἶ ὁ δεξίον σου χεῖρ σκάνδαλεῖ σε ...

Just as Matthew had added supporting material to the first antithesis, he also adds a saying on stumbling in the face of temptation to supplement the second antithesis on adultery. When this form of the saying is compared to Mk. 9:43, 45 and 47, it is evident that Mark is the more primitive. The editors of the synoptic tradition often show novelistic tendencies. These verses are a typical example of Matthew's tendency in this direction. In Mark there is only the mention of a hand, a foot and an eye. Matthew, however, speaks of the eye and the hand being the right member. Here Bultmann's chief canons are the "forms and the growth of the tradition" and the "argument from silence". These indicate that Matthew has adapted a more primitive saying for his own purposes. The "canon of multiple attestation" is used to support the essential authenticity of the original form of the saying. 12

The Third Antithesis, Mt. 5:31-32

(1) 31 ἔρριξαν δὲ, ὡς ἀπολογήσῃ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, δῶται αὐτῇ ἀποστάσιον.

11. Ibid., pp. 134-136, 149.
12. Ibid., pp. 149, 311-312, 324.
Bultmann contends that this saying on divorce was clearly not in an antithetical form in its most primitive stage. Here Matthew has set Jesus' view on divorce (as he has deduced it) in contrast to the Torah by means of the antithetical form (as it is represented in Deut. 24:1). Neither Lk. 16:18 (Q) nor Mk. 10:11f. appear in such an antithetical form. In Mark Jesus forbids a man to divorce his wife, and also forbids his wife to remarry. The Q source (Lk. 16:18 and Mt. 5:32), however, forbids a man to divorce his wife, and it further forbids a man from marrying a divorced woman. In Bultmann's view the Q source represents the more primitive tradition. Therefore, he maintains that the Markan form arose when a legal ruling was wanted not only for the divorcing man, but for his wife as well. Mark is not the only editor to adjust the original tradition, as Matthew has made alterations here in Mt. 5:32. Bultmann believes that it is obviously artificial to say, as Matthew does here, that a man who divorces his wife is guilty because he is thereby the cause of her second marriage. Matthew further displays his editorial tendencies by including the concessionary words η δέι πωρεύεσθαι in Mt. 19:9 and πωρεύεσθαι λόγου πωρευέομαι in Mt. 5:32. Finally, the variant in Mt. 19:9 appears to be an abbreviated form of the Markan version. From this analysis Bultmann believes that it is fair to conclude that the saying on divorce has undergone several editings, and that Mt. 5:31f. is an editing wherein the saying is made into a church law in the antithetical form. Thus, Bultmann's key canons here are his "two canons of the forms". The "canon of
growth" enables him to isolate the most primitive form of the saying and the "canon of the Sitz im Leben" enables him to understand the place of this saying in Matthew's purpose. As the argument shows, therefore, the church interest thus detected means, by the "canon of dissimilarity", that much of the content here cannot be attributed to Jesus himself. Finally, the "canon of internal coherence" is also applied in order to eliminate the seemingly more superfluous material. The "canon of multiple attestation" would indicate that the primitive form of the saying could go back to Jesus and the extremeness of the primitive form, indicates authenticity as judged by the "canon of dissimilarity". 13

The Fourth Antithesis, Mt. 5:33-37

(I)  33 πάλιν ἱκοδομήσετε ὅτι ἔρρησεν τοῖς ἀρχαῖοι, διὸς ἐπιορκήσεις, ἀποδώσεις δὲ τῷ κυρίῳ τοὺς ὀρκούς σου.

(II)  34 ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν μὴ διδάξαί οἶλαμ. μὴτε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, 35 μὴτε ἐν τῇ γῇ...μὴτε ἐλά Ἰεροσόλυμα... 36 μὴτε ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ σου διδάσας... 37 ἐστώ δὲ ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν ναί, οὐ σου... τὸ δὲ περίσσειν τοῦτων ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἐστιν.

Bultmann maintains that this passage is one of the original or 'old' antitheses, which was first used polemically, and only later was reshaped into a church rule. Professor Bultmann, however, is only really sure of verses 33-34a when he makes this contention. He follows C. G. Montefiore with regard to verses 34b-37, and raises the question as to their originality. The first three examples of swearing by heaven, earth and Jerusalem suggest an encroachment on God's majesty. The last example of swearing by one's head makes oath-taking an absurdity, for no creature has power over himself and, there-

fore, cannot hope to add anything to his statement by such supplementary speech. Montefiore has suggested that the first three examples are probably not authentic, because they include scriptural quotations. These quotations could likely have been introduced by some later redactor. The "canon of dissimilarity" calls into question verses 34b-37. The "canons of the forms", however, indicate that verses 33-34 are surely a primitive saying which has been adapted to current church needs by Matthew.14

The Fifth Antithesis, Mt. 5:38-41

(I)  38 ἔκαθοσατε οτι ἐρρέειν, ὅφειλαμεν ἀντὶ ὅφειλοι καὶ ὰδόντα ἀντὶ ὰδυνα.

(II)  39 ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὅτι ἀντιστήναι τῷ πονηρῷ ἀλλ’ ὅστις σε ἀφίζει εἰς τὴν δεξίαν σταγώνα [σου], στρέφετον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην. 40 καὶ τῷ θέλοντι σοι κρίθηναι καὶ τὸν χιτώνα σου λαβεῖν, ἄφες αὐτῷ καὶ τῇ μακρινῇ. 41 καὶ ὅστις δὲ ἀγαρεῖμεν υἱλοῖν ἐν, ὕπαγε μετ’ αὐτοῦ odo.

Verse 42, supplementary material

42 τῷ αἰτοῦτι σε ὡς...

Here Bultmann contends that a comparison of Mt. 5:38-41 with Lk. 6:29-30 quite plainly shows that originally this saying did not appear as an antithesis. Rather, the antithetical form of verses 38-39a has been shaped after the pattern of the original antitheses. The critic must reach this conclusion in Bultmann's view, because in Luke "the parable form and the breadth of the execution which goes beyond the needs of an antithesis to a legal saying support the view that these sayings originally were not clothed in an antithetical setting."15 In character, Mt. 5:39f. is perhaps best described as

a prophetic logion. However, verse 42 is most definitely an alien saying, which came to be attached to the saying on retaliation. This association of the injunction to lend and the injunction to give to those who ask must have taken place at an early date, for they were already linked in Q (cf. Mt. 5:39b-42, Lk. 6:29f.). Still verse 42 is clearly out of place between the new and lofty sayings which surround it here (eg. 5:39b-41 and 44-48). Thus, τὸ ἀντιδίκιον σε δοσι... is typical of the proverbial wisdom of the Old Testament and late Judaism (cf. Prov. 28:27; Sir. 4:4f., 29:1f.; Ἱβ. 4:7). Therefore, "the canon of the forms and growth" is most useful to Bultmann in reaching the primitive form of this saying and "the canon of the forms and Sitz im Leben" in understanding its role for Matthew here.

The "canon of dissimilarity" casts serious doubt on verse 42 as authentic Jesus' material, but allows for the authenticity of the most primitive saying.

The Sixth Antithesis, Mt. 5:43-48

(I) ἐρωτήσατε ὃι ἐροθην, ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου καὶ μισήσεις τὸν ἐχθρὸν σου.

(II) ἔγγο δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀγαπάτε τόδε ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν καὶ προσεχεῖτε ὑπὲρ τῶν διωκόντων ὑμᾶς...

Again verses 43 and 44 were moulded into the antithetical form by the evangelist. A comparison of Mt. 5:43-44 with Lk. 6:27-28 shows that Luke's version is likely the more original form. This can be concluded, because Luke gives the otherwise parallel elements in an abridged form. In verses 45-48, however, it can be seen that Matthew represents the more primitive form with regard to detail. Further,

16. Ibid., p. 119.
Bultmann draws attention to the fact that in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament and late Judaism, the brief mashal is sometimes enlarged with an illustration. Moreover, it is not uncommon to find direct speech interwoven with the illustration. He believes that Mt. 5:44-48 could perhaps be just such a case. In the wisdom literature, the illustration is sometimes an obvious enlargement upon the original mashal, where the wisdom poet has thus amplified some popular proverb. In light of this tendency Bultmann points out that verses 46f may be secondary in relation to verses 44f. The words

οτι του ηλιου αυτον ανατελει επι ποιησος και
λαβεις και βρεχει επι δικαιους και δακκους.

of Mt. 5:45b may represent a borrowing from a current proverb in the Jewish wisdom literature, for this shows nothing characteristic of Jesus' teaching in itself. Since the evangelist saw that this proverb was not inconsistent with Jesus' teaching, he merely inserted it in the present context. Furthermore, the divergent tradition of Luke (cf. Lk. 6:36) raises a question as to whether verse 48 was originally connected with verses 44-47. Whatever the exact history of these verses may be, however, Bultmann is prepared to maintain that Mt. 5:44-48 along with 39b-41, "which admittedly are in part no longer specific examples of logia, contain something characteristic, new, reaching out beyond popular wisdom and piety and yet are in no sense scribal or rabbinic nor yet Jewish apocalyptic. So here if anywhere we can find what is characteristic of the preaching of Jesus". Then while "the canon of dissimilarity" does raise a question as to the authenticity of the content of verse 45b, it as-

sures the authenticity of the remainder of verses 44-48. However, the "canon of the forms and growth" and the "canon of the argument from silence" call into question the antithetical structure itself. Finally, the "canon of internal coherence" raises a question as to the original setting of verse 48 (but not its essential content as has been shown).

II. Bultmann's Interpretative Understanding of Jesus' Preaching of the Will of God, With Especial Reference to the Results of His Analysis of Mt. 5:21-48

In presenting Bultmann's views on this matter, the present writer will, of course, remain as strictly oriented to Mt. 5:21-48 as possible. It would be impossible, however, to do justice to Bultmann's interpretation of these verses if attention were not directed to the wider context within which he treats this block of material. Therefore, this examination will require a summary presentation of Professor Bultmann's understanding of Jesus' proclamation of the Will of God generally, in the context of and in contrast to, Judaism in the first century A. D. Special attention will then be devoted to Mt. 5:21-48, as properly understood against this background.

In Bultmann's view the historical Jesus appeared in a two-fold role. First, as has been shown, he appeared as the eschatological prophet. He proclaimed that the long awaited Kingdom of God was coming in the near future, and thus could already be felt proleptically in human history in the present ministry of Jesus. In light of this, Jesus called for a personal decision for or against this coming Reign of God. The proper decision which Jesus sought from persons consisted of a complete renunciation of all attempts to find security within
this present world. This renunciation of the world must not be conceived of as a form of asceticism but rather as a complete openness to God's nearness and gracious salvation activity. Finally, one cannot seriously doubt that Jesus did appear historically as the eschatological prophet, for the origin of the church itself is too completely tied up with its consciousness of the certain and imminent end of all history. Hence, one must conclude that this consciousness surely cannot be a later community product. Moreover, the movement which Jesus evoked, and his resulting crucifixion, can only indicate that he appeared in the role of a Messianic prophet.20

In Bultmann's view, Jesus further proclaimed that if one would be truly open to the Reign of God, he must be positively prepared by fulfilling God's Will as well. Hence, Jesus appeared not only as the eschatological prophet, but also as the rabbi who proclaimed the true Will of God. The fulfilment of God's Will, therefore, was for Jesus the proper condition of participation in the Kingdom. This fulfilment of the Will of God on a man's part indicates his genuine desire for God's Reign. Thus, only the person who will decide in the concrete present for the demand of God, which meets him in relationships with his neighbours, is actually ready for God's Rule. The ethical demand of Jesus, and his call for decision in view of the coming Kingdom, both thrust men into the very presence of God and revealed to them that now is the hour of decision for or against God. This rabbinic role of Jesus is likewise, on general considerations, well assured historically. The fact of Jesus' appearance as a rabbi

is testified to not only by his various designations as such in the synoptic tradition (e.g. Mk. 9:5; 10:51, 11:21, 14:45), but also by the overall importance given to his ethical teaching in the gospels. Moreover, if Jesus had not appeared in a rabbinic role, the church would never have made a rabbi out of one they clearly considered to be the long expected Messiah. In addition, the careful observance of the Law by the primitive church, and the radical sayings about the Law and its proper interpretation which the church preserved in the synoptic tradition, cannot be adequately explained on any other grounds. Thus, the "canon of multiple attestation" and the "canon of dissimilarity" (insofar as it shows that Jesus' rabbinic role could not have derived from church theology) serve as Bultmann's chief critical canons here. 21

As a rabbi, Jesus was essentially at one with the Jewish scribes of his day in accepting the authority of the Old Testament Law. Here the attitude of the early church is most telling, for "It could not possibly have taken for granted the loyal adherence to the Law and defended it against Paul, if Jesus had combated the authority of the Law. Jesus did not attack the Law, but assumed its authority and interpreted it." 22 Bultmann does allow that Jesus' interpretation of the Law often did violence to its apparent original meaning and that his actions sometimes appeared to conflict with the Law. Nevertheless, Bultmann maintains that Jesus' interpretation and actions were "not inconsistent with his belief that he found in the Law the Will of God." 23 It was after Jesus' death that Paul and

22. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, p. 62.
23. Ibid., p. 63.
other Hellenistic missionaries began to preach a gospel apart from the Law to the Gentiles. Only at this point did the problem of the Law become acute in the Christian community. From this period came the church-created words of Mt. 5:17-19, which were given form in reaction to the Pauline attitude. It may only be said that Jesus abrogated some of the ritual and ceremonial aspects of the Old Testament, which had lost their real meaning for the believing Jew centuries before. These aspects of Old Testament Law had meaning for worship and religious practice at a certain period of early Judaism, but had in recent times become dead and routine ritual. Thus, in setting these aside, Jesus was only attacking a dead cultic legalism, not the fundamental authority of the Law. Therefore, Bultmann believes that it is quite apparent that the notion that Jesus freely attacked the authority of the Law was entirely unknown in the most primitive church. This is further confirmed by such supplementary evidence at Mt. 5:23-24, where temple worship and sacrifice are presupposed, and in the legend of the coin in the fish’s mouth of Mt. 17:24-27, where the community still obviously paid the temple tax. Neither did Jesus protest against the customary religious practices of the Jews (such as almsgiving, prayer and fasting). He only protested against a misuse of these practices for the sake of personal vanity (cf. Mt. 6:1-4, 5-8, 16-18). Even Mk. 2:19 does not involve a basic rejection of fasting. It is only an explanation of the loss of meaning of fasting in the present joyful hour of the inbreaking of the Messianic Age.  

The truly important issue for Bultmann is not that Jesus accepted

the Law as authoritative, but how he, in fact, interpreted and applied the Law. It is precisely at this point that the radically new element in Jesus' teaching becomes clear. Before one can grasp the newness of Jesus' interpretation, however, it must be understood against the situation of Judaism in Jesus' own day. The rabbis of first century Judaism had come to explain the Law in terms of legalism. This legalism had attempted to equate the Will of God with a written code and with the rabbinic oral tradition which properly interpreted that Law. Hence, a true piety was one which sought to win God's favour by a painstaking labour that would fulfill every aspect of the Law's tedious requirements. By the time of Jesus, many of the laws which had had their origin in cultic and ritual conditions which no longer existed, were still preserved and carefully obeyed because they were believed to have been absolutely commanded by God. Therefore, "Obligation to obedience depended no longer upon content but upon formal authority; not what was commanded determined the will of the person acting, but the fact that such and such was commanded."25

Even the universal ethical precepts for human relations and the preaching of the prophets, with their demands for justice and inward righteousness, fell under the petrifying influence of the religion of late Judaism, with its governing notion of a blind obedience that would never think to question the original meaning of the demand. Even the scribes that protested against the idea of rewards and punishments as motivation for obedience, and who criticised legalism to the extent of establishing centrally important ethical and religious principles, never really questioned this basic concept of "formal authority". Hence, there finally appeared a system of "good works" or

25. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, p. 66.
"extra merits", whereby one could go beyond the specific demands of the Law (e.g. as in almsgiving, acts of charity or voluntary fasting). In so doing, one was thought to establish a storehouse of merit that would atone for his transgressions of the Law. It is only against this background that Jesus' proclamation of the Will of God can be rightly viewed. 26

Jesus did not differ from contemporary Judaism by denying the absolute importance of obedience. Rather he appears to have definitely agreed with the Jewish scribes that a man can have no claim upon God, but must obey him as a servant (cf. Lk. 17:7-10 and Mt. 20:1-15). Where Jesus differs from anything in contemporary rabbinic criticism, says Bultmann, is in his protest against purely "formal authority". In contrast to the scribes of his day, Jesus did not hold all the passages of Old Testament Scripture to be equally binding. He would freely set one passage of Scripture over against another in order to show God's Will. In doing this, Jesus was suggesting that man could make distinctions within Scripture, and determine by the content of a command whether it was really a binding command of God or not (cf. Mt. 23:23-24). This new attitude of Jesus' is a departure from all external or "formal authority". In positive terms, Jesus was setting forth what Bultmann has called "radical obedience". Therefore, Bultmann believes that Jesus was saying that,

What God's Will is, is not stated by an external authority, so that the content of the command is a matter of indifference,

26. Ibid., pp. 65-71; Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, pp. 11-13; Rudolf Bultmann, Primitive Christianity, pp. 69-84 and especially pp. 80-84. It is a matter of debate whether the picture of the rigid legalism of late Judaism which is given above by Bultmann is a fair and accurate one, or whether what he says would apply only to given elements within late Judaism. Cf. W. D. Davies and D. Daube, eds., The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956); W. D. Davies,
but man is trusted and expected to see for himself what God commands. God's requirements are intrinsically intelligible, and here the idea of obedience is first radically conceived. For so long as obedience is only subjection to an authority which man does not understand, it is no true obedience; something in man still remains outside and does not submit, is not bound by the command of God. Criticism can still arise: in itself this does not concern me, in itself these things are indifferent - but I choose to obey. In this kind of decision a man stands outside his action, he is not completely obedient. Radical obedience exists only when a man inwardly assents to what is required of him, when the thing commanded is seen as intrinsically - God's command; when the whole man stands behind what he does, when he is not doing something obediently, but is essentially obedient. 27

This "radical obedience" goes beyond Judaism, moreover, in the fact that it does not allow a man to see his life as sometimes neutral, when he is not specifically demanded to do a certain thing by the Law. Jesus taught that there is no middle ground, for a man's whole life is claimed by God, and, therefore, in all of life there are only the two live possibilities of good and evil. It is between these possibilities that a man must constantly decide in every moment. Neither does Jesus' promise of reward (eg. Mt. 6:19, 20; Mk. 10:21), nor does his threat of punishment (eg. Mt. 10:28; Mk. 9:43-47) qualify his demand for "radical obedience". This must be maintained, for Jesus plainly knows of no appeal to merit or rights upon the part of man (cf. Lk. 16:15 and 18:9-14); nor does he consider misfortune a punishment for special sin (Lk. 13:1-3). Nevertheless, Jesus is certain that man does receive both reward for obedience and punishment for disobedience. 28 This apparent contradiction can be solved, Bultmann believes, for

The motive of reward is only a primitive expression for the idea that in what a man does his own real being is at


27. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, pp. 76-77.

stake - that self which he not already is, but is to become. To achieve that self is the legitimate motive of his ethical dealing and of his true obedience, in which he becomes aware of the paradoxical truth that in order to arrive at himself he must surrender to the demand of God - or in other words, that in such surrender he wins himself. This paradoxical truth is taught in the following saying: Lk. 17:33

'Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it,
But whoever loses his life will preserve it.' 29

In light of this new demand for "radical obedience", one can also correctly understand Jesus' attitude toward the conventional Jewish piety. In Jewish piety the individual could all too easily become hypocritical and take special pride in his own correct performance of the Law's requirements. Jesus, however, saw precisely that when obedience is not understood radically, a man can easily come to look upon his obedience as a self-achievement. When this happens, the end result can only be a self-righteousness and pride, which looks down upon others who are less strict in their obedience to an external authority. This is why Jesus rebukes the people who are not inwardly obedient and are, therefore, misusing their piety (cf. Mt. 6:2, 5, 6; 23:5, 27, 28; Lk. 16:15). 30

Likewise, Bultmann claims that Jesus' words with regard to a heavy burden being lifted make sense now. When a man is "radically obedient", he is freed from a continual and yet senseless searching for the correct command or prohibition by which to live. He is freed from fear of failure, because of ignorance of some fine point of the Law, and from the contempt of the self-righteous scribal class. Under obedience to the "formal authority" of the Law, the scribes became the only ones who could really be obedient, for they alone had studied the Law well enough to know its proper interpretation.

30. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, pp. 80-81.
It is with this in mind that Jesus denounces the scribal class (cf. Mt. 23, 13). Moreover, Bultmann contends that one can now understand why the church felt free to put the wisdom words of Mt. 11:28-30 into the mouth of Jesus. For, "The obedience which Jesus asks is easy, because it frees man from dependence on a formal authority, and, therefore, frees him also from the judgement of the men whose profession it is to explain this authority. Such obedience is easy, because it depends on the judgement and responsibility of the one concerned."\(^{31}\)

In another way, however, Jesus' obedience is truly more difficult, for it calls men to the burden of personally choosing God's Will and not their own. Hence, Jesus never identified "the good" with man's ideal human nature, but only with God's sovereign Will. Jesus' ethical teaching places the individual before the Will of God, so that he must decide and express his decision by a concrete action of obedience or disobedience. \(^{32}\)

From the above, Bultmann has made it clear that he understands Jesus as offering man no concrete standard of right or wrong, nor does he offer a theory of the highest good. Jesus always thrusts man back upon his own judgment to discover God's Will in the "present concrete moment." Therefore, it is not an alarming factor for Bultmann's theology that his form-critical analysis really yields no distinctly new ethical precepts of Jesus and that numerous parallels can be traced in the Jewish tradition to most of Jesus' ethical sayings. In this situation Bultmann suggests that the correct procedure for comprehending Jesus' own distinct ethical contribution is to examine his sayings that are most likely to be authentic. In these

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31. Ibid., p. 83.
32. Ibid., pp. 81-86.
"authentic sayings" one can discover not precepts or principles but Jesus' own radically new conception of obedience to the Will of God. On the basis of his analysis, Professor Bultmann regards the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount as representative of some of the oldest and most probably characteristic of Jesus' sayings recorded in the synoptic tradition. Moreover, the fact that only the first, second and fourth antitheses were analysed as having been in the antithetical form in the oldest tradition means little, for the essential content of the other antitheses is equally old and characteristic of Jesus (in spite of their being recast into the antithetical form by the evangelist in Mt. 5:21-48). Here if anywhere, Bultmann believes we can see the historical Jesus revealing his unique interpretation of the Old Testament Law in contrast to the scribal principle of "formal authority". Here Jesus utterly destroys the scribal interpretation of the Law. It would be helpful, therefore, if the most reliable material could be set forth at this point. This drawing together of the results of Bultmann's analysis will serve as a graphic reminder as to the content of his basic conclusions.

You have heard that it was said to men of old, Do not kill; whoever kills shall incur judgement. But I tell you, every one who is angry with his brother shall incur judgement (22b is probably a later elaboration) (Mt. 5:21-22).

You have heard that it was said, Do not commit adultery. But I tell you, every man who looks at a woman to desire her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Mt. 5:27-28)

Further it was said, He who sends away his wife must give her a writ of divorce. But I tell you, he who sends away his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. (Mt. 5:31-32 or Lk. 16:18).

33. Ibid., pp. 87-89.
Also you have heard that it was said to men of old, Do not swear falsely, but keep your oath to the Lord. But I tell you, do not swear at all; your word must be yes for yes, no for no; whatever goes beyond that is evil. (Mt. 5:33-37).

You have heard that it was said, Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth. But I tell you, do not defend yourselves against injury; whoever strikes you on the right cheek, offer him the other; whoever goes to law with you about your cloak, give him your coat also; whoever forces you for a mile, go two with him (Mt. 5:38-41).

You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbour and hate your enemy. I tell you, love your enemies and pray for your persecutors, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. For he lets His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and lets it rain on the just and the unjust; for if you love only those who love you, what have you done? Do not the tax-collectors do that? And if you greet your brothers only, what especial thing do you do? Do not the Gentiles also do that? You must be perfect, as your heavenly Father also is perfect (Mt. 5:43-48). 34

In the above six antitheses it can be seen that a single decisive theme runs throughout. One can not do good in a partial manner or with reservations and qualifications, in order simply to fulfil an outward regulation. The good must be done completely and from the whole man. Thus, one who refrains from the act of murder, but whose heart is yet filled with anger, has not become completely obedient. Likewise, he who shuns adultery, and yet inwardly lusts, is not wholly pure. Whoever avoids perjury and still fails to be absolutely truthful, does not grasp the meaning of real obedience to God's Will. The man who divorces his wife has not understood that marriage requires a total decision of loving commitment of a man. He who takes revenge for an unjust act has not really rejected injustice, but clings to a selfish desire for personal retaliation. Finally, the one who shows kindness only to his friends, has not understood that complete love

34. Ibid., pp. 89-90.
means a true concern for one's enemies as well. In every case, Jesus has set the "formal authority" of the Old Testament Law against the true demand of God.

God is not concerned with external behaviour that is motivated by a blind obedience to an ancient code, but He is concerned that a man's inner motives should arise from a posture of complete obedience, which permeates one's total being. In the older antitheses the Law prohibits murder, adultery and perjury (Mt. 5:21f., 27f., 33-37), but Jesus presses home an interpretation of these laws that demands a sort of inward obedience that was yet unknown in Judaism. The later antitheses (Mt. 5:31f., 38-41, 43-48) were formed from other old sayings of Jesus on the example of the original antitheses, because they were properly understood by the evangelist as reflecting this same radical obedience. These laws were all basically of a concessionary nature, wherein a man was allowed some scope for his own self-will. Jesus annuls these concessions of divorce, jus talionis and restriction of love to one's neighbour. He proclaims that God demands a total surrender of a man's will, and thus concessions have no place if obedience is properly comprehended. The Law could only lay a claim upon a man insofar as his conduct could be regulated by precepts, and beyond these limits a man was free to do as he pleased. Here, however, Jesus shows that such an idea of freedom is an illusion.

The totality of a man's life is claimed by God. In teaching this, Jesus is not setting us some better law to guide the life of man. Rather, he is entirely separating obedience from any form of legalism, and opposing the notion that the fulfilment of any law is a fulfilment of the Will of God. 35 "For God demands the whole man, not merely

35. Ibid., pp. 90-92; Rudolf Bultmann, Primitive Christianity, p.85.
specific acts from the man."\textsuperscript{36} Bultmann maintains that Jesus thus definitely saw human action from the viewpoint of an either/or decision in each concrete moment of life. Thus,

Whoever appealing to a word of Jesus refuses to dissolve an unendurable marriage, or whoever offers the other cheek to one who strikes him, because Jesus said so, would not understand Jesus. For he would have missed exactly the obedience which Jesus desires; he would imagine that he could achieve and present an act of obedience when obedience is not really present as the determining factor of his life. All these sayings are meant to make clear by extreme examples that it is not a question of satisfying an outward authority but of being completely obedient. \textsuperscript{37}

Neither can one escape the crisis of decision by saying that in the antitheses Jesus was really more interested in human intentions than in specific actions. This would be to separate intention from action. Furthermore, such a separation could easily excuse weak action in the present, if one's intention was basically good. In this view, a good intention would "one day" express itself in more positive action, once it had been properly strengthened by further educational experience in moral decision-making. Such a notion excuses a man's moral failure in the present by some projected compensation in the future. Rather, Jesus emphatically does not see moral failure as a relative stage in the development of character. Failure is sin, for Jesus understands man as making all ethical decisions precisely before God. Likewise, Jesus does not present an ethical idealism in these antitheses. Rather, he brings an absolute command of God to the fore. This can be seen in the fact that Jesus does not spell out the content of the meaning of love in his own command to love. He makes no effort to explain all that a man must do in loving a neighbour or an enemy. One is only told that he must love, and what he

\textsuperscript{36} Rudolf Bultmann, \textit{Jesus and the Word}, p. 92.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p. 92.
must not do. An ethical idealism should suggest how one must love; or in any case what one must do in certain given circumstances, in order to provide for "the welfare and happiness of humanity." Jesus, however, was not interested in providing a system of ethics that would be universally valid, or would spell out exactly what must be done or left undone. Such a theory of ethics would in effect make man a seemingly secure being, who could control every situation with his general ethical theory. Rather, Jesus saw man as fundamentally insecure and as one who must face each new decision without the aid of a definite standard. He could take this radical position because he determined the good always from God's standpoint and not from man's. Hence, Bultmann claims, "He can only leave the decision to the man in his concrete situation. If a man really loves, he knows already what he has to do." It is from this perspective alone that one can rightly grasp the "radical obedience" which the antitheses demand.

Professor Bultmann also contends that this call to "radical obedience" which is set forth so vividly in the antitheses (and indeed also in the other critically authentic ethical sayings of Jesus), is not a form of asceticism. Jesus was himself no ascetic, for Mt. 11:19 makes this fact abundantly clear. The demand for asceticism really carries with it the idea that this quality then becomes a permanent possession of the individual's character. This conception would shift the emphasis from the absolute character of the action, to an ideal achieved by good behaviour. On the other hand, asceticism could also be of the kind that despises the material realm, and so tries to achieve a spiritual sanctification in the midst of the world. Both notions,

38. Ibid., pp. 84-85, 93-94.
39. Ibid., p. 94.
however, really aim at some ideal life for man. Jesus, on the contrary, is concerned only with placing man in the moment of decision now, before the holy demand of God. This is quite another thing from the aims of asceticism. Likewise, Jesus was not attempting to found a world ethical revolution, for again such a conception turns away from Jesus' concrete concern to some other imagined purpose. He was concerned only that man should discover God's Will in the actual comprehension of his own true existence. That is, in the present moment of decision. Thus, it would be a gross misunderstanding of Jesus to maintain that he was either a teacher of asceticism or a social or political reformer. One cannot hope to gain support for such a false understanding of Jesus from the antitheses. Bultmann would contend that such conclusions are really based on other grounds than a careful analysis of Mt. 5:21-48. Such conclusions owe their origins to a bias of the historical interpreter.

Jesus radically sets forth the command of love toward enemies in Mt. 5:43-48. Here Jesus suggests that real obedience knows no limits, and true love even includes one's enemies. This command coupled with his answer to the question regarding the chief commandment (cf. Mt. 22:34-40; Mk. 12:28-31; Lk. 10:25-28), wherein Jesus responds with the answer that one should love God and his neighbours, form what might be called a "summary" of Jesus' ethical teaching. Here one can see that which Jesus required of man in his entire conduct toward others. He focused his ethical teaching in the commandment of love toward God, and, therefore, love for all man; whether they be neighbour, friend or foe. If one is to make such a sweeping statement,

40. Ibid., pp. 98-110.
however, Bultmann believes that two things must be understood. First, because the sayings are so few, one can be certain that neither Jesus nor the church intended this command to be used as a specific programme of ethics. "Rather the demand for love is included under the general requirement of doing the Will of God; or better expressed, the Will of God, insofar as it determines conduct toward other men, may be designated as the commandment of love." Secondly, neither Jesus nor the church viewed this command as something completely new. The command of love as the summary of the Law was well known in Jewish literature. Furthermore, the love of men generally and enemies specifically was considered to be one of the highest virtues in certain pagan ethical writings (eg. especially Stoic writings). In the pagan literature, however, the requirement of love is generally based on an idea of humanity, wherein a man should not be moved out of his spiritual equilibrium by any injustice that confronts him. In such writers as Seneca, however, the demand is based on a conception of man as a being of intrinsic value, and because this is objectively true, one must love all men (even one's enemies). The basis of Jesus' command is not a conception of strength of character or the intrinsic value of human beings, but the idea of obedience to God and the surrender of one's own claim. "Jesus thought of love neither as a virtue which belongs to the perfection of man, nor as an aid to the well-being of society, but as an overcoming of self-will in the concrete situation of life in which a man encounters other men." Again, Jesus refuses to spell out a new ethical principle, but suggests that the man who is obedient before God will know what love demands in each

41. Ibid., p. 110.
42. Ibid., p. 112.
particular situation of life. Neither did Jesus suggest that love for man equalled love for God. Rather, he demands a love for God as primary, which Bultmann understands as the command to "how your own will in obedience to God's." This bowing of the will to God defines already how one will deal with his neighbour and his enemy. When one is obedient to God, he surrenders his selfish will, and is thus prepared to sacrifice himself for his neighbour or his enemy. Moreover, this loving of the other shows one's true obedience to God, for in becoming obedient he learns to will that same love which God wills for one's fellows.

Once he has made it clear that Jesus taught no new ethical principle, Bultmann is willing to qualify his apparently extreme emphasis, which could suggest that Jesus' command of love has no real content at all. Rather, Jesus did teach that a man should love his neighbour, "as he loves himself". Now every natural man knows what this means without any guiding principle of morality. Since a man knows what it means to love himself, he knows already what his conduct should be in each specific situation. Moreover, this phrase "as yourself" cannot be rationalised, for it places one in the searchlight that cannot be dimmed. Its light floods the most hidden parts of a man. Any discourse on loving one's neighbour could be evaded with a host of rationalisations and excuses. It could be said that the command did not cover a certain case, or overlooked yet another situation. The two words "as yourself", to the contrary, leave self-love with no escape clauses. Jesus did not suggest by this phrase that a man must cultivate a self-love before he can act ethically, however. Self-

43. Ibid., p. 114.

love as Jesus refers to it, is the attitude of the natural man that must finally be overcome in its narrow exclusive dimensions. The mark of one who truly loves is, therefore, a readiness to forgive one's neighbour or enemy for some wrong done. If forgiveness is seriously grasped, it knows no limit; and exclusive self-love must utterly die in its wake. From all of the above it can be seen that love is not merely a passing emotion but an attitude of the will that lives by the command of God. Since love is no mere emotion, then, indifference cannot be considered a middle ground. "But if love means the surrender of one's own will for the good of the other man, in obedience to God, there exists for man only the Either - Or of love and hate." What men call indifference is in fact a form of hate, for in this attitude the selfish nature of man is in control. Moreover, if love were based on an emotion such as sympathy, it would really be an unhealthy expression of self-love, for it would be a "love" based on the preference of the self. In Jesus' view, one's neighbour is not the man whom one prefers, but is in fact every man that is encountered in the course of life. Likewise, the very fact that Jesus commanded love shows that it is not an emotion in his understanding, but rather an attitude of the will.

Finally,Mt. 5:48 shows plainly and supremely that Jesus' teaching on the Will of God was no idealistic ethical system. As Bultmann's analysis demonstrates, Mt. 5:48 is likely older than the form "Be merciful as your Father is merciful" (Lk. 6:36), for Luke appears to have changed the saying in order to make a suitable transition to the following section. In Bultmann's view, therefore, Mt. 5:48 most likely

45. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, p. 118.
46. Ibid., pp. 115-119.
represents an authentic utterance of Jesus. For this very reason, one cannot here allow the Greek idea of perfection, for Jesus in all probability would have spoken these words in Aramaic; not in Greek. The Greeks saw perfection as an ideal to be achieved by gradual improvement. Hence, for them the perfect was the peak of a set of relative values. Such an idea would have been foreign to Jesus' view of God, for God cannot be measured in terms of relative values. Likewise, the Semitic understanding of perfection is an absolute conception. Thus, Jesus must have had in mind some such meaning as "sound" or "whole". When the Semitic idea of perfection was applied to man, it could also mean "true" or "exact". Jesus was, therefore, asserting that a man's conduct must be undivided and unwaveringly true. Here Jesus based his requirement upon the value of God Himself, before whom there is only an Either - Or. Thus, "This saying expresses the whole emphasis of the demand of Jesus; man stands in the crisis of decision; and this decision is not something relative, a stage of his development, but the Either - Or before which God has placed him, so that man's decision has final character; he becomes thereby a righteous man or a sinner." 

III. Conclusions From Bultmann's Analysis of Mt. 5:21-48

In concluding this review of Bultmann's work with regard to Mt. 5:21-48, a few further words must be devoted to three general matters in a final summary fashion.

(a) The first matter is that of critical historical authenticity as it appears in Bultmann's work here. In dealing with his form-
critical analysis of these verses, one senses a very great degree of caution in allowing anything in this block of material as the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus. When Professor Bultmann says that verses 21-22a, 27-28 and 33-34a represent the original old antitheses, he does not commit himself to the view that these are actually the words of the historical figure Jesus. He only maintains that these words are genuine in the sense that they are truly representative of the church's consciousness of a new possession. This consciousness itself goes back to, and arose in response to, the historical preaching of Jesus of Nazareth (Cf. footnote 20). Nevertheless, the church's consciousness, and these words as Jesus' *ipsissima verba* are not to be equated. Furthermore, as one works his way through the secondary antitheses, the supporting material, and additions from other sources which Bultmann isolates in his form-critical analysis; one can be even less sure of firm historical ground. On the basis of Bultmann's critical analysis of Mt. 5:21-48, one might be tempted to conclude that he is very sceptical indeed. Yet when one turns to his later books, *Jesus and the Word*, *Primitive Christianity* and his *New Testament Theology*, it is soon discovered that extreme scepticism here would not be a fair characterisation of Bultmann's attitude. In *Jesus and the Word*, *Primitive Christianity* and in his *New Testament Theology*, Bultmann is willing to treat verses 21-22a, 23-24, 27-28, 29-30, 31-32, 33-37, 38-41, and 43-48 (with the possible exception of 45b) as representative enough of Jesus' actual message to draw some highly concrete interpretative conclusions about Jesus' message concerning the Will of God. What can account for this seeming contradiction between Bultmann's critical and interpretative writings? The present writer would suggest that this difference is only seen as a real contradic-
tion, if one is not willing to understand the whole of Bultmann's work. Some are content simply to believe uncritically much that has been written about Bultmann's radical scepticism. Once this viewpoint has petrified one's thinking concerning Bultmann, his rather more generous attitude (which is seen most clearly in his interpretative historical writings) can only be understood as an apparent contradiction. The present writer would maintain, however, that what he allows in his interpretative writings about Jesus is not really excluded in his critical work. What Bultmann is concerned to show in his critical work, is that our only certain link to the actual preaching of Jesus here is the church's consciousness of its new possession. While this consciousness cannot be trusted as a source for absolutely certain or unshakeable historical sayings, it can nevertheless be trusted as being in essential historical harmony with Jesus' actual message concerning God's Will. Therefore, the above examination of Bultmann's work leads to the conclusion that there are indeed two orders of critical reliability in his thinking. The first order is that of the ipssima verba of Jesus, which cannot be found with certainty in Mt. 5:21-48 and, therefore, stands as more of a theoretical possibility than an actual one here. The second order is that of a "church consciousness" which is yet essentially true to the content of the teaching of Jesus and can, therefore, be trusted as to general content in reconstructing the message of the earthly Jesus. This type of historical reliability can be seen in Mt. 5:21-22a, 23-24, 27-28, 29-30, 31-32, 33-37, 38-41 and 43-48. It should be underscored, however, that this second order of reliable material is found only in those sections of the tradition which have passed Bultmann's stringent canons of critical-historical authenticity and, therefore, possess a strong
claim to primitiveness of form and a distinctive ethical flavour, in his view.

Before moving beyond the issue of Bultmann's evaluation of critical historical authenticity here, one further matter deserves a summary statement; that is, the relative importance and function of Bultmann's several critical canons as they are applied to Mt. 5:21-48. As was seen in the review of the critical canons in the preceding chapter concerning the Kingdom of God in Jesus' message, here also the "canon of dissimilarity" serves Bultmann as his chief norm for discerning material clues of probable distinctness which can thus be traced to an origin with Jesus, because they show a significant contrast to the teachings of Judaism on the one hand and the church on the other. Twice in analysing Mt. 5:21-48 Bultmann also uses his "canon of multiple attestation" as a criterion for detecting probable Jesus' material, although this canon is neither as frequently used, nor as strong an indicator of authentic Jesus' material for Bultmann as the "canon of dissimilarity". Likewise, in Mt. 5:21-48, as with the Kingdom of God material previously reviewed, only those sections can be trusted as being most primitive (although not necessarily thereby Jesus' material) which can pass the standards of the "two canons of the forms". Consequently, these two canons similarly serve Bultmann here as his most normative for determining the relative age of the various pericopae. Three cases of the use of the "canon of internal coherence" and one of the "canon of the argument from silence" are seen in a supportive role here also in determining age. Thus, they serve as secondary but none the less valuable supplementary canons to the two primary "formal canons". Finally, the "canon of the isolated pericopae" is evident throughout this analysis, as Bultmann
repeatedly demonstrates how separate units of the tradition have been fused together and reshaped by Matthew in setting forth the six antitheses.

(b) The second matter is that of Bultmann's historical (geschichtlich) interpretation of Jesus' ethical message as it is so characteristically reflected in Mt. 5:21-48. Here the significant question arises as to whether Bultmann interprets Jesus' message adequately. There can be little serious doubt that Bultmann's existential insights do enable him to illuminate certain aspects of Jesus' break with the legalism of much of the Judaism of his own day. Here ongoing New Testament scholarship must gratefully acknowledge that Bultmann's study of present day existential approaches to ethical decision-making has given him an especial "life relationship to" and 'reunderstanding of' Jesus' own resistance to the stifling tyranny of the codes and casuistry of late Judaism, which had tended to remove a man's moral decision-making from the realm of acute personal responsibility in the ever-changing situations of life under the continual guidance of, and in the concrete awareness of, the actual presence of the living God. Yet the present writer still is compelled to ask whether Professor Bultmann has not also allowed his special interest (i.e., his second hermeneutical canon) in existential ethics (i.e., his third and fourth hermeneutical canons) to unduly cloud his otherwise keen perception, so as to miss other interpretative possibilities which might be contained in his critically recovered authentic logia and thus sometimes fail to interpret truly the whole of his text from its parts, and the parts from the whole, as he surely intends to do (i.e., his first hermeneutical canon).
By way of example, it is at least questionable whether Jesus' teaching does entirely repudiate some general (but not rigid) guidance for the individual from the deepest insights and intentions of the (past and current) ethical codes of Judaism and thereby really thrusts man wholly unaided by the community's overall moral-religious experience into the stark presence of God in each new moment of decision in life. Rather, does not Jesus' general acceptance of the more profound intentions of the Law in the antitheses imply as much? Likewise, one wonders if Jesus' norm of "loving others as one's self" is utterly incompatible with such an acceptance of the deeper intentions of the Law as usable but flexible guidelines from moment to moment? If Jesus did accept the intention of the Law as a guide, then Jesus may not have been so opposed to the value of ethical guidelines as Bultmann often suggests, provided one understands with Jesus that these guidelines must always remain flexible enough to allow the loving purpose of the living God to override any stifling allegiance to standing guidelines which might normally be useful as criteria for proper behaviour. Following from the above, it would also seem that if Jesus did allow for such profound but still flexible guidelines, he would have thereby provided for some check transcending the individual upon sinful man's amazing ability to rationalise his own selfish motives mistakenly as "love" in the often difficult "pressures of the moment". It would otherwise seem, from the critical evidence available, that Jesus was more keenly aware of sinful man's ability and tendency to deceive himself and others about his motives than most men are. Consequently, it would not seem inconsistent if Jesus did accept just such flexible and profound guidelines as a guard against any individual's rather too easy acceptance of changing sociological
standards as God's "true intention", while at the same time remaining open to the genuine new insights which emerge with changing times and situations. Moreover, how can Bultmann be so sure that Jesus saw man's life of ethical decision-making as segmented into "separate moments" rather than as linked in a manner which would provide the individual with some evaluative guidance (and thus possibly some moral growth) from past positive and negative experiences in moral decision-making? Sometimes one feels that by such assertions Bultmann himself is trying to probe Jesus' mind psychologically in a way he does not normally allow, because this emphasis fits so well with what he has learned from existential ethics. Indeed, it would appear that Bultmann does not really want to isolate a person's present moments from his past and future; but rather to emphasise clearly that each new decision really involves such a critical questioning concerning one's past, under the often peculiar nuances of the present, that each new decision has about it the quality of a genuinely fresh encounter with God, whereby one becomes free for the future anew. Our past, (whether good or bad) thus should not be allowed to suffocate the uniqueness and possibilities of the present and the open future. Still it must be noted that such an interpretation of Bultmann's meaning must be unearthed from a number of his specific statements by always remembering his statements concerning the interlocking nature of past, present and future. Moreover, this exact intention is only spelled out with full clarity and precision when Bultmann believes himself compelled to respond to one of his more appreciative critics on this matter. Finally, it might also be asked by what interpretative canon does Bultmann know that

50. Ibid., p. 147.
Jesus' emphasis on radical obedience to God (as a servant) of necessity excludes the possibility for Jesus (who also spoke of God's fatherly concern for the welfare of His children) that that which fulfills the Will of God is not likewise meant to be the most fulfilling for the true humanity of mankind? Does Bultmann's proper realisation of the obedience theme in Jesus' teaching overshadow its probable blending for Jesus with a loving purpose for humanity within the Will of God; and thus also overshadow man's response of obedience precisely because he is so loved by God? It would appear to the present writer, at least, that often Bultmann seems to set these two emphases in unnecessary tension, or even contradiction, because of his reaction to the anthropocentric tendencies of the philosophical idealism of much of liberal protestant exegesis. His attempt at correction, however, amounts to an over-reaction which thus strains the truth otherwise contained vividly in Bultmann's exegesis.

These questions and criticisms are then, clearly not meant to discredit the several valuable historical-interpretative insights which Bultmann's hermeneutical canons do provide here. Rather, these questions are meant to indicate that in spite of the several especially helpful aspects of Bultmann's interpretative procedures, there is also a significant danger residing in his method. Moreover, this danger is located at a crucial point, for it is doubtful if Bultmann has actually taken scholarship much beyond liberal hermeneutical procedures methodologically. Bultmann, like the liberal scholars before him, tends to telescope his authentic historical evidence concerning the first century of Palestine and the philosophical insights of a specific philosophical tradition of modern times (in Bultmann's case existentialism). Should the judicious historian not attempt to dis-
tistinguish quite carefully between the interpretation of a person against his own Umwelt (allowing for - or at the very least leaving open - several possibilities where the critically reliable evidence can be read several ways) and his own present day "interpretation-application" of that past figure's meaning (or the meaning of his message) for any given modern generation or culture? Indeed, it is quite possible that a past figure (such as Jesus) might possess certain insights in common with specific present day insights into the nature of reality and yet be at variance with, or at least not in full harmony with, other insights of a given contemporary system of thought or philosophical tradition. Surely, allowance must be made, not only in theory but in practice, for the "individuality" or "strangeness" of any past figure as well as his conspicuous agreements with any given current conceptual notions. More attention to this factor in proper historical understanding should provide for less "forcing" of any thorough-going, modern viewpoint upon Jesus in hermeneutical practice. One gains the impression that more attention to the above point could also provide for more genuine and humble: "ecumenical" learning than normally takes place between the various "schools of interpretation". The present writer would maintain that Bultmann's own theoretical writings (especially when discussing his second and third hermeneutical canons) do draw special attention to just this need, but that his own practical work tends to fall short of the goal because of the rather exclusive manner of his exegetical use of his fourth hermeneutical canon.

(e)

The third matter is that of the Κύριος of Jesus. How does Bultmann understand Jesus' teaching with authority, as it is revealed by his critical analysis and interpretation of Mt. 5:21-48 and Jesus'
Kingdom proclamation? In what sense is Jesus' authority distinct or unique? It should be pointed out that Bultmann does not discuss the question of the ἐξουσία of the historical Jesus in a detailed manner, in these precise terms, in his constructive historical writings. Nevertheless, he does have a great deal to say about this problem in somewhat less explicit terms. There is one especial exception to this tendency in Bultmann's writings, however. He does specifically discuss this question in his paper entitled *Das Verhältnis der urchristlichen Christusbotschaft zum historischen Jesus*, which he delivered before the Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften on 25 July, 1959. This paper represents Bultmann's reaction to his pupils' resumption of the Quest of the historical Jesus. This address and its essential conclusions on the question of Jesus' ἐξουσία will be discussed further below. First, however, concentration must be focused upon Bultmann's own positive, if less explicit, writings on this same subject.

It is apparent that Bultmann does believe that the historical Jesus did possess an authority which differed radically from the scribes of contemporary Judaism. The scribes attributed absolute authority to the Torah as the formal legal power, and to the oral Tradition which the great rabbis had created in order to apply the Law to men's lives in every present situation. Hence, the authority which the scribes possessed was secondary and thus derived from an external and formal Law. The scribes possessed no real authority in themselves, but had only a "secondary authority" which was dependent upon their degree of knowledge of the Law and Tradition. Moreover, when a scribe spoke "with authority" on the Law, he had to repeat a number of often conflicting human interpretations of the Law from the oral Tradition. This further reduced any personally absolute quality in the ἐξουσία of the scribes.
Bultmann believes that Jesus, to the contrary, possessed an authority in his own person. Thus, the "church's consciousness" of Jesus' utter certainty in the face of questions concerning God's Will for men can be trusted as essentially accurate. It was not simply Jesus' ability to distinguish the central ethical commands in the Law, however, that determined his true authority. Even certain of the scribes and some of the prophets of old had done as much. In contrast to these scribes and prophets, who still thought that all Scripture passages were equally binding (and, therefore, seeming contradictions must be somehow reconciled), Jesus freely set one passage in open contrast to another. By doing this, Jesus showed that certain supreme sections of Scripture should, in fact, determine the meaning of the others; and even displace the others if they should contradict the passages of supreme authority. Jesus was quite unique in demonstrating that all men stood under the direct authority of God's Will and, therefore, not simply under a formal Law; or the scribes' secondary, derived authority. Jesus' disclosure, however, implied something further. If a man stood directly before God in every situation of life, he must constantly exercise his own decision in order to determine precisely what God's Will is within the Scriptures. In effect, this meant that every individual possesses a certain authority within himself to discern whether a particular word or passage in Scripture contains God's command or not. This authoritative decision on a man's part, in the context of total surrender to God, must alone determine what is God's Will for the moment and what in the Scriptures is mere trivia. Therefore, Jesus held that the chief authority resides with God's Will. Man, however, can only know that Will of God as he uses his own authority and freely decides in every situation what
Scripture truly unfolds as God's Will in the present moment. Hence, in Bultmann's view, it would appear that the unique ἔξωφρα of Jesus' ethical teaching must reside in the fact that historically he was the only rabbi who plainly demanded that men should decide immediately for God's Will as the highest authority in life, and revealed that the Will of God can only be known when a man exercises his own God-given authority precisely in order to surrender, and thus to decide radically for God in every concrete moment. (pp. 184-205)

Now the church first came to regard this same authoritative Jesus as the apocalyptic Son of Man, who would come in the near future to bring in God's final Reign. Jesus, who had appeared in the days of his flesh as the proclaimer of God's fast-approaching Reign and the one who demanded radical obedience to God's Will in order to receive God's Reign, thus became the one who was himself proclaimed by the church as God's means of Salvation. Bultmann maintains that Jesus had appeared as the eschatological prophet and the rabbi of radical obedience (and likely also as an exorcist) but certainly not as one claiming messianic titles for himself. All such titles in the synoptic tradition, according to "the canon of dissimilarity", must be considered most probably as church additions to the earliest pericopae. 51

Now Bultmann claims that in certain features of his earthly appearance as a prophet, Jesus surely must have been viewed as standing in the same tradition as the Old Testament prophets. Likewise, his ethical teaching could be understood within the framework of the scribal discussion about the Law; even if his criticisms were extremely radical. Furthermore, Jesus' eschatological preaching entirely presup-

posed the Jewish apocalyptic beliefs of the time (even if he modified them somewhat by his own teaching). This, therefore, raises the question all the more acutely as to why the church shortly came to view Jesus as the coming Son of Man. It cannot be argued with historical persuasiveness that Jesus' messianic significance was built upon his great or numinous "personality", which stood as a mysterious power behind his teaching; for the church never really preserved such a picture of Jesus' numinous "personality" in the Tradition. Here, every modern attempt at a reconstruction of Jesus' numinous "personality" is, in fact, largely a creation arising out of a given modern scholar's subjective imagination. Neither, in Bultmann's view, was Jesus looked upon in the earliest church like one of the great figures of the Old Testament (e.g. like Moses), whose significance lay wholly with his unique accomplishments in past history. Rather, Jesus' proper significance rested with what the church expected of him in the near future, when he would come as the bringer of God's final act and draw all history to its completion. In spite of the fact that the earliest church did not develop an understanding of Jesus' person as the eschatological occurrence in the full sense that it later did (e.g. as in the writings of John and Paul); nevertheless, the church did quite early implicitly comprehend the historical appearance of Jesus as the eschatological occurrence in some sense. This fact can be known, because from its earliest days the church regarded itself as the congregation of the "end time", which was called into existence by Jesus' ministry (this reality is well testified to in both Paul's writings and the synoptic tradition). Thus, the question presents itself as to precisely what was the origin of this unique self-consciousness of the church?

52. Ibid., pp. 33-42.
Only by making a closer examination of this self-consciousness of the church, will its origin become evident. The fact that this self-consciousness was only an implicit reality for the earliest church can be seen in that the church did not view the content of Jesus' message as the decisive element (as indeed it seems that Jesus did not either). Rather, during the days of his ministry Jesus had significantly also called for a decision either for or against his own person as the bearer of God's final and decisive word. Surely, Jesus' ζητεία rests precisely here, in Bultmann's view. The one who alone dares to challenge Jewish legalism and freely declare God's own authentic Will, the one who demands that men should exercise their authority by totally obeying God's Will in the concrete moment, and who above all links a proper response to God's Reign and Will with a favourable response to himself, must have had such a pre-eminent ζητεία as is reflected in Mt. 7:28-29 (and similar passages). At points in his writings Bultmann even suggests that Mt. 11:11-14 could be essentially authentic (in the secondary critical sense); and, therefore, Jesus himself may have actually interpreted his own ministry as 'the shift of the aeons'.

In this case Jesus would have been quite aware of his own ζητεία and of being an eschatological figure of unique significance. Hence, as Bultmann says, "Jesus' call to decision implies a Christology". Those who belonged to the earliest church made just such a positive decision. For Bultmann, the call to decision did not, of course, necessitate or justify the sort of Christology which would later freely speculate about Jesus as a pre-existent heavenly being, or attribute to him a thorough-going messianic self-consciousness. "But it does imply a Christology which will unfold the implications of the positive answer to his demand for deci-

53. Rudolf Bultmann, Existence and Faith, pp. 298-299; Rudolf Bultmann, Das Verhältnis der urchristlichen Christusbotschaft zum historischen Jesus, p. 16.
sion, the obedient response which acknowledges God's revelation in Jesus. Such Christology becomes explicit in the earliest church to the extent that they understood Jesus as the one whom God by the resurrection has made Messiah, and they awaited him as the coming Son of Man.⁵⁵ Thus, in Bultmann's view, Jesus' ethical and eschatological call to decision carried with it such an έξουσία that it led first to the church's expectation of Jesus' future coming as the apocalyptic Son of Man, and then also to the church's clear understanding of his past historical appearance as God's decisive act of salvation in history.

Professor Bultmann further spells out this historical process of decision-making which created the church as the eschatological congregation. The initial response to Jesus' call was made by his disciples during the years of his public ministry. The initial response, however, had to be made anew and even more radically when the first disciples were faced with Jesus' problematic crucifixion. The cross raised a most serious question over his claim to be the bearer of God's decisive word. The disciples made this renewed decision when they proclaimed their Easter faith, that God had made this crucified prophet and rabbi His coming Son of Man and Messiah. In this situation of renewed decision, the earliest church thus came to see itself as now living in the beginning of the "new age". Moreover, it came to view Jesus' ministry even more vividly as the divine "sending forth", which had called the eschatological congregation into existence. Finally, since Jesus of Nazareth had come to be seen as the coming Son of Man in the future, and God's Messiah in the past, he was now understood as the one who determined the present life of the church as well.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 43-44.
According to Bultmann, the contemporary rabbinic belief held that the Messiah would properly interpret the Torah at his coming. Since the church already possessed Jesus' words with regard to the Law, Jesus' words were, therefore, editorially brought together and adapted in Mt. 5:21-48, as the new messianic interpretation of the Law. These words of Jesus were thus now seen by the church as the authoritative interpretation of the Torah, given by God's Messiah.

While Bultmann does seem to attribute a totally unique to Jesus in his call to decision, yet this fact should not lead to the conclusion that Bultmann desires to create an unshakable historical foundation upon which the kerygma can securely rest. This fact is lucidly established by several factors in Bultmann's writings. First, Jesus' call to decision does not show that Jesus saw the Reign of God as actually present in his own person and ministry. On the contrary, historical analysis has convinced Bultmann that Jesus understood God's Reign as an event that would only come in the near future in a miraculous manner, thus drawing all human history to its conclusion. Jesus' ministry of proclamation and teaching is only a sign that this event is so near that the present with Jesus could be thought of as the dawn (Anbruch) of God's Reign. Therefore, whatever Jesus of Nazareth possessed, it was not that of the one who actually brings in God's long expected Rule (hereinbrechen), but only that of the one who announced its sure imminence and expounded the conditions of entrance into the Kingdom. Hence, when Jesus of Nazareth taught with authority, it was only as the rabbi who was capable

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of expounding the proper way of obedience to God's Will, as the condition for entering the future Kingdom. 58

Secondly, Bultmann makes it quite plain in his writings that faith in the kerygma's proclamation of Jesus as the eschatological event, cannot, and should not, be dependent upon the results of historical research. He is in perfect harmony with this emphasis, therefore, when he states that there is nothing in Jesus' historical appearance which necessitates or demands the conclusion that in his life and work God's eschatological event had occurred. If one is to come to that conclusion today, he must be confronted with the preaching of the church about Jesus as the Christ, and on that basis make his own personal decision for Jesus as God's event of salvation. The earliest church made their decision when confronted with Jesus' \( \kappa \varepsilon \omega \sigma \varphi \alpha \), which they came to believe implied a Christology (especially after the crucifixion). We today, however, cannot return to the position of those early disciples and make our decision on the basis of a sure encounter with the earthly figure Jesus of Nazareth. We can only make our decision for or against the Jesus which the church continues to preach as the Christ of God. This fact is most clearly elucidated in Bultmann's above mentioned Heidelberg paper of 25 July, 1959. 59

Finally, it is in this same paper that Bultmann most clearly states his complete views on the \( \kappa \varepsilon \omega \sigma \varphi \alpha \) of Jesus. Here Bultmann allows that it is critically probable that the earthly figure Jesus did possess an \( \kappa \varepsilon \omega \sigma \varphi \alpha \) and "directness" through which men then apparently encountered God. This result of historical analysis does not

58. See footnote 22.

show, however, that the kerygma is thereby surely contained in nuce in Jesus' ministry. All that is really shown is the probable historical process concerning how Jesus came to be considered God's eschatological event originally. Above all, Bultmann shows that Jesus' real and full authority is to be discerned in any case as the authority of the Risen Lord (Cf. Mt. 28:18 ἐνδέχεται μοι πᾶσα ζωσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐστὶ γῆς. ). Therefore, the authority present in Jesus' life, as is seen today in the synoptic tradition, has been presented always from this later, post-Easter perspective. Closer attention to this fact, Bultmann maintains, would save some scholars from too readily confusing the pre-Easter and post-Easter ζωσία of Jesus (as they now seem to do when they claim that the kerygma was clearly contained in nuce in Jesus' historical appearance).60

In the whole of Bultmann's work here, the present writer would contend that there remains still something of an enigma. While basically Bultmann does not want to supply a secure historical foundation for the kerygma, he does nevertheless point to Jesus' (historically authentic) call to decision as truly inviting a Christology (both as it is represented in Jesus' announcement of God's imminently coming Kingdom and in the demand of obedience to God's Will as the condition for receiving the coming Rule of God). The present writer believes that one should interpret Bultmann as has been done above, and so suggest that he is really not concerned to show that Jesus' earthly ζωσία thus demanded a Christology, but only implied it in such a manner that it thrust those first disciples into the ultimate decision for or against faith. Therefore, in Bultmann's view,

60. Rudolf Bultmann, Das Verhältnis der urchristlichen Christusbotschaft zum historischen Jesus, pp. 15-17.
one cannot really gain anything for faith today by attempting to return to those initial stages of Christianity (e.g. to Jesus' earthly ministry and its implications for the church's preaching) via historical analysis. 61

B

Gunther Bornkamm's and Ernst Käsemann's Critical and Interpretative Analysis of Mt. 5:21-48

As was the case with the representative texts discussed in the previous chapter concerning the Kingdom of God, here also the writings of Bornkamm and Käsemann presuppose the critical work done by Bultmann and thus their writings tend to discuss the several critical and interpretative issues only when they differ from Bultmann in some significant sense. Likewise, here too it is sometimes not completely clear when these scholars discuss a given text as authentic, whether they hold it to be an actual utterance of Jesus or a church formulation which nevertheless reflects accurate insights into the teaching of the earthly Jesus (that is, critically authentic in the secondary sense). In the following, however, care will be taken to set forth in which sense Bornkamm and Käsemann do suggest historical authenticity, insofar as that is discernible from their several critical statements.

Professor Käsemann on 20 October, 1953, delivered a lecture in Jügenheim at a reunion of former students of Bultmann, which has been given primary credit for initiating the so-called "New Quest of the Historical Jesus". It was in this lecture that Käsemann briefly analysed the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount afresh and used his conclusions from that analysis to begin the lively discussion which has continued to the present. 62

61. Rudolf Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, p. 41.

Kasemann begins by agreeing with Bultmann's analysis that surely the first, second and fourth antitheses are essentially quite primitive. In Kasemann's view these antitheses must be considered critically authentic because their content and form both suggest marked distinctiveness. Indeed, in Kasemann's view, these few verses are representative of some of the most extraordinary material in the gospels. He agrees with Bultmann that their form initially suggests that these are the words of a rabbi interpreting Scripture. There is, however, another factor present which makes these verses radically unlike anything which one would expect of a rabbi. The significant factor is found in the three words ξυθo δe λεγω, which imply a personal claim to an authority that would equal and even exceed the authority of Moses. If Jesus did actually speak these words, he thereby ceased to be simply a rabbi; for all rabbinic authority is secondarily derived from the Mosaic Law. One rabbi might oppose another in a legal debate by saying, "But I say"; but no rabbi would ever dare to pit himself directly against Moses (who was believed to be the original giver of the divine Torah). The rabbi who would dare to utter such words as these in first century Palestine would certainly sever himself from his fellows and be thought of as either mad or blasphemous, unless he was himself actually the bearer of the Messianic Torah. Not even the prophets of old who said "Thus saith the Lord" would have thought to challenge the supreme authority of Moses. Thus in Kasemann's view, this saying must be deemed critically reliable, for it is so totally unique that it stands in stark contrast to anything in contemporary Judaism. Furthermore, the implied claim here is not expounded on the kerygmatic or messianic titular lines of thought characteristic of early church belief and preaching. Moreover, Mt. 5:17-19 shows that
the evangelist found these words of Jesus too bold for the taste of many Jewish-Christians and thus felt compelled to soften their contrast to the Torah via this attempted delimiting preface. This additional factor further increases the likelihood of historical authenticity in these antitheses, as it shows a loyalty to Jesus' words but an embarrassment with them that fails to grasp their full impact. It is, therefore, most unlikely that these antitheses had their origin in church creativity. Hence, the total impact of Jesus' actual earthly appearance must have been of such a manner that it exceeded that of any rabbi or prophet known to the Jewish people (even if Jesus at first seemingly appeared in such roles). In fact, the only category in Judaism which would do justice to such an implied claim, was that of Messiah (even if it is doubtful that Jesus ever explicitly claimed to be Messiah because of the demands of the critical "canon of dissimilarity"). This, of course, is precisely how the disciples later came to understand Jesus. If Käsemann is correct in his conclusions, he has surely established a more concrete link between the earthly Jesus and the Christ of Easter Faith than Bultmann was able to do.

Thus, in the above, Käsemann chiefly uses the "two canons of the forms" and the "canon of dissimilarity" in conjunction, in order to detect critical authenticity in both form and content. Likewise, the variety of authenticity here detected goes beyond Bultmann's cautious suggestion of a secondary level of critical reliability and maintains that ἑγὼ δὲ λέγω and the essential content of the primitive antitheses (according to Bultmann's prior analysis) are very close to Jesus' own words, if not his ἑπισεκάματα verba.

Professor Bornkamm is in fundamental agreement with Käsemann and he further elaborates the ramifications of Käsemann's initial conclu-

63. Ibid., pp. 37-38.
In his book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Bornkamm especially stresses that Jesus' ethical teaching can only be understood in the broader context of Jesus' central theme of the presently in-breaking Kingdom of God. Thus, Bornkamm, as we have seen, underscores his difference with Bultmann when he points out that salvation and repentance have now conspicuously changed places from those they occupied in Jewish theology. In Jewish thought repentance came first, as the condition of salvation. Here, salvation precedes repentance, because with Jesus the Kingdom is already given as a gift to mankind. Thus, for Bornkamm it is only against this altered background that Jesus' proclamation of the Will of God is fully comprehensible.  

Bornkamm too believes that Jesus probably did appear initially as a rabbi (even if he was not ordained as such in accordance with the strict regulations known from a later time). Moreover, one would be wrong to say that Jesus disagreed with the rabbinic method of expounding upon Scripture, wherein equal authority was attributed to the Law, its exposition and its current application. Jesus also followed such a pattern of quoting a Scripture passage and then presenting its true present meaning (cf. Mt. 5:21, 43). Rather, he was concerned to attack the normal content of contemporary rabbinic interpretation via a new understanding of religious authority. In spite of his fundamental approval of the rabbinic method, Jesus never supported his own representation of the Law with authoritative quotations from the rabbinic "Fathers", as was the case with the rabbis. When Jesus quoted a passage of Scripture, it was simply to justify his own ministry and message. As we have seen already from Bultmann's

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64. Günther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 64-95, p. 83 especially.
65. Ibid, p. 57.
and Kasemann's examination of Mt. 5:21-48, a rabbi is only an interpreter of Scripture. Therefore, the authority of the rabbi is always one that is clearly derived. It must prove itself by first quoting supporting passages from Scripture and then by the exegesis of the respected rabbinic "Fathers". At this point Bornkamm does go beyond his teacher by stressing the note of fulfilment in Jesus when he says, "Jesus' teaching, on the other hand, never consists merely in the interpretation of an authoritatively given sacred text, not even when words from Scripture are quoted. The reality of God and the authority of his Will are always directly present, and are fulfilled in him." Nothing in Judaism could parallel the manner in which Jesus dared to confront and contrast the literal word of the Law with the Will of God that was immediately present in his own words. Even the chief authority, the Torah itself, had to submit to Jesus' criticism. Here, mainly in Jesus' authoritative declaration of God's own Will and in his open attack upon the formal authority of the Law, is the cause of the growing hostility of the scribes and Pharisees witnessed to in the gospels (who were not always antagonistic toward him cf. Lk. 7:36, 11:37; 14:1). This freedom of Jesus in criticising the Law with such sovereign authority is most clearly expressed in his words ἐν τῷ τῆς θεοῦ λέγει in the antitheses of Mt. 5:21-48. In so speaking, however, Jesus did not intend to displace the Law with his own teaching, but to measure the letter of the Law critically by the Will of God now present in his own consciousness and words.

Jesus' direct and unique proclamation of God's Will can be found nowhere more perspicuously than in Mt. 5:21-48. Bornkamm, once again

65. Ibid., p. 57.
66. Ibid., pp. 57, 96-100.
following Bultmann's lead, says that the antitheses must not, however, be understood as a total rejection of the Torah. Even if Mt. 5:17f., is a church creation (as Kasemann maintains), it still at least represents a summary of Jesus' general disagreement with all those who would fanatically disregard the Law. Jesus held man to be a responsible being, for whom the Law was given that he might learn to walk responsibly by the Divine Will. Therefore, the "newness" of Jesus' teaching in the antitheses is not one which utterly rejects God's Law, but examines it in light of the immediate presence of the Divine Will. Bornkamm says all the antitheses can be summarised in the words, "Not only - but even...Even wrath, even the hurtful look, even the 'legal' divorce, even the mere oath (by which one word is singled out above others as true), even the kind of retaliation which remains within the limits prescribed by the law, even the kind of love which yet excludes the enemy, are against God's Will." This is the sort of righteousness that is not out of continuity with the true intent of the Torah (Mt. 5:17f.), and yet exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (Mt. 5:20).

Bornkamm further agrees with Bultmann in saying that the ideas expressed in Jesus' radical interpretation of God's Will were not entirely unknown in Judaism. There are many Jewish parallels to Jesus' words, where the rabbis sought to penetrate to the true Will of God within the Law. But in these cases the Divine Will is still conceived of as legal in nature. As Bornkamm puts it, "A legal statute which fences life in on all sides has also this implication: There are as many gaps in the fence as pickets." Hence, the rabbinic Tradition,

67. Ibid., p. 103.
68. Ibid., pp. 100-103.
69. Ibid., p. 104.
with its minute detail, was created to cover the many gaps. The problem arose, however, when men's obedience came to be seen in a formalised manner, and men consciously kept merit charts to reckon their relationships with God. In fact, the Law had become totally isolated from the living God. In such a situation the Torah actually had replaced God as the chief authority in life. Consequently, the Law had ceased to sustain man in a living relationship with God. Rather, a barrier of formal achievement on the one hand, and guilt on the other, now separated God and man. Jesus smashes this barrier and shows that God is concerned about the heart and action of man in his Divine Will. This is achieved by Jesus in his call to specific and personal obedience.  

Jesus spoke thus:

Be reconciled to your brother! If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out! Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you. Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.  

Here the directness of Jesus' words comes through, for he was not concerned with vague and general rules but only in bringing men into the very presence of God. This sort of directness reaches through the gaps of Jewish legalism and places a man before the living God in the context of his daily life with other men. Above all, this is made extremely lucid in the antitheses, with their concrete and simple demands. Jesus does not isolate motive from action in these demands, but rather he demonstrates that a man's condition of mind and heart produce his actions. Hence, God requires total inward obedience  

70. Ibid., pp. 105-107.  
71. Ibid., p. 105.
as well as external action. Furthermore, Jesus' preaching on the Will of God is always quite concretely tied to a man's daily experience (cf. Mt. 5:36) and needs no external theological authority to explain and support it. The hearer of Jesus' words in the antitheses is not left to puzzle out the niceties of their fulfilment but is confronted with the personal need to acknowledge these words inwardly and act upon them as speaking God's own Will. This is the supreme challenge to those who want to live by "what men said of old" and who, therefore, understand God's Will merely as a protection of religious and ethical traditions. 72

Bornkamm suggests that from the above, it is evident Jesus was not simply suggesting a new and better variety of Pharisaism. The word "exceed" in Mt. 5:20 and the reference to doing "more than others" in Mt. 5:47 must not be interpreted quantitatively, if one truly understands Jesus' teaching in Mt. 5:21-48. When Jewish-Christian influence colours Jesus' teaching by saying that he demanded obedience to the jot and tittle of the Law (Mt. 5:18f), it here simply misunderstands the meaning of the antitheses that follow. Jesus actually abrogates certain aspects of the Law in these antitheses. The righteousness which Jesus demands is, therefore, qualitatively new. The nature of this new quality is seen in Mt. 5:48 where Jesus says, "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect". This is no ideal to be achieved, but a wholeness that comes from actually living constantly in God's presence and in continual expectation of His future. In this way Jesus knew that men would become "Children of their Father in Heaven" (cf. Mt. 5:48). Here the message of Jesus concerning the Kingdom and his teaching on the Will

72. Ibid., pp. 107-108.
of God are truly united because they both reveal God's true and present Will for man.  

Bornkamm is then essentially in agreement with Bultmann's insights when he finds the unity between Jesus' message of the Kingdom and his ethical preaching in the crisis of a man's decision before God. There is, however, a significant disagreement between these scholars on this matter as well. As we have seen, Bornkamm believes that the available evidence points to the fact that the Kingdom of God was in an initial sense immediately and consciously present with Jesus' in his earthly ministry. Thus, man's response to the Kingdom was essentially a response to something given by Jesus. Jesus, however, was also the one who revealed consciously (as in the antitheses) the unmediated Will of God. Therefore, whoever responded to God's Kingdom did so by obediently responding to this present Divine Will. Consequently, the total obedience which Jesus sought in Mt. 5:21-48, was the proper response not only to God's ethical Will but also to his Salvation which was now breaking into human history with Jesus of Nazareth. This response to God's complete Will for man is most perfectly spelled out in the command to Love. The one who loves both friend and foe in their special needs is now living in God's own Reign and so manifesting his love for and response to God by such action in the very concrete events of life (cf. Mt. 5:43-48; 22:34-40).  

Here then, Bornkamm like Käsemann, chiefly uses the "two canons of the forms" and the "canon of dissimilarity" in conjunction, in

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73. Ibid., pp. 64-95.
74. Ibid., pp. 108-117.
75. Ibid., p. 11.
order to discern the essential critical authenticity of the first, second and fourth antitheses as most probably Jesus’ own words. Furthermore, Bornkamm apparently holds the remaining material here to be critically authentic in the secondary sense previously discussed (with the possible exception of verses 25–26, which is a misplaced eschatological warning; and verse 32, which has a reliable core but has been modified by the Jewish-Christian community in order to agree with the school of Shammai). The chief canon for such critical establishment would seem to be the "canon of consistency", for this material does agree with the basic purpose of the more surely authentic material, even if the "two canons of the forms" and the "canon of dissimilarity" raise some questions as to its exact formulation as it now stands in Mt. 5:21-48 (which we have already seen in Bultmann’s primary analysis).

III. Conclusions From The Foregoing Analyses of Günther Bornkamm’s and Ernst Käsemann’s Writings Concerning Mt. 5:21-48

(a)

1) The first matter that calls for a summary review is that of the critical canons here employed. Again, we have seen the "canon of dissimilarity" and the "two canons of the forms" emerge for Bornkamm and Käsemann as the canons of primary importance in recovering the actual, authentic words of the earthly Jesus. Likewise, again we have seen Bornkamm’s especial use of the "canon of consistency" to recover words that reflect a critical authenticity of a secondary degree.

2) However, attention must also be called to a further related development. Repeatedly, the "authentic" words of Jesus for Bornkamm (whether primarily or secondarily authentic) appear as those words
which reflect the "directness", "sovereign freedom" or "authority" of Jesus. Consequently, one cannot help but gain the impression from reading Bornkamm's writings (especially) that he has begun to formulate yet another positive canon in establishing his historical picture of the earthly Jesus. Moreover, this canon increasingly appears to be almost a "super-canon" in itself. That is, chiefly by the use of the "canon of dissimilarity", Bornkamm has repeatedly discovered traces of a unique authority in the most reliable pericopae. Having discovered this quality so fused with Jesus' person in the most authentic pericopae, he has then begun to become more trusting of the critical authenticity of other pericopae wherein this same feature can be found. Thus, here the "canon of consistency" and the "canon of multiple attestation" merge into what might be called a "super-canon of unique ἀξιωματικόν".\(^6\) If, indeed, the present writer is correct in this contention, it should be noted also that Bornkamm would not thereby be alone methodologically among critical historians, for as Professor E. H. Carr has shown, all historians have certain working hypotheses which they bring with them to their emerging evidence. All through the course of a historical investigation these hypotheses interact with the evidence unearthed by the ongoing critical method. Hence, a given working hypothesis (in this case emerging from the primary use of the "canon of dissimilarity") becomes more and more established as an actual criterion of historical authenticity itself as it is further apparently verified by the evidence that is unearthed (i.e. as by the "canon of consistency" and the "canon of multiple attestation"). This sort of criterion, however, should properly be exposed to evidential falsification as well.\(^7\) Unfortunately, the

\(^{76}\) Ibid., p. 57f.

more subconscious the working hypothesis is, the less open it is to careful examination by a given historian. If this quality of "directness", "sovereign freedom" or "authority" is indeed such a "working hypotheses become-critical canon" for Bornkamm, he does not anywhere reflectively discuss it as such. This in itself could imply that it is a rather unconscious canon, therefore. Moreover, although Professor Käsemann does not demonstrate his use of such a canon, even as transparently as Bornkamm, he does apparently use it as well.\textsuperscript{78}

3) Before moving beyond the question of the use of critical canons here, it would be fruitful to renew a question raised in the corresponding section of the previous chapter on the Kingdom of God in Jesus' teaching. That is, in the concluding summary of that chapter concerning Bornkamm's and Käsemann's use of critical canons, it was noted that use of the "canon of dissimilarity" might be still something less than the precise tool historical critics would like it to be. But because the canon seems a demanding one, some students of the New Testament might thereby be led to the conclusion that anything which passes its standards can surely be attributed to the earthly Jesus; or conversely anything which does not pass its standards surely does not come from Jesus. However, the present writer should like to suggest that the results produced by this canon are not so absolutely firm as they might initially appear. Especially one wonders if this canon, as used by Bornkamm and Käsemann, makes Jesus appear too vividly distinctive in contrast to Judaism on the one hand and early church theology on the other.

Consequently, a further brief examination must be undertaken of

\textsuperscript{78} Ernst Käsemann, Jesus Means Freedom, pp. 16-41; Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, pp. 37-47.
the key words ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω. Bultmann's original analysis indicated that most likely three of the six antitheses were secondary formulations based upon the pattern of the more primitive antitheses (i.e. the third, fifth and sixth antitheses were in essence not as primitive as the first, second and fourth antitheses), and Bornkamm, as we have seen, has in his own way agreed with this analysis. If this analysis is essentially correct, then Matthew has apparently taken over certain appropriate old material known originally in the community of his own time in other forms (i.e. the material now included in the third, fifth and sixth antitheses) and freely recast it in the present antithetical form on the pattern of the more primitive antitheses. If with Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann, however, it is realised that these secondary antitheses were probably set in their precise, present form and context by the especial theological interests of Matthew; then this factor in itself should raise a further question concerning the historical origin of the words ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω in the more primitive antitheses. Is it not quite likely that a similar theological interest could have been at work in the specific manner of formulation of these words in the more primitive antitheses themselves? Several considerations would seem to indicate that the evangelist, in fact, may have created the precise antithetical structure of the primitive antitheses as well. At least these considerations are significant enough that they should be examined before accepting Bornkamm's and Käsemann's conclusions entirely.

First, if Jesus did actually set his own teaching in such sharp contrast with the Torah by means of the formula Ἰκόδομάς ὑμῖν ἡ ἐρεθή... ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑµίν..., it is rather strange that none of the other evangelists should have realised this extremely significant fact and
thus incorporated it in their gospels.\(^79\) That omission (a form of the argument from silence) suggests the possibility of Matthew's editorial hand. Secondly, even a number of less sceptical New Testament scholars have recognised that Matthew surely had quite definite theological interests at work when he set forth the three main sections of the "Sermon on the Mount". T. W. Manson, for example, believes that the main sections of the "Sermon" are based on a comparison of the Christian life with Jewish teaching as exemplified in a famous saying of Simeon the Righteous; that the world rests upon three pillars of the Law, worship and "imperting kindness". Hence, in Manson's view, the antitheses as they now stand, represent Matthew's specific conception of the New Law (even if much of the material used by Matthew goes back to Jesus himself as Manson believes).\(^80\) Thirdly, Professor David Daube has shown that the rabbinic exegetical debates often employed a form of argumentation that was quite similar to Matthew's formal antithetical structure here. In such debates a rabbi would refute the more literal understanding of a text with the formula, "You have literally understood....But you must understand." The seed is thus already present in such a known rabbinic formula which could have germinated into the more specific legislative formula, "You have heard....but I say unto you", if a different theological objective were held by the evangelist. If, for example, Matthew's theological aim was to demonstrate that the earthly Jesus

\(^79\) One could, of course, argue that Jesus did set his teaching in sharp contrast with the Torah in Mk. 7, (as on the matter of ritual cleanliness) and in Mk. 10 and Lk. 16 (as on the matter of divorce), as Käsemann has rightly also shown. However, in these places the precise antithetical structure of the primitive antitheses of Matthew is not to be seen, with its clearer corresponding implication of Jesus as the giver of the Messianic Torah.

had been the proclaimer of the true or Messianic Law (in dispute with the synagogue and legalistic Jewish customs of his time), then this factor could well account for the concrete legislative formula being placed upon Jesus' lips in Mt. 5:21-48 (but nowhere else in the synoptic tradition). The difference between the rabbinic antithetical form and Matthew's here, then, is understandable on the basis of a difference in settings. Here the setting is to be found in the evangelist's theologically interpretative intentions (whether those intentions arose historically out of a situation in which a New Messianic Torah was expected in the last days, or in a situation wherein the church was simply attempting to show the origin of its new way of life in contrast to the rabbis at Jamnia).  

Fourthly, it should be noted that one of the secondary antitheses is already introduced in its parallel form in Lk. 6:27 by the words ἀλλὰ οὐπώ λέγω.

Moreover, there are numerous examples in the gospels of Jesus' use of the formula ἄμην λέγω οὐπώ. These examples can be found in all three of the synoptic gospels (and the pattern is also found in John's gospel where ἄμην is doubled liturgically). These examples, furthermore, can be isolated in various forms of Jesus' sayings. Thus the "canon of multiple attestation" would suggest that such an element could well have been characteristic of Jesus' actual speech. Additionally, Heinrich Schlier has demonstrated that most of these various forms of sayings (introduced by the formula ἄμην λέγω οὐπώ) deal with the Kingdom of God as in some manner united with Jesus' own person. In Judaism ἄμην served generally as an acknowledgment of that

which is sure or valid. Thus, it came to be used responsively with oaths and prayers in the Old Testament period (or occasionally at the end of a prayer to confirm that which is hoped for). In the early church's usage, the ἄμην continued to be used responsively with prayers and doxologies to the ων of God declared in the accomplished event of Jesus Christ. Jesus himself, however, appears (from the gospel evidence) to have placed the ἄμην consistently before his own interpretation of the Law, or his warnings and promises; in order to indicate that they are utterly true and confirmed as valid by his own person. Therefore, the "canon of dissimilarity" seemingly suggests that some such formula as ἄμην λέγω ὅμην is uniquely enough used by Jesus in the tradition to be traced back confidently to the characteristic speech of Jesus. Consequently, if this strongly suggestive element was in any sense present already in the tradition known to the Christian community of Matthew's time, little change would have been required by Matthew in order to adapt such an introductory formula into the even more pointed antithetical formula now standing throughout Mt. 5:21-48 (especially if the evangelist was keen to present Jesus' teaching as the Messianic Torah or the Messianic intensification of the Torah). Finally, we noted initially


83. R. H. Fuller, The Foundations of New Testament Christology (London: Lutterworth Press, 1965), p. 132; Indeed, in our time Heinrich Schlier goes so far as to maintain that Jesus' preceding ἄμην λέγω ὅμην is so significant a factor that it contains the whole of Christology in nuce. Cf. Heinrich Schlier, op.cit. The present writer would maintain that Schlier is too enthusiastic in this conclusion and that Jesus' historical consciousness depends far more on what one can or cannot establish about Jesus' teaching concerning the Kingdom of God
that Käsemann especially contends that Mt. 5:17-20 has been inserted in the tradition in order to tone down Jesus' antithetical teaching, which the early church found too bold for its taste. However, the present writer would suggest that the situation which Matthew was addressing was more complex than Käsemann's statement would imply. On the one hand, Matthew speaks out throughout his gospel against the rigid legalism of Pharisaic Judaism which had lost sight of the true Will of God in ritualistic hair-splitting and had thus rejected the Messiah whom God had sent. Against these Pharisaic Jews, and their camp followers among the Jewish-Christians, Matthew is most desirous of lucidly demonstrating that perfect righteousness that shatters petty legalism and probes through to God's pure Will. Thus, he has a real interest in especially stressing Jesus' authoritative willingness to set aside even the teaching of Moses in light of God's pure present Will. The antithetical structure of Mt. 5:21-48 is a vivid means of conveying this message. However, Matthew was likewise engaged in a vigorous struggle against the enthusiasts inside the church of his time who believed themselves so filled with the "Lord's Spirit" in God's new era, that the Law and the prophets were now considered obsolete. It is against these antinomian enthusiasts that Matthew feels compelled to emphasise Jesus' respect for the Law prior to presenting the antitheses (even if he unfortunately did it with a radical Jewish-Christian formula in 5:18f. which virtually all scholarship today recognises could hardly have been formulated by Jesus and his mission consciousness in relation to that Kingdom, that upon the Ἰδρὺς in isolation. Nevertheless, Schlier's observation here makes it clear that the significance of Ἰδρὺς Κυρίῳ would not have been lost on Matthew, and he could have felt quite justified in drawing out the implication of such a speech pattern in his own antithetical presentation of Jesus' ethical teaching.
himself [according to the "canon of consistency"]'). Hence, Matthew being engaged in a struggle on two theological fronts, was compelled to incorporate and reshape materials editorially for use in his gospel which would answer both of his needs. This too supports the notion that Matthew's theological interests may have been as active in shaping Mt. 5:21-48 as in using Mt. 5:17-20 for his purposes.

In light of the above cumulative critical considerations, it is quite possible that Matthew could have been influenced by definite kerygmatic interests, even if those interests do not show themselves in exactly the same forms as Bornkamm and Käsemann are used to detecting via the "canon of dissimilarity" (i.e., as in the Messianic titles, specific expressions of faith in Jesus as a Messianic figure, mythological faith-formulations etc.). Simply because Matthew does not here explicitly demonstrate his understanding of Jesus as the Messiah, and, therefore, giver of the New or Messianic intensification of the Torah, we cannot argue that the kerygmatic theology of the church has not greatly influenced his formulation of the antitheses. Those kerygmatically shaped items which the "canon of dissimilarity" is thus normally programmed to detect do not specifically appear here and so possibly the more subtle theological motives of Matthew are too readily accepted as the actual words of Jesus of Nazareth. Hence, it could be that Bultmann's extremely keen critical sense with regard to how completely kerygmatic theology has coloured the synoptic tradition is taken rather too lightly by Käsemann and Bornkamm in this case, in their earnest desire to uncover more firm historical links between Jesus and the church. All of this is not meant to discredit

the work of Bornkamm and Käsemann, but rather to suggest that Bultmann’s judgment of the antithetical structure as only secondarily authentic, is probably a safer conclusion for the cautious historian to draw. Yet because of the work of Schlier (and others), it is now somewhat clearer what it likely was in the speech of the earthly figure Jesus of Nazareth which gave easy rise to such editorial reshaping of the traditional material. Thus, the central thrust of Bornkamm’s and Käsemann’s work is not wholly invalid, for there is something in the probable, characteristic speech of Jesus which is not unlike Matthew’s presentation of Jesus’ teaching. Nevertheless, the above discussion suggests that a more precise use of the "canon of dissimilarity" may sometimes be called for than is presently seen in the work of Bornkamm and Käsemann here. And that precision could be gained by the exercise of more critical caution in the use of the "canon of dissimilarity", as well as careful attention to factors suggested by the other canons (as here the "canon of the argument from silence" concerning why the other evangelists do not record Jesus’ teachings in this antithetical structure, and the "canon of multiple attestation" and the "canon of dissimilarity" with reference to ἄμην λέγω ὅμως and like introductory formulae).

Moreover, the above argument could be carried a step further by considering more closely the possible similarity of much of Jesus’ teaching in these antitheses to what is otherwise known to be representative of the best insights of the Judaism of Jesus’ day (as well as the formal and material differences present in Jesus’ teaching, of course). It would be unnecessarily repetitive simply to recount the highlights of the history of scholarship on this question, but the present writer would call attention to the fact that there has
been an increasingly strong tendency of careful scholarship to admit (rather than deny) that there is a great similarity between much of the content of Jesus' teaching in Mt. 5:21-48 and certain contemporary rabbinic sources. This factor becomes even more significant to note, then, if it is questionable that Jesus did consciously present his own teaching in such vivid contrast to the Torah, as Käsemann has suggested only the Messiah would dare to do (that is, if the present writer's foregoing critical analysis of the antithetical structure could be correct and the evangelist rather than Jesus is probably to be given credit for the precise antithetical formulation of Mt. 5:21-48). However, it would also seem that Professor Bultmann has not been able to satisfactorily demonstrate an actual borrowing process wherein the church can be shown to have freely attributed this rabbinical material to Jesus at some time after his death. This leads to a further crucial problem with regard to the use of the "canon of dissimilarity". It is not sufficient merely to note a material parallel between aspects of Jesus' teaching and given items in contemporary Jewish literature. In any field of historical study wherein a borrowing process is suspected by a later community of followers, the cautious historian should be required to demonstrate some concrete link (or process) by which that community, in fact, borrowed material and attributed it to their leader. Material similarities in themselves do not adequately demonstrate a church borrowing process.


Hence, it remains an equally possible hypothesis that Jesus himself may have employed ideas, and even specific sayings, commonly known in the Judaism of his day and recast them with his own especial emphases. For on general considerations, it is just as likely that Jesus, as a Jew with an especial interest in religious and ethical issues of his time, could have freely used material that was familiar to him from his own synagogue training and knowledge of contemporary rabbinical discussions of the Law. Such things would have been "a-round in the atmosphere" for anyone who was sensitive to such issues. Thus, Jesus frequently may have taken what he considered to be quite valuable points (and/or actual sayings) from current discussions and have reapplied them with his own peculiar emphases. A clear example of such a reaplication has recently been pointed out in the case of one of John F. Kennedy's most noted sayings, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country". It appears that a quite similar exhortation was commonly uttered in Kennedy's presence by the headmaster of the Choate School when Kennedy was a young student there. The headmaster, the Rev. George Clair St. John, is reported to have said frequently, "Ask not what your school can do for you, but what you can do for your school". If this principle of reaplication should be valid in Jesus' case, then the similarity of a number of his sayings to contemporary Jewish sources is quite understandable without diminishing the possibility that they (or something quite similar) were also uttered from the lips of the earthly Jesus. On this view, the historical figure Jesus is thus not automatically separated so radically from his own Umwelt by the use

of a critical canon, but is rather so much a part of it that he can be understood as one able to use material freely from his own personal historical background (much as any person does, even a President of the United States in an age of mass media and copyright!). Thus, at the present state of our historical knowledge one can only speak with real certainty when he maintains that the similarity between the content of given sayings in Mt. 5:21-48 and the relevant contemporary Jewish literature indicates that the content of much of Jesus' teaching here was not utterly new or strange to the Judaism of Jesus' day and thereby could as easily have an original Sitz im Leben Jesu as a Sitz im Leben der alten Kirche. 88

Furthermore, the use of the "canon of dissimilarity" here by Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann involves a particular definition of late Judaism as an "ossified legalism", which surely would be questioned by a number of New Testament scholars today. It can be maintained that the variety of religious expression within the Judaism of Jesus' day was much richer, and the residual vitality of certain elements within Pharisaism itself much stronger, than these three scholars rather simplistically suggest in employing their "canon of dissimilarity". Consequently, again Jesus may appear to be more unique to readers of these scholars' works today than he actually appeared to many of his contemporaries. 89

Next it will be quite important to note those aspects of Jesus' message in Mt. 5:21-48 which may more clearly show marks of distinctiveness. But first this much of the foregoing analysis leads the present writer to several general conclusions that need stating. First, it is important to examine more carefully whether a given aspect of Jesus' message does truly differ so radically from church theology on the one hand and/or Judaism on the other as indeed it may initially appear. For in this case Käsemann's concentration on the apparent uniqueness of τῆς λήμνου causes him to underplay several questions that could be raised by his other canons and the material similarities of Jesus' message in Mt. 5:21-48 to known Jewish sources. In short, the "canon of dissimilarity" as employed by Käsemann and Bornkamm may sometimes too easily assure the result of "uniqueness" and thereby prematurely pass a verdict which in effect isolates Jesus too hastily and severely from both his own time and people, and also the church which arose as a response to his life. Secondly, and equally importantly, such a use of the "canon of dissimilarity" as has just been questioned can also carry with it certain somewhat more subtle theological dangers. That is, by using the "canon of dissimilarity" improperly, one could discover a "historical Jesus" who is no longer truly a "historical" person. That is, "Jesus" could appear to float so strangely above his own environment and be cut off so sharply from the movement which he induced, that ironically he could become a modern critical version of the older pious pictures of Jesus with the radiant halo about his head. Moreover, there is the added, 90

90. As a curious aside, the present writer noted some time ago that certain early copies of Bultmann's Jesus (in the German edition) actually carried on the cover an image of Jesus cum halo, which only struck him as oddly humorous at first. Only later, when reflecting on the dangers of the "canon of dissimilarity" did it seem ironically appropriate; since Bultmann and his pupils have thrust this canon upon New Testament scholarship so significantly in the twentieth century!
hidden theological danger of establishing such a falsely "secure" image of the "historical Jesus", that because of his utter uniqueness, he should have been self-evidently recognisable as the embodiment of the eschatological event during his own lifetime. This, of course, would not take proper account of the centrality of the Easter-Event in revealing who Jesus actually was, nor the much discussed "messianic secret". Yet these features are undeniably important aspects of the tradition. It must be gratefully granted that neither Kasemann nor Bornkamm have developed their research in precisely this direction (although some of their statements "lean" in this direction). Nevertheless, this inherent danger lurks beneath the surface in a too simplistic use of the "canon of dissimilarity" and could be so improperly developed by others less impressed with the centrality of the Easter-Event than these pupils of Bultmann.

Before moving beyond the issue of the use of critical canons here, it is yet necessary to ask more specifically how these canons could be better employed constructively so as to isolate what is properly distinctive in Jesus' earthly message (from Mt. 5:21-48 in this case) without thereby isolating him in an unwarranted manner from his own Umwelt or the church which he induced. The following section will thus attempt to set some initial directions for a methodological movement beyond what we have encountered in the work of Bultmann, Bornkamm and Kasemann thus far; but which nevertheless keys off of the pioneering work of these scholars and does not simply negate it.

First, it must be stated at the outset that the foregoing critique in no way is meant to question the value of the "canon of dissimilarity" as used negatively by these three scholars for isolating aspects of Jesus' words and work which are actually unique in contrast to
Judaism or the church (i.e., as in Jesus' proclamation of the inbreaking βασιλέα τοῦ θεοῦ or his characteristic use of ἀμὴν λέγω ἀμὴν etc.). This has been a most welcome and important addition to critical historical scholarship and must continue. However, this solely negative use, as we have seen, has had the effect of sometimes seeming to rule out aspects of Jesus' possible words or work wherein he may have actually held something in common with the church or Judaism. How can this more ambiguous material be analysed appreciatively; so that what could be either Jesus' material or church material, or Jesus' material or Jewish material, can be so classified in a "middle category" rather than prematurely be classified as surely not belonging to the historical figure Jesus? How can this more ambiguous material then be examined for other possible hidden marks of Jesus' influence, when initial material considerations from the negative use of the "canon of dissimilarity" would demonstrate only an enigmatic overlap with otherwise known church or Jewish material?

One possibility for achieving these goals has been suggested by Professor C. E. Carlston. He suggests that once the "canon of dissimilarity" has been employed negatively in its most rigid form and thereby produced a minimal core of Jesus' material, that it can be reapplied positively. That is, he suggests something very much like what has been called here the "canon of consistency" being applied regularly to all ambiguous material before it is assumed to be definitively non-Jesus' material. First, he maintains that any further authentic Jesus' material will fit reasonably with Jesus' unique eschatological message (as it has been discerned by the strict negative use of the "canon of dissimilarity"). Secondly, any authentic material must be shown to mesh with known conditions that prevailed
during Jesus' own ministry (linguistic, political, social, ecclesiastical etc.) Carlston, then, makes the following statement in support of his positive application of the "canon of dissimilarity" (or of what has been deemed here the "canon of consistency"); "This will bring the relative nature of any results obtained clearly to the forefront at the very outset and thus avoid the temptation of using historical methods to prove, rather than illustrate." So it would seem that Carlston has likewise detected the danger involved in an almost exclusive use of the negative "canon of dissimilarity" in evaluating material that is really enigmatic by the use of that canon (and thus also creating an overly false sense of security about apparently authentic material). It must appreciatively be acknowledged that Bornkamm, especially, has done something quite like this already in reclaiming the miracle tradition and the tradition of Jesus' ministry to the "poor in spirit". What is being suggested here is a more conscious effort to apply this procedure on a regular basis. Moreover, with that same material it was noted that Bornkamm has also employed the "canon of multiple attestation" with positive result. Especially when the use of both the "canon of consistency" and the "canon of multiple attestation" working together suggest the possibility of Jesus' influence, the probability of historical reliability is surely heightened. Hence, now the present writer will attempt to apply these canons briefly to the material at hand, in order to


92. Ibid., p. 44.

test whether their conscious application might move us beyond the limitations involved in the too exclusive use of the negative "canon of dissimilarity".

First, a linguistic matter draws our attention, for certain of Jesus' teaching in Mt. 5:21-48 is given in the imperative form (verses 24-25, 29-30, 37, 40-42, 44). This might have significance as a mark of historical authenticity. Professor David Daube has shown that in the New Testament period rabbinical teaching generally used the participle for stating the correct ethical practice of Judaism. (Halakah). In the Old Testament when direct revelation was believed to have occurred, the imperative and the imperfect were normally employed. However, in the time of Jesus it was considered that that period of revelation had been over for centuries and that the participle now normally served as the proper linguistic tool for conveying that revelation which had been delivered in the past. In effect, this participle usage was a linguistic way of saying that a given ethical practice was derived from the period of revelation and was now considered to be the customary practice for all who would obey God's Will in the present. Thus, the setting in life within Judaism by Jesus' time was not one of direct revelation, but rather one of interpretative stabilisation of formerly given revelatory religious and ethical practices. The prophet no longer spoke, but rather the scholar. Yet Jesus is represented as speaking in the imperative here. If this is an authentic feature of the tradition, then the implication could be that Jesus felt himself able to speak with the same direct authoritative demand which was characteristic of prophets. 94

It would seem unlikely, therefore, that this imperative form:

could have been borrowed from Judaism. Likewise, while it could be argued that the imperative form might have arisen from the church's theological desire to present Jesus as God's supreme revelation, Jesus' personal imperatives here do fall consistently within the context of quite concrete illustrative commands, and thus contrast sharply with the general maxim approach to ethical exhortation so typically found in the New Testament epistles. 95 If the church had created these ethical teachings, one would expect them to have reflected more traces of the stylistic form found characteristically in the epistles. Furthermore, this imperative form fits well with Jesus' apparent eschatological mission-consciousness, for in the crisis time of Jesus' ministry, the imperative would have most appropriatively declared the true Will and demand of God. Moreover, the use of the imperative surely fits well with the synoptic tradition's report that Jesus did not direct his teaching just to his "school of disciples", or confine his teaching to the synagogue; but rather went directly to "the people of the land" and taught in open fields, by the sea, in homes, and in the streets. The urgency of his message surely did demand unorthodox procedures and vivid language. 96 Consequently, it would seem that even when the "canon of dissimilarity" is applied negatively, there emerges a real possibility that the general character of the language here could better derive from Jesus than either contemporary Judaism or the church. When the "canon of consistency" is also applied, it would seem even more likely that the imperative form does fit extremely


well with what we otherwise know of Jesus' mission-consciousness and teaching patterns. This would seemingly increase the probability of the imprint of the earthly Jesus here.

Still further examination shows another significant feature. That is, the language in these above mentioned verses and the other verses in their immediate context (i.e., 22, 23-24, 25-26, 29-30, 34-37, 39-42, 46-47), shows distinct marks of that same poetic and yet wholly realistic picture-language which occurs repeatedly in the parables of Jesus. Here, as in the parables, an idea is always expressed concretely in terms of recognisable human action. 97 Likewise, it can be demonstrated that this type of concrete picture language can be consistently found throughout various forms and literary strands of Jesus' teaching within the synoptic tradition. Moreover, these verses and the parables would seem to presuppose a similar eschatological crisis 98 and the same confidence in Jesus' own authority as we have seen reflected in the most authentic core of the tradition. Thus, when the testing of the "canon of multiple attestation" is added to that of the "canon of consistency", the probability of historical authenticity in both the material and formal aspects of the general language here becomes even stranger, for much of the material in Mt. 5:21-48 does show marks of an individualistic style which is found elsewhere among the most reliable teachings of Jesus, rather than among writings of the early church or other contemporary Jewish writings. 99 Finally, it is of real consequence that if these features of Mt. 5:21-48 do point us back to an actual setting in the

life of Jesus, then these concrete imperatives also certainly agree
with that same confidence which Jesus apparently did possess in the
\( \eta \alpha \xi o \omega r \varepsilon \) of his own words (as we have argued previously).

Now the question must be raised, however, as to why a block of
material which shows such potential marks of authenticity should have
so many similarities content-wise to certain contemporary Jewish writ-
tings. First, attention should be drawn to the fact that some of the
material in Mt. 5:21-48 may not, in fact, be properly paralleled in con-
temporary Jewish sources. Professor W. D. Davies, for example, main-
tains that Mt. 5:43f. very likely goes back to Jesus himself, because
of the unusual content of this sixth antithesis. Here love is rad-
calised in a way that stands in sharp contrast with the attitude toward
love expressed in the writings of the Qumran Community. At Qumran,
love was to be directed only toward those within the closed religious
community, while those outside were rejected and even hated as "Sons
of Darkness" whom God would soon destroy. Likewise, similar yet
perhaps not such extreme attitudes toward the non-pious are reflected
in the rabbinic literature of the time. Therefore, Mt. 5:43-48
(Cf. also Mk. 12:28-34, Mt. 22:34-40 and Lk. 10:25ff.) may well be
indicative of a unique material emphasis in Jesus' message that is
really not properly paralleled in contemporary Jewish sources. Thus,
the "canon of dissimilarity" again may be applied to demonstrate pos-
sible authenticity. Secondly, (as has been argued previously) if
Jesus did act as a Jew of his own time, he may on occasion have used
material familiar to him from his own Umwelt and recast it with his
own especial emphases. Hence, if this principle of reapplication

100. W. D. Davies, op. cit., pp. 245f., 427, 431.
101. Ibid., p. 426.
should be valid in Jesus' case, then the similarity of a number of
his sayings to contemporary Jewish sources does not of necessity di-
minish the possibility of their having also been uttered from Jesus'
lips with new authority.

If the foregoing analysis of Mt. 5:21-48 has validity, it is also
possible to suggest the probable Sitz im Leben Jesu of this material.
Originally the material which forms the six antitheses in Matthew's
gospel was likely uttered on separate occasions by Jesus (as the con-
sensus of scholarship today agrees that Matthew has otherwise drawn
together separate sayings of Jesus into his "Sermon on the Mount").
On these occasions Jesus stated "with authority" what he believed to
be God's pure Will, in conscious contrast to various contemporary
interpretations of the Torah. (It is, of course, not now possible
to determine whether Jesus always defined the position [or positions]
with which he took issue. It is quite likely that the position to
which he reacted on a given occasion would be clearly enough under-
stood by his listeners). Moreover, on the basis of the authentic evi-
dence, it can reasonably be assumed that Jesus often did introduce
such pronouncements with an emphatic introduction (such as those rep-
resented by ἀλλὰ λέγω ὑμῖν or ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν etc. in the syn-
optic tradition). Such an introduction followed by an imperative
command would have naturally drawn attention to the unique authority
with which Jesus spoke. Finally, on some occasions (if not most)
Jesus probably did follow his pronouncements or command with such
concrete examples as now follow the antitheses in Matthew (for this
manner of teaching would certainly be consistent with the fundamental
nature of Jesus' teaching as we find it in the parables). This sug-
gestion, of course, does not commit one to the view that Matthew has
accurately transmitted an original illustrative example in each case
Where the concrete examples do naturally fit the pronouncement (by the "canon of internal coherence") and cannot be explained more accurately as having another setting in Jesus' teaching, they can be held to have arisen legitimately in such a context.

The antitheses as re-analysed here by the critical canons normally employed by Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann, do give us some valuable insight into how certain sayings of the earthly Jesus have been most probably adapted to the new situation in the life of the church of Matthew's time and place. First, the editor has apparently gathered sayings that probably circulated as isolated units in the oral tradition (although some sayings concerning similar topics may well have been grouped already in the oral state). Secondly, the editor has probably recast these sayings in the precise antithetical form for apologetic and theological purposes (i.e. to present Jesus, clearly as the bringer of the New or Messianic Torah of freedom in yet total obedience to God's Will, in contrast to the legalism of Pharisaic Judaism and their sympathisers among Jewish-Christians in Matthew's situation). Finally, the editor probably supplemented those pronouncements, which were not connected with concrete imperative commands in the oral tradition, with such examples as were known to him and seemed appropriate to his purpose. Thus, it would seem the old material (which has a highly probable claim to a historical authenticity of the first order) was duly recast in light of the specific needs that confronted Matthew in the life of the ancient church.

It should be noted in conclusion that the present writer has attempted to express his findings with regard to the critical use of
canons in terms of degrees of probability rather than in more absolute terms. For indeed, in his view, that manner of stating only probable (or even highly probable) conclusions in terms that would suggest certainty, is itself one of the worst problems besetting true advancement in historical criticism. Such dogmatism does not suit the situation but only masks the issues that require honest wrestling and repeated re-evaluation.

(b)

A second matter calling for summary review here is that of Bornkamm's and Käsemann's interpretative presentation of the εὐχοσφα of Jesus as it emerges in conjunction with Mt. 5:21-48. What precisely is the nature of Jesus' authority which they discover by their critical canons and then present via their interpretative canons to the reader today?

On their view, Jesus could not have been a rabbi, for he ignored the rabbinic practice of citing the support of the "Fathers" and Moses for his own ethical teaching. Furthermore, Jesus dared to call the authority of Moses himself into question when he abrogated certain aspects of the Law. Above all, when Jesus proclaimed his own word as the immediate presence of the Divine Will, he thereby raised the question as to his own εὐχοσφα. This question, coupled with Bornkamm's and Käsemann's discovery of the Kingdom as actually present with Jesus, cries out for an answer. As Bornkamm says, "The word 'authority' certainly contains already the mystery of Jesus' personality, and influence, as understood by faith. It, therefore, transcends the merely 'historical' sphere. Yet it denotes a reality which appertains to the historical Jesus and is prior to any interpretation."¹⁰² What then was the nature of this εὐχοσφα? Bornkamm sup-

¹⁰². Günther Bornkamm, op.cit., p. 60.
plies the answer when he says, "To make the reality of God present: this is the essential mystery of Jesus".\textsuperscript{103} When the members of the earliest church came to a realisation and comprehension of the meaning of this ἐσώτερα of Jesus of Nazareth (in some sense before, but only fully after his death and resurrection), they could only call him Messiah, Son of Man, and thus describe him by numerous other such exalted titles. None of these titles could properly contain the mystery of Jesus' authority (even if they tried to do so with mythological conceptions). Nevertheless, they were attributed to him in the realisation that in making God present to men, Jesus had brought the world to its end!\textsuperscript{104} In such statements neither Bornkamm nor Käsemann wish to remove the centrality of Easter faith, but they do wish to demonstrate a far more definite continuity between the historical figure Jesus and the kerygma than Bultmann would allow. Thus Käsemann says,

The Gospel is tied to him, who, both before and after Easter, revealed himself to his own as the Lord, by setting them before the God who is near to them and thus translating them into the freedom and responsibility of faith. This he did once without any demonstrable credentials, even without claiming to be Messiah, and yet he did it as having the authority of him whom the Fourth Gospel calls the only-begotten Son.\textsuperscript{105}

The question that requires raising here is whether Bornkamm and Käsemann have truly sought to understand the whole of the historical situation from the parts and the parts from the whole of the available evidence (the first hermeneutical canon)? Or whether their "specific interests" (the second hermeneutical canon) in attempting to press beyond Bultmann and find more concrete links of continuity

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., p. 62.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., pp. 57-63.

\textsuperscript{105} Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, p. 46.
between the earthly Jesus and the kerygma (the third and fourth hermeneutical canons) have distorted their views somewhat, so that they lay greater stress on Jesus' pre-Easter revelation of himself as Messiah and Lord than is warranted. That is, if it should be more questionable than Bornkamm and Käsemann suppose, that Jesus was the actual author of the precise antithetical structure, then it is not so clear that his manner of teaching was such that it conveyed the kind of authority which "only the Messiah could possess". Nor even if one follows the line presented earlier that Jesus typically taught with a preceding ἀμὴν, and that this in part (along with the possible revelatory imperative and Matthew's theological objectives) may have given rise to the antithetical structure of Mt. 5:21-48; does this support a historical interpretation of Jesus' earthly ministry wherein the whole of later New Testament Christology was contained in nuce. What is more clear is that Jesus apparently did possess both a strange freedom and utter confidence wherein he felt he knew God's pure Will (and if he did use the preceding ἀμὴν, that God had already endorsed his pronouncement). That only raises the further question: was this the confidence of one who consciously acted as only a Messiah and Lord could act, or was it rather as one who stood in the tradition of the prophets when they said, "Thus saith the Lord"? This is especially difficult to determine by historical analysis, for if Jesus spoke only as a prophet, it would still have been as a prophet who believed that he stood in the most unique position at the frontier of God's long awaited Kingdom. This consideration should help us to realise that even if Jesus' confidence arose from what might be termed a prophetic experience of God's Will, it would still seem quite unparalleled because of his belief about the unique timing of his own
historical appearance. Martin Dibelius reminds us that the tradition does not report personal ecstatic experiences for Jesus such as are related of certain of the Old Testament prophets. Rather, Jesus' consciousness of the Divine Will is presented as continuous and direct. Nevertheless, this type of presentation would be just the sort of picture a kerygmatically oriented church would have worked into the tradition (the "canon of dissimilarity"). Likewise, one must also note that the synoptic tradition does in many places report Jesus' continual withdrawal for private prayer (the "canon of multiple attestation"). This activity could thus have been the receptive prophetic source of his public certainty concerning God's Will.

What, then, can be said about Jesus' Εὐαγγέλια? If it is not probable (or even questionable) that Jesus is the actual author of the precise antithetical structure of Mt. 5:21-48, and if the remaining authentic evidence is enigmatic as to whether his authoritative confidence is to be described as prophetic or messianic; then perhaps Bultmann must be taken seriously once again. Perhaps Bultmann was correct in recognising that if Küsemann is correct in contending that the oldest antitheses represent the ipsissima verba of the earthly Jesus, then Jesus was doing nothing less than making a pointed claim to be the Messiah of Israel. Both Bornkamm and Küsemann, of course, generally agree with Bultmann that we can be certain that the earthly Jesus did not claim messianic titles, and that these titles most likely owe their origins to the early Christological formulations of the church (the "canon of dissimilarity"). Nevertheless, Bultmann squarely isolates the real problem when he sees his

pupils affirming, for all practical purposes, the same thing that they deny with regard to the titles, when they claim that the anti¬thetical structure of Mt. 5:21-48 is fundamentally authentic. Moreover, the present writer's foregoing analysis has confirmed Bultmann's position in this much, that whatever \( \varepsilon \xi \sigma u \sigma f \alpha \) the historical figure Jesus possessed, it was not openly expressed (as the present form of Mt. 5:21-48 would lead one to believe) so as to make undeniable claims for his own Messiahship. Bultmann has rightly shown that Jesus' \( \varepsilon \xi \sigma u \sigma f \alpha \) as the Messiah is only really unveiled in the Easter-Event (cf. Mt. 28:18b\textsuperscript{107} Εἴδες μοι πάσα \( \varepsilon \xi \sigma u \sigma f \alpha \) \( \varepsilon \nu \ \\delta \sigma \rho \alpha \nu \) \( \kappa \alpha l \ \varepsilon \pi \ \gamma \alpha s \)).

However, this analysis does not leave one precisely with Bultmann's position either. For on Bultmann's view, everything of messianic significance resides in the cross and resurrection. It is wholly in the Easter experience that Jesus' disciples actually realise, through their faith, that the cross is God's gracious act and Jesus is indeed Messiah.\textsuperscript{107} On this view, nothing of even veiled messianic significance actually happened during Jesus' earthly ministry. Jesus was only a prophet and teacher. None of the events of Jesus' life (not even his call for decision) apparently contain the necessary "raw materials" for the later church Christologies. Hence, for Bultmann it is not the meaning of these pregnant but enigmatic events of Jesus' ministry which is clearly understood for the first time at Easter. In the evaluation of the present writer, this is where Bultmann's work is inadequate and where there is something of great importance to be learned from Bornkamm and Käsemann. For even the present writer's critical analysis of such a passage as Mt. 5:21-48 indicates that the historical figure Jesus did possess an unusual \( \varepsilon \xi \sigma u \sigma f \alpha \), even if the meaning of this \( \varepsilon \xi \sigma u \sigma f \alpha \) was not clearly under-

\textsuperscript{107.} Rudolf Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, Vol. I., pp. 38-42.
stood and interpreted Christologically until the Easter-Event.

To be sure, the church that existed at the time of the production of the synoptic gospels understood the Κύριος of the earthly Jesus through its post-resurrection eyes of faith, and, therefore, saw Jesus’ authority in his teaching as that sovereign authority given by God to His own “Son” and Messiah. Nevertheless, the critical analysis of this passage, combined with the critical insights of others who have shown the centrality of Easter in revealing Jesus as the Christ, together indicate that Jesus’ earthly, historical Κύριος was less direct and more enigmatic than the faith of the evangelists would lead one to believe.

Certainly Jesus’ historical Κύριος does appear to have contained clues as to his ultimately understood role. Who is it that can speak with such self-confidence concerning the Will of God that he does not seek nor need the support of the rabbinic “Fathers”? Who is it that even dares to go beyond the Torah in his demands? Who is it that can cut through the multitude of rabbinic debates concerning the Torah, and thus using their very words and ideas consistently put his finger on the central ethical issues and demands? Who is it that dares to speak in the revelatory imperative? Finally, who is it that can preface his ethical demands simply with the authoritative words, “Amen I say to you” or “I say to you”? It is the contention of the present writer that these questions were not directly answered by the historical Jesus, and yet they were surely raised by him. Therefore, while the historian cannot fully penetrate the self-consciousness of the historical Jesus (nor likely successfully trace the development of the mission-consciousness), he can nevertheless show that Jesus was indeed conscious of possessing a sense of personal authority that was as disturbing and enigmatic
to those around him as it was essential to his being. The answer to the questions raised by this άνωτάτοιο of Jesus only properly came with Easter and the faith it produced; but when the answer came, it surely was in response to this strange άνωτάτοιο of the earthly Jesus of Nazareth. The historian cannot proceed further, for his work has only raised anew the question of faith. Perhaps, however, this faith may be led to understand its object more adequately in light of the foregoing discussion.
A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE CANONS
OF HISTORICAL AUTHENTICITY USED BY
RUDOLF BULTMANN, GÜNThER BORNKAMM AND ERNST KASEMANN
IN THEIR ANALYSES OF "THE PREDICTIONS
OF THE PASSION AND RESURRECTION"
AND THE RESURRECTION TRADITION
In the preceding two chapters, we have seen Bultmann's, Bornkamm's and Käsemann's basic critical judgments with regard to some of the most authentic material in the gospel tradition concerning the Kingdom of God and God's Will for the ethical life. This has brought to the fore knowledge concerning the critical canons used most frequently by these scholars and how each scholar employs his canons. Also it has provided us with an overview of how each scholar employs his hermeneutical canons, so that the critical evidence unearthed as most authentic may speak to readers today and challenge their individual lives.

Now it is equally important to analyse a sample selection of material which is deemed unauthentic, or only partially authentic, by these scholars in order to discover which critical canons prove most important in making these negative judgments, and more exactly how these canons are employed. It will likewise be most instructive to ascertain how the hermeneutical canons of these scholars are thus employed with regard to this less reliable material, because the sections selected here are yet quite central for grasping what can or cannot be known of the meaning of the history of Jesus of Nazareth.

I. The Predictions of the Passion and Resurrection

That Jesus came to a violent death as an apparent, political messianic pretender, at the hands of the Jewish religious establishment in cooperation with the Roman rulers of Palestine, is affirmed by all three of these scholars (as well as being the consensus of New Testament scholarship today). Thus, this is not the crucial historical problem (in spite of the fact that the details of precisely

how this came about is still of great interest to the historian and quite historically problematic, because of the conflicting nature of aspects of the authentic evidence concerning the passion events. What is historically significant for an understanding of Jesus' mission-consciousness, however, is whether he anticipated his own violent end in Jerusalem and if his own intention helped in any way to shape the events of the passion or not. In order to gain more insight into this matter, first Bultmann's critical and interpretative findings will be set forth with regard to certain key passages which have generally become known as the "predictions of the passion" (although as we shall be reminded, these passages speak also of the coming resurrection and exaltation), and then secondly Bornkamm's and Kasemann's findings will be examined as well.

I. Rudolf Bultmann's Critical Analysis of the Predictions of the Passion and Resurrection

All of the "passion predictions" fall within the category that Bultmann has deemed "I" sayings. That is, here Jesus speaks quite self-consciously of himself and his own activity. Most of the "I" sayings are finally found to be critically unauthentic by Bultmann as actual words of the earthly figure Jesus. This is so because these questionable sayings all reflect an understanding of Jesus' mission which was characteristic of the theological beliefs of the early church in Bultmann's view, and thus by the "canon of dissimilarity" must be attributed to the church rather than to Jesus himself. Moreover, some of these sayings are found to have secondary features by Bultmann's use of the "two canons of the forms" and the "canon of internal coherence". When an "I" saying is accepted as a possible Jesus' saying, it is so accepted essentially because it shows signs of being
in a primitive form and gives evidence of only a prophetic mission-consciousness.  

1. Mk. 8:31

31 Καὶ ἠρέτα τά διδάσκειν αὐτοῖς ὅτι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι ἕως τῶν τρειάτερων καὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν γραμματέων καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστήσεται.

2. Mk. 9:31

31 ἔδησακεν γὰρ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐλεγεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι Ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδόθηται εἰς χείρας ἀνθρώπων, καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν αὐτὸν, καὶ ἀποκτανθεῖται μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστήσεται.

3. Mk. 10:33f.

33 ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ναπαθόνειν εἰς Ιερουσαλήμ, καὶ δ' ὑιὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδοθήσεται τοῖς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ τοῖς γραμματέοις, καὶ κατακρινοῦσιν αὐτὸν θανάτῳ καὶ παραδοθοῦσιν αὐτὸν τοῖς ἔθεσιν 34 καὶ ἐμπάζουσιν αὐτὸ καὶ ἐμπάζουσιν αὐτὸ καὶ παραδοθοῦσιν αὐτὸ καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν, καὶ μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστήσεται.

The above are the primary "predictions of the passion" and they (or the theology which produced them) have left their imprint on several additional and apparently dependent sayings as well (i.e. Mk. 9:9, 12b; 14:21; 14:41; Mt. 17:12, 26:2; Lk. 17:25, 24:7). All of these sayings are deemed clearly unauthentic as true logia of the earthly Jesus. Rather, they represent the faith of the church in Jesus as the "Son of Man" and likewise reflect a clear knowledge of the actual details of his death and resurrection. This has been shown already by W. Wrede in his Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien, says Bultmann. The grounds for the rejection of these logia then are two-fold. First, Jesus (as a normal human being) could not have had such precise foreknowledge of the manner of his own death and resurrection and, therefore, in Bultmann's view these

2. Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, pp. 150-166.
texts must represent vaticinia ex eventu. Secondly, the presentation of Jesus here includes a Christological title placed upon Jesus as well as a kerygmatic presentation of the events of his passion and Easter victory. Thus, the "canon of dissimilarity" is the chief criterion in use here, supported by the "canons of the forms". Moreover, the assumption that Jesus could not have had such concrete foreknowledge also implies the use of the "canon of the closed causal nexus."

I. Interpretative Summary

Consistently, Bultmann speaks quite negatively of these texts when he deals with the question of the historian's attempt to interpret the whole of Jesus' life. Furthermore, Bultmann believes that since these texts yield nothing by way of valid critical evidence for understanding Jesus' self-consciousness, this means that any attempt to use these texts in order to build a consistent historical picture of the psychological character of Jesus is invalid. Indeed, Bultmann especially criticises those historians who hold that we can know, by critical historical science and hermeneutical efforts, that the historical figure Jesus went to his death in a full and clear consciousness of his own fate; and even embraced it as the necessary fulfilment of his entire life's work. Nor can we know that Jesus believed in God's ultimate vindication of his life and mission through his coming resurrection. This could only be asserted as a post-Easter faith statement of the church. It is surely neither a historisch nor a geschichtlich statement of the earthly Jesus himself. Moreover, Bultmann asserts that we cannot even know by his-

3. Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, p. 152, especially (but also pp. 124, 151, 155, 330, 331).
torical investigation that Jesus went up to Jerusalem to set his message of the Kingdom before the people in the Holy City in order to demand of them the crucial decision in the last hour. That interpretation of the events of Jesus' last week too would be only conjectural supposition. But even if that supposition should be correct, then Jesus could hardly have anticipated his death at the hands of the Romans, Bultmann thinks. It would be much more logical to assume that Jesus thought by such action that he could really precipitate the actual coming (or inbreaking) of the Basileia tou Theou. Thus, on this view, his arrest, trial and execution as a political criminal could only be understood as an ironic mistake of judgment on the part of Jesus. Moreover, under such circumstances the historian could not rule out the possibility that at the end of his life Jesus was simply a shattered man. But in any case, all of this is still sheer supposition which is based on no solid critical evidence, and the historian qua historian, simply cannot know in what way Jesus viewed, or inwardly experienced, his own death. This, of course, is entirely consistent with Bultmann's other judgments wherein he states that the historian simply does not have the critical evidence to probe the self-consciousness of Jesus (i.e. his psychological thought processes and their development through the course of his life). At best, the historian can speak only of Jesus' self-understanding in the sense of his general prophetic mission-consciousness (and the corresponding message which that mission-consciousness implies for mankind's self-understanding before the God whose Reign is near, and who thus demands a personal decision of

Bomkann's and Kasemann's Critical Analysis of the Predictions of the Passion and Resurrection

Here it will be necessary to rely on Bornkamm's analysis, as Kasemann does not supply an analysis of these texts in his writings. Bornkamm agrees with Bultmann's essential analysis of Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33f. Therefore, Bornkamm also believes that these are church formulations which have clearly been drawn up after the events in order to show Jesus' supernatural foreknowledge of God's Will. Bornkamm notes that the third prediction in Mk. 10:33f. is an especially complete kerygmatic summary of the passion and resurrection. Moreover, Bornkamm notes in this regard that it was the tendency of the church to include such predictions of the death and resurrection in the tradition quite early and frequently (eg. Mk. 2:19f.; Mt. 12:40; Lk. 4:24; Jn. 2:4, 18ff., 3:14ff. etc.). Thus, he too applies the "canon of dissimilarity," the "two canons of the forms" and the "canon of the closed causal nexus" in evaluating these pericopae as unauthentic as actual utterances of the earthly figure Jesus.

However, Bornkamm's analysis of the probable historical evidence does not stop at this point. First, he notes a saying in Lk. 13: 31-33 which contains a reliable core (i.e. 31 Ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὑπ' ὧν προσφερθήσεται ἄγνωστος αὐτῷ, ἐξελθεὶς καὶ πορευθέντα ἐντεῦθεν, ὥστε ὁ ἤθελεν τί σε ἀποκτείνῃ. 32 καὶ εἰσεναὶ αὐτῷ, πορευθέντες εἶναι τῇ ἁλάτει τοῦτο, ἦτοι ἐκβάλλων δαιμόνια καὶ λάσεις ἰπτεσθήσατο σήμερον καὶ αὐριόν, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ τελείωσατο. 33 πλὴν δὲ με σήμερον καὶ αὐριόν καὶ τῇ ἑκομένῃ πορεύεσθαι, ὥστε οὐκ ἐνδέχεται προφήτην ἀπολέσθαι ἐκὼ Ἰερουσαλήμ,) wherein Jesus makes a sharp reply to a few friendly (?)

5. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 154, 211.
pharisees who would warn him of Herod Antipas' desire to kill him. In finding an authentic core in this pericope, Bornkamm interestingly enough has the essential critical support of Bultmann, for Bultmann's critical analysis allows for the authenticity of these verses as representing a real situation in the life of Jesus. Only the reference to the passion seems a later church insertion and thus is found unauthentic by Bultmann, as he applies his "canons of dissimilarity and internal coherence." Bultmann, however, makes nothing of the possible critical reliability of the core of this pericope in his interpretative reconstruction of Jesus' life, but Bornkamm does (as we shall see shortly). Secondly, Bornkamm argues that Luke explicitly states that the disciples of Jesus pinned their hopes of the full appearance of the Φως του Θεου on the journey to Jerusalem (Lk. 19:11, 24:21; Acts 1:6). Both of these passages in the gospel of Luke (and presumably, therefore, also Acts 1:6) are considered unauthentic by Bultmann because they show church (and specific editorial) influence by the "canon of dissimilarity" and the "two canons of the forms." Thus, it is not clear in precisely what sense Bornkamm is maintaining authenticity for these Lukan references. However, the present writer would deduce that it is only in a secondary sense (wherein Luke does reflect an authentic memory of the disciples' anticipation concerning this trip to Jerusalem, but Luke surely here presents this memory overlaid with his own editorial portrait). Consequently, here one can detect Bornkamm's use of the

"canon of dissimilarity" and the "two canons of the forms," but especially the "canon of the forms and the Sitz im Leben" in his own distinct manner. That is, even when church influence is perceived, Bornkamm believes the critical historian may often still look within the church (or editorially) shaped material for authentic glimpses of the actual self-understanding of the earthly Jesus. Moreover, it would seem that Bornkamm also uses his "canon of multiple attestation" here to further support his view. 9

I. Interpretative Summary

What then does Bornkamm make interpretatively of this evidence? He concludes that Jesus did clearly "set his face toward Jerusalem" in order to present his message of the Kingdom there. He says in speaking of Lk. 13:31-33 that: "The real point of these words, which certainly contain as their kernel an authentic saying, is obviously to reveal Jesus' true mission, and to reject a political misinterpretation of it; but also to show his readiness to present himself and his mission for a decision in the only place where it should be given, in Jerusalem." 10 Thus, in spite of the fact that Mk. 8:31, 9:31 and 10:33f. are to be understood as unauthentic for a precise knowledge of Jesus' thoughts, Bornkamm nevertheless says of this material that it shows that, "This decision to go to Jerusalem is undoubtedly the turning point in Jesus' life." 11 Moreover, he holds that Lk. 19:11, 23:21 and Acts 1:6 show the reason why Jesus went to

9. Cf. Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 20-21. Also in a personal interview with Professor Bornkamm in Heidelberg on 9 May, 1972, he related to the present writer his belief that many anecdotes which may not be critically authentic in the most precise sense, may nevertheless convey an essentially true memory concerning a person, which is often more truly characteristic of the actual person than a strictly factual report might be.

10. Ibid., p. 154.

11. Ibid.
Jerusalem. "It is beyond doubt that only on the journey with his followers to Jerusalem and the temple did Jesus seek the final decision." Thus, here Professor Bornkamm clearly pushes beyond what Bultmann has held it is possible to reconstruct and thus to interpret historically.

Again it can be seen specifically that Bornkamm applies his fourth interpretative canon differently than Bultmann. For Bornkamm the interpretative "canon of existential openness or encounter" is not limited to an existentialist (as a Hegelian) analysis of Jesus' message concerning human existence before God. Rather for Bornkamm "existential openness" involves an interpretation of any intention Jesus might have had to live his life as the one who specifically understood himself to be the bringer of the eschatological crisis to mankind. Consequently, Bornkamm interpretatively does convey to his readers today the view that Jesus consciously understood his mission as grounded in the transcendent purpose of God to bring about the full inbreaking of the Βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ. In all of this, however, Bornkamm does not claim that he is able to prove theological convictions by historically established objectifications (which initial theological convictions were worked out even more fully by the later church) but he simply desires to convey Jesus' own apparent beliefs about the deeds which led to his death. Bornkamm does not believe that such historical reconstruction and interpretation can establish the actual truth or falsehood of Jesus' beliefs concerning his own role and activity, any more than Bultmann believes that an historical interpretation of the (later) church kerygma can demon-

12. Ibid., p. 155.
strate its actual truth or falsehood. This difference in the conception of, and application of, the "canon of existential openness" thus likewise underscores the clear difference between Bornkamm and Bultmann with regard to Jesus' self-understanding. For Bornkamm, Jesus' self-understanding involves the belief that he alone was God's especial agent in precipitating the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God, and that such a belief truly controlled Jesus' final earthly deeds leading to his own death on the cross. This view clearly goes beyond Bultmann's notion of Jesus' self-understanding (Existenzverständnis), which sees Jesus simply as God's final messenger concerning man's personal existence before God.

II. The New Testament Resurrection Tradition

Today the theological importance of the New Testament resurrection tradition is being emphasised anew. The older liberal movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, in which Bultmann was schooled as a theological student, tended to view the resurrection tradition with grave suspicion. The liberals stressed the significance of Jesus' earthly ministry and teaching and even his crucifixion as the logical outgrowth of his life and teaching. However, liberal scholarship could only understand the New Testament resurrection tradition as a superfluous mythological expression of the early church's belief in Jesus as God's Messiah. As such, liberal scholarship tended to jettison, or at least discount, the importance of the resurrection tradition for a full understanding of Jesus and his history. 13 The "neo-orthodox" movement, however, with its stress on biblical theology,

again made the church aware of the absolute centrality of the resurrection for a proper understanding of Jesus, as well as for Christian belief and theology. Rudolf Bultmann is in basic agreement with this more recent emphasis on the central significance of the resurrection. In spite of the fact that Bultmann understands the cross, as presented in the kerygma, as the focal saving event of God, he nevertheless does not sever it from the resurrection as the older liberal scholars did. Rather, he says that the "Cross and resurrection form a single, indivisible cosmic event which brings judgment to the world and opens up for men the possibility of authentic life." Upon making such a statement, Bultmann thus also raises the question as to precisely how this resurrection tradition is to be understood and interpreted historically.

Before analysing Bultmann's specific treatment of the Easter texts, it should be noted that several general problems are immediately obvious for any scholar who would attempt an historical examination of the New Testament resurrection tradition. First, educated twentieth century man, with his scientific understanding of the world, has especial difficulty comprehending just what can be meant by Jesus' resurrection, since in his scientific understanding of the nature of things "dead men stay dead." Secondly, any serious historical examination of the resurrection tradition quickly encounters a number of troublesome discrepancies in the tradition itself. For example, there is an "empty tomb tradition" and there is a separate "appearance

17. Ibid., pp. 39-43.
tradition among the Easter texts, and it would seem to most scholars that these two traditions were originally unrelated to each other in the most primitive stage of the gospel tradition. Moreover, among the "appearance stories" there is a major puzzling discrepancy, for some of these stories give the location of Jesus' appearances as Galilee (Matthew 28 and John 21) and others give the location as Jerusalem and its environs (Luke 24 and John 20). The oldest tradition (I Cor. 15:3-8) names Peter as the first to experience an appearance of the risen Jesus but none of the synoptic gospels includes a narrative of such a primary appearance to Peter. In Luke and John Jesus' appearance is presented in a quite physical way, while Matthew instead lays his stress on Jesus' unique commissioning of the church. Additionally, the "empty tomb tradition" varies from synoptic gospel to synoptic gospel concerning the names of the women who actually discovered the tomb, while John names only Mary Magdalene. Moreover, the message of the angelic messenger (or messengers), the description of the messenger (or messengers) and the reaction of the women all vary from gospel to gospel. These, and other problems, confront any serious historian who would seek to give an explanation of the history of the New Testament resurrection tradition. With this general background in mind, then, an examination of Bultmann's specific treatment of the several Easter texts must now be undertaken.

A

II. Rudolf Bultmann's Critical Analysis of the
New Testament Resurrection Tradition

Bultmann discusses the precise history of the Easter texts in a rather limited manner. However, he does maintain that on the basis

of the general New Testament evidence we can know fundamentally that:

The decision which Jesus' disciples had once made to affirm and accept his sending by 'following' him, had to be made anew and radically in consequence of his crucifixion. The cross, so to say, raised the question of decision once more. Little as it could throw into question the content of his message, all the more it could and did render questionable his legitimation, his claim to be God's messenger bringing the last, decisive word. The church had to surmount the scandal of the cross and did it in Easter faith.  

Nevertheless, as to exactly how that Easter faith arose within the individual disciples, Bultmann believes, the historian cannot know with final certainty. Bultmann maintains this because he believes that the New Testament resurrection tradition is so heavily overlaid with legend and mythology. 20

What does Bultmann mean by legend? In describing a pericope as legend, Bultmann means that a given unit of the tradition has little or no direct factual value for reconstructing the event or character of the person it portrays. Rather, the critical historian should understand a legend as serving a religious or edifying function. Legends fall into two fundamental types: the biographical legend which finds its focus in the life of a religious hero, and the cult legend which finds its foundation in the beliefs of the worshipping community. Legends often include a miraculous element (although they need not necessarily do so). Bultmann does not actually describe a formal structure which all legends possess, as he does with miracle stories or apophthegmata. It is the primary aim of form-criticism here to understand the motive (or motives) which led to

the formulation of a given legend, rather than to classify the legend precisely by formal characteristics, or recover the core of an historical event (which may not exist in any case) behind the legendary pericope. In dealing with the Easter legends specifically, Bultmann contends that the object of criticism should be to grasp the history of the formulation of the tradition from an understanding of the cultic needs and beliefs of the early Christian communities from which these legends arose. Consequently, Bultmann's chief critical canons for dealing with the legendary Easter tradition are his "canon of dissimilarity", his "canons of the forms" and his "canon of the closed causal nexus." By his "canon of the closed causal nexus" especially, he makes the fundamental judgment that whatever precise history the individual New Testament texts may have, they all represent an attempt to describe the Easter miracle in terms that science today cannot literally understand or accept.

Beyond this basic judgment then, Bultmann unfolds the several steps he thinks can be detected by historical criticism in the formation of the Easter tradition. These steps are best spelled out as the several texts of the resurrection tradition are each in turn discussed.

The Appearance Tradition

I Corinthians 15:3-8

3 παρέδωκα γάρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον, ὃτι Χριστὸς ἀνέστησεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς, 4 καὶ ὃτι ἐτάφη, καὶ ὃτι ἐγένεσται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς, 5 καὶ ὃτι ὤδη Ἱησοῦς, εἰτα

Bultmann holds that this text, which comes to us from Paul's writings, surely represents the earliest stage of the New Testament resurrection tradition. This is so not only because this passage occurs in an epistle which by the general agreement of scholarship must be dated earlier than any of the gospels, but because of the use of the *termini technici* ἐπανω τεκνικοὶς ἔφοδας, ἐκ ὃν ὀφειλέταις πλεονεκρανέν έκατέρτι, τινὲς ἐκ ἐκκόλουθον τοιαύτης ἑκάτης, εἶτα τοια ἀποστολοίς πάσιν. 6 ἐσχάτον ὑπὲρ πάντων ἄσπερει τα ἐκτράματι ὑψηλή κάμοι.

3. These terms of Old Testament origin, point to a significant difference between Old Testament religion and the pagan religions of the ancient world; for these terms were used for the passing on of not simply a cultic-legal religious tradition, but a tradition in which God Himself was conceived of as having acted in the concrete history of His people. As Bultmann rightly sees, these terms which especially recall God's activity in history are here applied to the passing on of an Easter tradition which existed prior to Paul's writing, and so also raise acutely the question within the New Testament of the precise relationship of historical data to the revelational tradition. Bultmann's conclusion is that the only valid historical (historisch) tradition to be found here is in the fact that Jesus was a truly human personality who was crucified in a specific historical situation and thus was buried. That part of the tradition which refers to Jesus' resurrection (here and elsewhere in Paul's writings) actually represents various mythological traditions (of the pagan mystery cults, the Gnostic redeemer mythology and less frequently the Jewish apocalyptic mythology). Bultmann suggests that
Paul often especially selected motifs from pre-Christian Gnosticism and the mystery religions in order to express the personal and present meaning of the resurrection adequately to his Hellenistic readers.\textsuperscript{22} However, it seems that Paul's specific problem in the Corinthian church is that a group of Gnosticising Christians have so completely understood the resurrection in these Gnostic mythological terms normally used by Paul, that they have come to deny the psychosomatic dimensions of the resurrection which are represented rather realistically in Jewish apocalyptic mythology. Consequently, here Paul is pressed to emphasise those psychosomatic (but not overly physical as in the gospel tradition) apocalyptic aspects of Jesus' resurrection (and as Paul's subsequent argument shows also of the resurrection of believers) which he believes are also essential to a proper theological understanding. However, in so doing, Bultmann believes that Paul has made the fatal theological error (which he normally elsewhere avoids) of attempting to demonstrate the objective historicity of Jesus' resurrection by the means of eyewitnesses. This unfortunate departure from Paul's normal treatment of the resurrection somewhat obscures the fact that Paul otherwise thinks of the resurrection in more 'spiritual' (or less physical) terms essentially as Jesus' exaltation. Only an over-reaction of Paul here to these Gnosticising Corinthians causes him to become entrapped in starting the process of presenting the resurrection via a historicised myth of an apocalyptic nature, and so appear to separate Jesus' resurrection and exaltation. It should be noted also that among the eyewitnesses

cited by Paul, Peter holds the primary position. Finally, Paul does not mention the empty tomb legend at all and thus apparently was unaware of it (at least at the time of the writing of this correspondence to the Corinthian church). Hence, the empty tomb tradition must not have been a part of the earliest resurrection tradition according to Bultmann. 23

In the above critical treatment, then, Bultmann employs his fundamental "canon of the closed causal nexus" for an understanding of all of Paul's presentations of Jesus' resurrection as mythological (whether Gnostic, from the mystery religions, or as above essentially from Jewish apocalyptic writings). He also applies his "canon of the elimination of analogous materials" for a critical understanding of the origin of materials, terminology and ideas apparently normally borrowed by Paul from Gnostic sources and/or the mystery-cults, as he likewise uses his "canon of dissimilarity" for understanding Paul's use here of Jewish apocalyptic mythology. The "two canons of the forms" and especially the "canon of the forms and the Sitz im Leben" are useful in determining the reasoning behind Paul's specific use of apocalyptic mythology here. Finally, Bultmann uses his "canon of the argument from silence" to argue that Paul knew nothing of the empty tomb tradition and thus it must not have been a part of the pre-Pauline tradition.

The Appearance Tradition
In The Gospels

As one moves from Paul to the gospel accounts of the resurrection,

later stages of development can be detected, Bultmann thinks. In I Corinthians 15:3-8, eyewitnesses to the resurrection are simply named and no descriptive narratives are yet presented. By the time of the production of the synoptic gospels, however, new situations in the life of the early Christian communities had given rise to a number of specific legendary stories.

What was the earliest stage of this development? Bultmann says,

"It belongs to the very nature of things that the Easter appearances or visions should have been told in the first place of individuals and then of all the apostles, and that obviously was the actual course of events; and in the same way, it is natural that the evangelists, as they collected and combined the traditions, should put at the end a story of an appearance to all the apostles."

Moreover, it is equally apparent to Bultmann that essentially "spiritual" (or less physical) descriptions must have pre-dated the more physical descriptions, which later naturally arose to satisfy the developing apologetic needs (especially contra Gnostic) within the early church. Consequently, Bultmann notes that I Corinthians 15:5 names Peter as the first to have seen the risen Lord. Thus, it would seem that those gospel accounts which simply mention such a singular "spiritual" appearance to Peter must reflect the earliest stage of the gospel development. In this regard, the allusions to such an appearance in Mark 16:7 and Luke 24:34, and probably the core of the tradition of Peter's confession in Mark 8:27-30 and the essence of the transfiguration story in Mark 9:2-8 (which pericopae are both probably misplaced Easter accounts which have been back-dated to the

25. Ibid.
earthly ministry of Jesus by the evangelist) reflect the earliest stage of the gospel appearance tradition. This same report of an initial appearance to Peter also finds an echo in the dominical saying of Luke 22:32, and in Luke 24:24, as well as in the lost ending of Mark’s gospel (which surely must have included an account of Peter’s encounter) says Bultmann. 26


13 Καὶ ἴδεις διὸς ἐὰν αὐτὸν ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἦν πορευόμενοι εἰς κοιμῆν ἄπεγόναυν σταδίων ἐξήκοντα ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλήμ, ἢ ὅσοι Ἰουδαῖοι, 14 καὶ αὐτὸς ἀφίλων πρὸς ἄλλους περὶ πάντων τῶν συμβουλευθέντων τούτων. 15 καὶ ἔγενετο ἐν τῷ ζυλεῖν αὐτοῦ καὶ συμπήν. καὶ αὐτὸς Ἰησοῦς ἐγγόνασα σύνεφερεντα ἀπότομα, 16 οἱ δὲ σφαλμοὶ αὐτῶν ἀκρατῶς τοῦ ἐπὶ ἐποιεύματι αὐτὸν. 17 εἰπον δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς, Τίνες οἱ λέγοι οὗτοι οὕς ἀντιβάλλετε πρὸς ἄλλους περιπατησάντες; καὶ ἐπιδόθησαν σκυθρωστι. 18 ἀποκρίθηκες δὲ εἰς οὐδὲν ἔκλεος εἰπον πρὸς αὐτούς, εἰ δὲ ὅσον παροικεῖται Ἰερουσαλήμ καὶ ὁδικ γένοι τῇ γενόμεναι ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταῖς, 19 καὶ εἰπεν αὐτοῖς, Πάτα; οἱ δὲ εἰπαν αὐτῷ, Τὰ περὶ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Νατανηνοῦ, ὃς ἐγένετο ἀνὴρ προφήτης δυνά¬τος ἐν ἑργῷ καὶ λέγω ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ παντικα τοῦ λαοῦ, 20 ὡς τε παρεδόθην αὐτῶν εἰς ἀναγινώσκεται καὶ ἐπεκαύεται ἡμῶν εἰς κρίμα δικαίου καὶ ἐπακρατήσαν αὐτῶν. 21 ήμεῖς δὲ ἐλπίζομεν ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐκεῖνος ἡμῶν. 22 ἀλλὰ γυναῖκες τινες εἰς ἡμῶν ἐξεστήσαν ἡμᾶς γενόμεναι ὄρ¬θριναι ἐν τῷ μνημοσύνῃ 23 καὶ μὴ εὑροῦμεν τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἢν ἔγενον αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτῷ ὅταν λέγουσιν αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτῇ πάντων τῶν σῶν ἡμῶν εἰς τῷ μνημοσύνῃ, καὶ εἰρήνη ὅμοια καθὼς καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες εἰτον, αὐτῶν δὲ ὅσι εἰδον. 25 καὶ αὐτὸς εἰπεν πρὸς αὐτοῖς, Οὐ ἄνθητοι καὶ ἱδοὺ δει τῇ κατά την πιστεύειν ἐν τῶν ἤλθον οἱ προφῆται. 26 οἱ καὶ ταῦτα ἔδει παραδείγματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ εἰσελέατε εἰς τὴν δέξια αὐτοῦ; 27 καὶ ἔρξαμεν ἀπὸ Ἡλεόσους καὶ Ἄνδριον.
Among the Easter appearance stories Bultmann further detects two motifs which occur sometimes separately and sometimes combined. The first motif is simply that of proving the resurrection of Jesus by means of an appearance of the risen one. The second motif is the giving of the missionary charge to the disciples by the risen Lord. Bultmann believes that the motif of the express missionary charge is a somewhat later theme which was simply implicit in the earliest appearance stories. Galatians 2:7 shows that the primitive church knew nothing of a universal mission command. Rather:

This missionary task could not be experienced as something surprising, needing express authorization, but was self-evidently given in the certainty that Jesus was risen from the dead and that as the risen Lord, he was coming as Messiah. And this and nothing else must have been the content of the oldest stories of the Easter appearances, just as it was the content of Paul's vision on the Damascus road." 27

Therefore the stories which contain an express mission command reflect a later development in the tradition and were fashioned by Hellenistic Christianity in all probability, Bultmann thinks. Only

27. Ibid., p. 289.
the Emmaus story still has the first motif as its dominant theme. Hence, in the certainty of Jesus' resurrection, there is given also the certainty ὑπὸ αὐτὸς ἔστιν ὁ μελλὼν λυτροθετεί τὸν Ἰσραήλ (Luke 24:21). This story likewise lacks the more physical aspects that appear in the later stories and it is the only narrative which carries within it a reference to the primary appearance to Peter (Luke 24:34). The Emmaus story also contains a reflection of the cultic experience of the primitive church's encounter with the risen Lord in the Lord's Supper (Luke 24-30). Finally, Bultmann notes that this pericope does here and there reflect novelistic motifs and is certainly a true legend, for its presentation of Christ as the unknown traveller (who reveals his divine nature by unique characteristics and who disappears as soon as he is recognised) is quite analogous to both ancient Hebrew and pagan stories of the manifestation of God or the gods. Consequently, Bultmann believes this story originated in the Hellenistic Jewish-Christian church. 28

In the above analysis, then, Bultmann employs his "canon of the argument from silence" to show that the early Pauline tradition did not know of an express universal mission command and that consequently this motif must be considered secondary. Likewise, Bultmann employs his "two canons of the forms" to demonstrate the relatively early form of this narrative and to understand what cultic experiences probably stand behind its formation. Also the "canon of elimination of analogous materials" is employed here for understanding the legendary models Luke used. Finally, the "canon of dissimilarity" and the "canon of the closed causal nexus" serve Bultmann in understanding

the pericope as a mythological expression of the church's Easter faith.

**Luke 24:36-43**

36 Τοῦτο δὲ αὐτῶν λαλοῦντων αὐτῶν ἡμᾶς ἐστὶ ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν (καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Ἐλήφθη ὑμῖν). 37 προῆγεντες δὲ καὶ ἐμφανίζοντο γενόμενοι ἐνδόκους πνεύμα θεωρεῖν. 38 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Τί τεταραγμένοι ἐστε, καὶ διὰ τί διαλογίσμου ἀναθανάτου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν; 39 ἑδετε τὰς χειράς μου καὶ τούθα πασώς μου ὡς ἐγώ εἰμι αὐτός· γυλαφήσατε μὲ καὶ ἑδετε, ὥστε πνεῦμα σάρκα καὶ στήσατε οὐκ ἑξει καθὼς ἐμὲ θεωρεῖτε ἐχοῦτα. (40 καὶ τοῦτο εἰπέν τοῦτον αὐτοῖς τὰς χειράς καὶ τοῦς πάσας.) 41 ἓτε δὲ ἀποστόλων αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς καὶ θαυμαζόντων εἰπεν αὐτοῖς, Ἑκεῖτε τι βράσιμον ἐνθάδε; 42 οὗ δὲ ἐπεδίωκαν αὐτὸ ἰχθύδων ὠποὺ μέρος 43 καὶ λαβοῦν ἐνύψιον αὐτῶν ἐφαγεν.

Bultmann notes that these pericopae, like the Emmaus story, have the motif of proving the resurrection as their dominant theme. However, it is clear that Luke 24:36-49 is already a combination of this more primitive motif (vv. 36-43) and the later motif of the missionary command (vv. 44-49). Bultmann thinks that verses 36-43 represent an older legend which originally told of a Galilean appearance, (although here already an appearance to a group of disciples rather than an appearance to an individual) while verses 44-49 are surely a literary production of Luke, built upon the foundation of the older legend. Both Luke 24:36-49 and John 20:24-29 emphasise the physical aspects of the risen Lord's appearance and so do not represent the earliest phase of the appearance tradition. Additionally, the allusions to the eucharistic meal in Luke 24:41-43 and John 21:12f. surely reflect Hellenistic Christian cultic experiences. Hence, these pericopae must be considered rather late apologetic legends which were fashioned in their present form within the Hellenistic church. Here Bultmann primarily uses his "two canons of the forms" to ascertain the precise stage of development and the probable church situation which gave rise to this stage of the tradition. Here
also, of course, the "canon of the isolated pericopae", the "canon of dissimilarity" and the "canon of the closed causal nexus" are also presupposed as fundamental norms. 29

Matthew 28:16-20

16 Of δὲ ἐνδέχεται ἐπορεύθησαν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαΐαν εἰς τὸ ὅραον οὗ ἐπάθετο αὐτὸς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, 17 καὶ ἴδοντες αὐτὸν προσεκύνησαν, οἱ δὲ ἐξαίρεσαν. 18 καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ελάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων, 19 καθόθις ἐοίᾳ πᾶσα λέγουσα ἐν οἴρων καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς. 20 διδάσκοντες αὐτοῖς τηρεῖν πάντα τὰς ἑντελέχειαν ὄμνις καὶ λαοῦ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἔως τὴν συντελεσίαν τοῦ αἰῶνος.

John 20:19-23

19 Οὕς ὑμῖν ὑφίετε τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἔκλειψεν τῇ μνασεβάσειμ, καὶ τῶν θυρῶν κεκλεισμένων ὅπου ἦσαν οἱ μαθηταὶ διὰ τοῦ φόβου τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ἤλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἔστη εἰς τὸ μέσον καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Ἐλήθη ὅμως. 20 καὶ τοῦτο εἶπεν ἐρεινεῖν πᾶσας τις ἀνάμεσα καὶ τὴν πλευράν αὐτοῖς. ἐχάρισαν οὖν οἱ μαθηταὶ ἴδοντες τὸν κόσμον. 21 εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς πάλιν, Ἐλήθη ὅμως· καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πάτὴρ, καὶ ἔδωκέν μοι ὅμως. 22 καὶ τοῦτο εἶπεν ἐνε- φόσαν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Λάβετε πνεύμα ἁγίου. 23 ἀν τινων δέθη τὰς ἁμαρτίας αφέωνται αὐτοῖς, ἀν τινων κρατήσε τας κεκράτησαν.

John 21:15-17

15 Ὄτε οὖν ἠρπασσαν λέγει τῷ Σιμώνι Πέτρῳ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Σιμών Ἰωάννου, ἀγαπᾶ με πλέον πᾶσαν; λέγει αὐτῷ, Νας, κύριε, σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φίλῳ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ, Βούκε τὰ ἁμαρτία μου. 16 λέγει αὐτῷ πάλιν δεδ- τερον, Σιμών Ἰωάννου, ἀγαπᾶ με; λέγει αὐτῷ, Νας, κύριε, σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φίλῳ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ, Ποιμάνε τὰ πράβατά μου. 17 λέγει αὐτῷ τῷ τρίτῳ, Σιμών Ἰωάννου, φιλεῖ με; ἐπισκίησεν δὲ Ἰωάννου ότι εἰπεν αὐτῷ τῷ τρίτῳ, φιλεῖ με; καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, Κύριε, πάντα σὺ οἶδας, σὺ γνωσκέτας ὅτι φίλῳ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ, Βούκε τὰ πράβατά μου.

Here Bultmann believes we are dealing with the latest stage of the development of the appearance tradition because in all of these

29. Ibid.
pericopae the secondary motif of the missionary charge becomes the main theme. However, there are some traces of older traditions underlying all of these narratives as well. In Matthew 28:17 (οι δὲ ἔστιν τὰς χεῖρας καὶ τὴν πλευρὰν αὐτῶν) traces of the older motif of proving the reality of the resurrection can be seen. Likewise, the Galilean setting of Matthew 28:16-20 is in all probability a sign of a more primitive recollection. Likewise, in spite of the presence of the seven disciples in John 21:15-17, the real focus of the narrative is the encounter of Peter with the risen Lord, and thus this pericope probably represents a later legendary development of the primitive memory of the Galilean appearance to Peter, in which the implicit missionary task presupposed in the old tradition is here made the explicit point of the story. Finally, Bultmann notes that Matthew 28:19, with its specific instruction to baptise (ἀπεστέλλαν τὰ ἔστερα) is surely a further indication of the Hellenistic Christian cultic origin of Matthew's "commissioning of the disciples." 30

Here one can see that Bultmann's analysis hinges on his use of the "canon of the argument from silence" and its indication that the express missionary charge was not a part of the most primitive stage of the tradition (as reflected in Galatians 2:7). Also of fundamental importance here are Bultmann's "two canons of the forms" which show how and why this later stage of the appearance tradition arose. Likewise, the "canons of the isolated pericopae, dissimilarity and the closed causal nexus" are again employed throughout this analysis by Bultmann.

Here Bultmann contends that the resurrection account set forth in Mark 16:1-8 appears to be a separate formulation from the preceding sections of Mark. This contention is supported by the fact that the women have already been mentioned in Mark 15:40, 47 and yet are named again in a detailed manner in Mark 16:1. Thus, Bultmann argues that this factor indicates that Mark 16:1-8 is a unit unto itself. This is understandable on the grounds that in the preaching of the earliest Christian communities, a continuous Passion narrative would have been needed (as the individual stories of the arrest or mocking would contain little interest apart from the central fact of the crucifixion). The resurrection, however, represents a different situation. The various resurrection accounts were told to give assurance of the fact that Jesus was truly risen and had appeared to his followers. Hence, testimony of many individual witnesses was employed by preachers, and various resurrection cycles become current in separate Christian communities. The Markan resurrection account, as set forth in Mark 16:1-8, represents one of these many witnesses to the resurrection.
which circulated in the early church. The purpose of this account must certainly have been to demonstrate the reality of the resurrection of Jesus by means of a witness to the empty tomb. 31

Bultmann also contends that this tradition of the empty tomb is certainly a secondary formulation which was not part of the earliest kerygma of the church. At first, Bultmann maintains there was no distinction between Jesus' resurrection and exaltation (or ascension). This distinction only arose later as a consequence of the Easter appearance tradition (as in I Corinthians 15:3-8) and the specific appearance stories (as in the gospels), which eventually caused a special story of the ascension to be formulated as the terminus of the risen Lord's earthly sojourn. Consequently, the account of the empty tomb was also created as an intermediate stage in this development. Bultmann maintains by way of proof (as has been noted above) that Paul knows nothing of this empty tomb tradition; nor do the speeches in Acts reflect any knowledge of it. Therefore, Bultmann concludes that the original kerygma must not have included the empty tomb tradition, but that it was created as a middle stage in the legendary development of the overall resurrection tradition of Jesus. Moreover, Bultmann contends that the motive for this development can be seen quite clearly. In Mark, the angel certainly has the apologetic purpose of proving the resurrection by means of the empty tomb. Furthermore, the shattering impression in Mark 16:8 is meant to explain apologetically why this story was not first heard as a

part of the original kerygma and as an apology for the fact that the
church could produce no actual witnesses for the resurrection-event
itself. Bultmann does remark that Mark's account is still quite re-
served, due to the fact that neither the resurrection-event itself
is described nor any appearance account of the risen Lord is included.
In this regard Bultmann especially mentions verse 3. His implication,
however, is that Mark's creative construction is more impressive as
a well-told story than as history. Finally, Bultmann notes that
verse 7 is surely a later addition to the primary form of Mark's
empty tomb account. He believes that the lost ending of Mark must
have contained the Galilean appearance tradition. Therefore, verse
7 is an editorial addition to adjust this secondary story of the
women with the older Galilean appearance tradition. Likewise, Mark
14:28 can only be properly understood as an editorial addition to
prepare for the Galilean tradition. Also the addition of verse 7 by
Mark shows his presupposition that the disciples stayed in Jerusalem
following the crucifixion. Bultmann, however, maintains that the
earliest tradition must have told of the disciples' flight directly
to Galilee and of the appearances of the risen Lord there. Conseguent-
ly, verse 7 serves as an artificial means of sending the disciples to
Galilee. In this way Mark hopes to harmonise the discrepancies in
his two traditions.32

In the foregoing analysis, Bultmann employs his "canon of the
isolated pericopae" to show that Mark 16:1-8 was originally a sepa-
rate unit of the tradition from the Markan Passion account and in all
probability from the other New Testament Easter accounts. Next, it
can be seen that Bultmann uses his "canon of the argument from silence"

32. Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, pp. 284-
287, 290.
to deduce that the empty tomb tradition was not a part of the original kerygma and thus must represent a secondary but still intermediate stage of the overall legendary New Testament resurrection tradition. Bultmann further uses his "two canons of the forms" and especially his "canon of the forms and Sitz im Leben" to explain the specific apologetic needs of the early church which gave rise to the precise form of the empty tomb tradition in Mark. Here it is significant to note that although Bultmann believes that his "canons of the forms" and his "canon of the argument from silence" do indicate that Mark 16:1–8 represents a secondary, intermediate stage of the overall Easter tradition; that nevertheless the Markan account surely also represents the most primitive form of that stage of the tradition (as will be seen more perspicuously below in our examination of the empty tomb tradition in Matthew, Luke and John). Additionally, Bultmann uses his "canon of internal coherence" to deduce that in verse 7, Mark is editorially adjusting his empty tomb tradition (with its apparent assumption that the disciples had remained in Jerusalem following the crucifixion) to fit with the older Galilean appearance tradition which was also known to him. Finally, as we have seen throughout this section, the "canon of the closed causal nexus" is employed to understand the mythological dimensions of the narrative as is the "canon of dissimilarity" to understand this account as arising from the theological beliefs of the early church rather than from an actual historical (historisch) event.

The Other Empty Tomb Stories
Matthew 28:1–10 (Matthew 28:11–15)

Matthew

represents a further apologetic legend, which is surely a later development built upon the foundation of the more primitive core of the empty tomb tradition as seen in Mark 16:1-8. Moreover, Matthew's editing and reshaping of Mark's tradition can be seen in the altering of details (such as the dropping of the name of Salome and the elimination of the problematic statement of the intention of the women to anoint Jesus' body in verse 1) and in Matthew's obvious heightening of supernatural features (as in verses 2-4 where a beginning of a description of how the resurrection-event occurred is given via the transformation of Mark's "young man" into an angel who descends from heaven in the midst of an earthquake and rolls away the stone from the entrance to the tomb, and whose countenance is so heightened with supernatural features that he clearly invokes fear from the guards) and in Matthew's alteration of Mark's cryptic conclusion (wherein the fearful silence of the women in Mark is transformed into a mixture of fear and joy which overcomes the silence in proper accord with the angel's command). In spite of Matthew's editorial development of the more primitive Markan tradition, Bultmann comments that Matthew is still reserved in his description when it is compared with the even later development in the Gospel of Peter. Finally, Matthew's editorial hand also can be seen in his addition of verses 9 and 10 (the appearance to the women) as a literary bridge to his other basic appearance tradition of the Galilean commissioning of the disciples. 33

Luke

Again Bultmann maintains that Luke simply develops the Markan empty tomb tradition to serve his own purposes. Luke both abbreviates and alters his Markan source. The major items of change in-

33. Ibid., pp. 286-287.
clude: the changing of Mark's "young man" into two men in dazzling apparel in verse 4, the omission of the questioning of the women concerning how they will move the stone, the alteration of the angelic message so that the prophecy of a Galilean appearance disappears in verses 6 and 7 (in order to harmonise the angelic message with Luke's Jerusalem appearance tradition), the substitution of the name Joanna for the Markan Salome, and the alteration of Mark's conclusion so that the women report their news to the disciples but the disciples receive the report as only an "idle tale." (Bultmann also apparently holds, with a number of other scholars, that verse 12 is a "western non-interpolation" which has been interpolated into Luke here on the basis of John 20:3-10.)

John

Bultmann believes that the Johannine narrative of the empty tomb is most certainly a late formulation. This can be seen in several factors. First, John skillfully combines the empty tomb tradition with his appearance stories. Second, John shows the later tendency to individualise, and also to add previously unknown details, when he isolates Mary Magdalene from among the "women" of the earlier tradition. This pattern is a definite mark of secondary development in story-telling, says Bultmann. (This same pattern may account for the "beloved disciple and Peter episode" in John 20:2-10 as well). Finally, the angels appear as two in number in verse 12, whereas the more primitive Markan account spoke of a single young man. No doubt the folk motif of two angels is added for purposes of supernatural heightening and literary symmetry, as the angels serve such little purpose that Bultmann refers to them as "stage furniture". This

34. Ibid.
feature actually is due to John's artistic blending of the appearance and empty tomb traditions, where Jesus himself in an appearance to Mary Magdalene, takes up the role formerly played by the angels in the more primitive accounts.\textsuperscript{35}

In all of the above, Bultmann contends that the historical critic must realise that in the final analysis the empty tomb tradition reduces itself to its most primitive core in Mark 16:1-8.\textsuperscript{36} The several other developments which have been analysed above in Matthew and Luke and finally in John simply represent further embellishments upon the original Markan account. The purpose of the empty tomb tradition as a whole, then, was to "prove" that Jesus had conquered death in a real (i.e. bodily) manner; for the angel in the story has only the role of angelus interpres. In Bultmann's judgment the empty tomb tradition probably arose to satisfy the needs of the Hellenistic Jewish-Christians and was itself developed as the intermediate stage of the overall Easter tradition between the appearance accounts and the final development of the ascension story.\textsuperscript{37}

Throughout the above analysis of the later development of the empty tomb tradition, Bultmann employs several of his critical canons repeatedly. He employs his "two canons of the forms" to show why and how the empty tomb tradition developed from its original core to its later shapes. Likewise, throughout, the "canon of the argument from silence" is used to argue for the more primitive nature of the Markan account and the secondary character of the several features added by Matthew, Luke and John. Similarly, the "canon of the isolated pericopae" is employed repeatedly to demonstrate the independent origins

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., pp. 287, 309-310, 314-316.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p. 287.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., pp. 284-295, 301-317; Rudolf Bultmann and Karl Kundsin, Form Criticism, pp. 64-70.
of the Passion tradition, the appearance tradition, the core of the empty tomb tradition, the secondary features which were built upon the core of the empty tomb tradition (such as the later embellishments, the secondary apologetic legend represented in Matthew 27:62-66 and 28:11-15 and the editorial account of the appearance to the women in Matthew 28:9-10), and finally the ascension story. Moreover, the "canon of the closed causal nexus" and the "canon of dissimilarity" are in constant use to explain the mythological nature of the presentation of the theological beliefs of the Hellenistic Jewish-Christian community here in the form of the empty tomb tradition.

The Ascension Tradition

Bultmann contends that the ascension tradition in Luke and Acts represents the final stage of the New Testament Easter tradition. Bultmann says, "Originally there was no difference between the Resurrection of Jesus and his ascension; this distinction first arose as a consequence of the Easter legends, which eventually necessitated a special story of an ascension with heaven as an end of the risen Lord's earthly sojourn." The ascension as we have it in Luke 24:50-53 is a literary creation but represents the more primitive form of the development within this final stage of the Easter tradition. Luke 24:50-53 may, in fact, be an account which Luke already had on hand (but that cannot be known for sure). Clearly, however, the account in Acts 1:9-11 is the latest stage of the ascension tradition (and thus of the overall Easter tradition) within the New Testament; for here the ascension is presented in a legendary narrative form not

yet present in the more primitive account in Luke 24:50-53. Moreover, Bultmann notes that the ascension tradition was carried even further in the post-canonical writings. 39

Here Bultmann chiefly uses his "two canons of the forms" to further elucidate the development of the Easter tradition. Also assumed, however, are the use of his "canons of the isolated pericopae, dissimilarity and the closed causal nexus," employed in a manner similar to their use throughout this analysis of the entire Easter tradition.

II. Interpretative Summary

In order to understand Bultmann's interpretation of the legendary resurrection tradition in the New Testament, one must have an understanding of his programme of demythologising. Thus, it will be necessary to review this programme here briefly and show its relevance to the issue presently under discussion.

Bultmann vigorously contends that the New Testament has a unique message to present. This message is the unparalleled eschatological act of God, which appeared in human history in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. He maintains, however, that the New Testament often proclaims this eschatological act in the form of mythology. These myths find their origins (as we have seen) in the Jewish apocalyptic hopes, the Hellenistic mystery cults and the Gnosticism of the first century A.D. Therefore, the message of the New Testament is badly obscured for modern man by the obsolete mythological cosmology of a three-storied universe (contained in the above mentioned mythologies). This cosmology presents men's lives as influenced and

39. Ibid., pp. 286-287.
controlled by God from above (heaven) and the demons from below (hell).
So also, the very redemptive event itself is presented in the form
of these mythologies. 40

The liberal biblical scholars of past generations rightly have
shown the many mythological elements throughout the New Testament,
but they made a fundamental mistake in simply eliminating these mytho-
logical elements and retaining only broad principles of religion and
ethics. Bultmann maintains that the older liberal approach failed to
perceive properly that the heart of the New Testament message is
kerygma; that it is a proclamation of a definite and unique act of
God. Consequently, when the liberals freely eliminated what they
understood as myth, and rationalised away the resulting doctrinal im-
plications, they failed to understand the New Testament message itself
correctly. A new method of interpreting the New Testament is needed,
Bultmann argues. This method must fully appreciate the positive work
of the liberals who were able to show the mythological form of the
New Testament message, but it must not do violence to the central
proclamation of God's eschatological act. Thus, what the New Testa-
ment demands is a method of interpretation which is able to remove
the mythological framework and yet retain the essential message of
God's gift of a new quality of life through Jesus Christ. 41

The first step toward discovering this method of interpretation
is found in an examination of the nature of myth. Bultmann contends
that myths obviously should not be understood literally as objective
pictures of the world. Nor are myths simply ancient tales of folk-
lore, which describe the divine in terms of human life. Rather myths

40. Rudolf Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, pp. 1-16.
41. Ibid., pp. 9-10, 12-15.
actually represent and convey a particular understanding of man and
his place in the world (an Existenzverständnis). Thus, "Myth should
be interpreted not cosmollogically, but anthropologically, or better
still, existentially." A myth conveys a definite point of view
with regard to human existence. Therefore, a proper method of inter-
pretation must not just discard the myth, but should uncover the
challenge of its message for man's present existence. This pro-
cedure of interpretation is found for the New Testament in what
Bultmann calls demythologising. The aim of demythologising is to
cut through the mythological stories of the New Testament, which are
presented all too often as objective history; and uncover the exis-
tential challenge which these stories present to our existence today.
This method, Bultmann believes, will uncover precisely that challenge
of God's redemptive act for modern man.

Bultmann further explains demythologising by spelling out just
what he understands the heart of the New Testament proclamation to
be. He maintains that the demythologised New Testament clearly con-
trasts two opposite types of self-understanding. The first type is
that of life "apart from faith." Such words as sin, flesh and death
are really mythological terms, which convey descriptions of life
in bondage to this visible world; a bondage to the tangible decaying
things of life that enslave man and so drag him down to destruction.
This is a life of seeking security where no real security is to be
found. Hence, when one does entrust himself to the things of this
world, he is deceived and becomes enslaved in an inauthentic form of

42. Ibid., p. 10.
43. Ibid., pp. 10, 15-16.
The second type of self-understanding is "the life of faith." This life is one which does not seek to hold on to the tangible things of life but rather rejects them. It is open to the grace of God seen in His gift of Jesus Christ. The "life of faith" releases man from the past and gives him an openness to the future. This authentic life is not given magically to a person but must be renewed constantly by new acts of decision and obedience.  

Secular existentialist philosophy also speaks about inauthentic and authentic existence. Among the secular philosophers it is assumed that man can achieve the transition from inauthentic to authentic existence by an act of the human will. Bultmann points out, however, that the New Testament is far more realistic about man's nature and speaks of man as radically fallen, or as sinner. These terms mean that man is not capable of escaping from his plight by his own effort. The only hope for man is help from outside the sphere of his own existence. Consequently, the New Testament proclaims that the way of transition to authentic existence has been provided for man by an act of God.  

Bultmann contends that the New Testament speaks perspicuously of an act of God focused in the event of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. To be sure, Jesus is described in mythological language in the New Testament, and especially in such places as the legendary resurrection tradition, but the language of myth here points beyond itself. It emphasises that the New Testament is not really concerned  

44. Ibid., pp. 17-19.  
45. Ibid., pp. 19-22.  
46. Ibid., pp. 22-23.
with an objective account of a figure of past history. Rather this mythology is meant to underscore Jesus' significance for human existence and so to set forth his importance for faith as "the one" in whom and through whom the saving act of God takes place. That God has acted uniquely in Jesus cannot be further demythologised but rather represents the central claim and scandal of Christianity.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 34-45.}

Bultmann employs his method of demythologising precisely in order to explain the act of God in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Bultmann shows that in the New Testament a number of mythological descriptions are applied to Jesus. He is called the pre-existent and sinless Son of God, for example. His death is said to be a triumph over the demonic powers which enslave man. All of these descriptions are surely mythological and need to be demythologised. Therefore, Bultmann directs attention primarily to the death of Jesus upon the cross. Here is the key to understanding the New Testament's several mythological descriptions of Jesus' life; and the event of the cross, then, is to be rightly understood as the actual focus of the unique saving act of God. Bultmann explains that in so interpreting the cross, the mythological elements within the New Testament must be set aside and its true cosmic meaning brought to light. The cross has cosmic meaning because it is not merely an event of past history. It is, of course, an event of the past, for that distinguishes Christianity from Gnosticism and the mystery religions of Jesus' day. The true significance of the cross, however, is misunderstood if it is approached as an "objective fact of salvation." If one approaches the cross as an objective historical fact
to be examined, one actually sins, Bultmann believes. For, "By human norms, the cross cannot be recognized as the fact of salvation, but remains a 'stumbling block' and 'folly'. Any evaluation of the historical Jesus according to human categories would be kata Sarka (flesh-wise) regarding of Christ and hence would mean seeing him as a Kata Sarka Christ". 48 Here the essential meaning of sinfulness is found in seeking Christ "according to the flesh". Bultmann points out, "That conduct or attitude that directs itself according to the 'flesh', taking 'flesh' for its norm, is sinful - as the cited sentence, Rom. 8:5, clearly says: 'existence in the flesh' realizes itself in 'setting the mind on the things of the flesh' (R.S.V.), i.e. in the pursuit of the merely human, the earthly transitory." 49 Hence, the sin involved in approaching the cross as a 'fact of history' is one of perceiving Christ as merely a phenomenon of the world and of seeking security in the tangible and transitory. This effort is really an attempt to avoid the existential decision of faith; the personal decision of being crucified with Christ to the tangible things of this world. Only when one makes this decision of faith, does he discover the true meaning of the cross as the act of God, which frees a man from his past and from the present power of this world to enslave. In this decision of faith, the cross of Jesus ceases to be an objective event of the past, which God has somehow turned to our advantage, but rather Jesus' cross becomes our own and we are personally crucified with him. Here, Bultmann invokes Paul's support, when the apostle stresses the need of Christians to identify them-

49. Ibid., p. 238.
selves with the crucified Christ in partaking of the Sacraments (Rom. 6:3, 6; I Cor. 11:26, 10:16), and when Paul expresses a repeated desire that Christians should die to their sins (Gal. 5:24, 6:14, Phil. 3:10). In this demythologised way the cross is properly understood as a permanent reality which brings judgment and deliverance to the sphere of each man's personal existence. 50

Bultmann does not complete his theology nor cease to apply his hermeneutical method once he has demythologised the cross as the eschatological event, however, for he rightly realises that in the New Testament proclamation the cross and resurrection of Jesus form a single cosmic event. When Bultmann emphasises this, it is because he does not hold that the resurrection, as it is described in the legendary New Testament accounts (of appearances, the empty tomb and the ascension) is actually a separate historical (historisch) event in its own right. In its manner of description in the overall New Testament Easter tradition, the resurrection simply looks like the legendary resuscitation of a corpse, which Bultmann believes is quite inconceivable to modern man and thus must be understood as mythological. Moreover, the resurrection is also often presented within the New Testament as a miraculous proof of the atoning significance of the cross. But this attempt to prove one article of faith with another is an impossible procedure. Bultmann believes that the resurrection itself must remain an article of faith, for no amount of witnesses could prove it to be an actual historical event (especially when those witnesses were disciples of Jesus). No proof can really convince the sceptic (who lives with a modern scientific world-

view) that the resurrection accounts of Jesus are historical. Furthermore, even if (for the sake of argument) the miracle of the resurrection could somehow be established by historical-critical methods, that demonstration would only remain quite barren and unable to tell us anything about the eschatological reality of death's destruction and the true saving significance of Jesus. No, the resurrection tradition is paralleled too closely in other ancient religious mythologies to allow for its acceptance as anything but mythological in form. However, if the resurrection in the New Testament is cast in the form of mythology, then it points beyond its mythological form to a specific understanding of human existence. Thus, when the resurrection is demythologised, it can be seen clearly as the proclamation of the saving significance of the cross. It is the confession that the one who died upon the cross is actually Lord and Son of God. In this manner, the resurrection is properly understood as containing the eschatological significance which Paul ascribes to it. As one understands the word of the cross to mean a dying with Christ to this world, so he will then know the present reality of the risen life with Christ (Rom. 6:4f.). This risen life is one in which the Christian knows freedom from his past, a freedom from the power that this world holds over him, and a new freedom toward God's future. This life of risen freedom is what is meant by the "power of the resurrection" (Phil. 3:10). Consequently, it would seem that the historian qua historian can know little about the resurrection of Jesus, except that the first Easter was that time when Jesus' disciples first discovered the true meaning of the cross. Bultmann can thus summarise

his position by saying,

Indeed faith in the resurrection is really the same thing as faith in the saving efficacy of the cross, faith in the cross of Christ. Hence you cannot first believe in Christ and then believe in the cross of Christ. The saving efficacy of the cross is not derived from the fact that it is the cross of Christ; it is the cross of Christ because it has saving efficacy. \(^{52}\)

How does the saving event seen in the cross, and realised for the first time on Easter Day, become a saving event in the lives of persons living today? The eschatological event only really ceases to be mythological when it is preached and received in faith. In fact, the preaching and receiving of the cross and resurrection are part of the eschatological event, whereby a person living today gains his true historical (eschatologisch) authenticity (or authentic existence). Since the church is the place where preaching and response take place, the church (but not merely as a cultural or sociological phenomenon) is a part of the total eschatological event of salvation. So without preaching and personal response, the eschatological event is still incomplete and mythological, for it remains external to the personal existence of persons living today. But if the word of the cross and resurrection is preached and received, men will receive a new self-understanding (Existenzverständnis) and historical authenticity (eschatologisch) as God’s gift. \(^{53}\)

Once the task of demythologising is fully realised and the word of the cross and resurrection has been properly preached and responded to, then the act of God is truly complete. However, some may raise the objection that in speaking of an act of God at all, Bultmann is

\(^{52}\) Ibid., p. 41.

himself employing mythological language. Bultmann, to the contrary, believes that it is not mythological to speak of this total event as an act of God, for it is not an observable, objective, super-natural event; but rather concrete history (past and present) which can be examined and explained by the normal methods of critical history. Only the eye of faith can see and understand that in the preaching of the eschatological significance of the cross and resurrection of Jesus, God is actually acting. To unbelief Jesus is only flesh and no act of God can be seen. This is the true paradox of the Christian faith which cannot be eliminated, and so constitutes the actual stumbling-block of the Christian message. Demythologising has removed all the false stumbling-blocks of the ancient mythological elements within the New Testament precisely in order to present the real σωτηριακόν of the claim of the hidden act of God in the cross and resurrection. So Bultmann can say, "It is precisely its immunity from proof which secures the Christian proclamation against the charge of being mythological."

Since Bultmann places the real meaning of the resurrection so squarely in the kerygmatic proclamation of the cross and in the believer’s response of faith, it is natural that some critical interpreters of Bultmann should conclude that he thinks that the resurrection of Jesus is finally no more than the legendary concretisation of an idea. However, Bultmann resists such an interpretation of his critical and hermeneutical work concerning the resurrection as quite superficial and false; for he contends that he does not believe that the New Testament resurrection tradition is simply the legendary

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55. Rudolf Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, pp. 43-44.
56. Ibid., p. 44.
concretisation of a mere idea, but rather the legendary concretisation of the vital Easter faith of the first Christian community, faith that God has indeed exalted as Lord this Jesus who was crucified, faith in the present reality of the risen Lord. Additionally, this means for Bultmann that death for the Christian believer does not hold the fear of being swallowed up in nothingness, but rather the same God who repeatedly comes to the believer (by faith) in life will come to him also in his death. Therefore, as a Christian believer concerned with historical authenticity at its most profound level, (i.e. eschatologisch historical authenticity) Bultmann strongly affirms the actual reality of the resurrection of Jesus, but only as it is known and reflected in the believer’s faith. However, as a mere event of objective history (Historie) Bultmann is quite sceptical of demonstrating an objective, supernatural event in history of first century Palestine, or of exploring the meaning of an event in cultural history (i.e. the continuing influence of Jesus as a great man); and thus Bultmann is in the last analysis not really interested in what can be known at the historisch level (except as it is necessary to deal with the legendary development of the various New Testament accounts as a scientific historian concerned with understanding Christian origins). 57

57. Rudolf Bultmann, "Is Jesus Risen as Goethe?" Der Spiegel on The New Testament, ed. by Werner Harenberg, pp. 235-238; also this same understanding of Bultmann's views was related to me by Professor Günther Bornkamm in an interview in Heidelberg on 9 May, 1972.
II. Günther Bornkamm’s and Ernst Käsemann’s Critical Analysis of the New Testament Resurrection Tradition

Bornkamm and Käsemann do not supply as detailed a critical analysis of the resurrection tradition in their writings as Bultmann does. Therefore, it is not always possible to tell from their published works precisely where they might differ from Bultmann concerning specific aspects of the New Testament Easter texts. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that both Bornkamm and Käsemann do agree with the general form-critical analysis of the Easter texts which Bultmann has set forth in his writings. That is, Bornkamm and Käsemann surely agree that the resurrection tradition as a whole is heavily overlaid with legendary mythology which was borrowed from the mythology of Jewish apocalyptic sources, Gnostic sources and the mystery cults. Likewise, they agree that the earliest stage of the tradition is to be found in I Corinthians 15:3-8, the second stage in the gospel appearance stories, the third stage in the empty tomb tradition (with Mark 16:1-8 as the most primitive core of this stage) and the final stage in the ascension tradition. Consequently, Bornkamm and Käsemann here also employ all of the critical canons which have been noted previously in Bultmann’s critical analysis of the Easter texts.  

II. Günther Bornkamm’s and Ernst Käsemann’s Interpretation of the New Testament Resurrection Tradition

Here (as in several previous sections) it will be necessary to rely more heavily on the writings of Bornkamm than on those of Käsemann, for the latter scholar has written even less with regard to the

subject at hand. Nevertheless, again it would appear that these two former students of Bultmann are in essential agreement in the manner in which they both agree with Bultmann and yet move beyond him in interpretative emphasis.

Both Bornkamm and Käsemann agree with Bultmann that the overall Easter tradition in the New Testament presents Jesus' resurrection in the form of mythology, wherein the act of God in raising Jesus from the dead is presented in an objectified legendary manner in the appearance, empty tomb and ascension stories (although it must be allowed that this objectification of the act of God is quite reserved in that it does not actually present the act of God itself but only its aftermath). The historian qua historian, then, cannot accept nor interpretatively present these mythological accounts to his twentieth century readers in a literal way, because modern man cannot allow for observable divine intrusions in the natural order. Yet, as with Bultmann, there is a recognition on the part of these historical interpreters that at the most profound level these mythological Easter narratives do speak of an actual eschatological act of God in Jesus' resurrection, which cannot be eliminated without destroying the Christian message itself. For in the Easter message underlying the several legendary accounts is contained the central kerygmatic claim of the New Testament, which says that God has acted here for the salvation of mankind. Indeed, as Bornkamm says,

Without this faith not a single item in the Jesus tradition would have come down to us. Thus, it is not a question of a few highlights and colors being borrowed from

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this faith and superimposed upon the tradition. Rather, the tradition in all its narratives and in all its variations is a confession and proclamation of Christ. 60

Although Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann all agree that the reality of the resurrection of Jesus cannot be eliminated in historical interpretation, Bornkamm especially differs from Bultmann with regard to interpretative emphasis in presenting the reality of Jesus' resurrection to his readers today. As has been shown, Bultmann believing that the last historisch fact which can be reconstructed is the Easter faith of the first disciples, uses his geschichtlich canons to convey the meaning of that faith to his present day readers as a kerygmatic challenge which offers the possibility of (eschatologisch) historical authenticity (or authentic existence) to the one who will believe today. This means that the interpretative emphasis of Bultmann's treatment of the resurrection focuses upon Easter faith (past and present) rather than upon the act of God which first gave rise to that faith. Bornkamm, however, believes that the New Testament Easter message does not place its focus upon Easter faith in isolation from the act of God which gave rise to that faith. Still, all three scholars do not attempt to separate the reality of Jesus' resurrection from the believer's faith or wish to appear to make the act of God a visible reality (as the legendary New Testament narratives do). However, (unlike Bultmann) Bornkamm desires to make it quite clear that the New Testament Easter message consistently declares that it is God's hidden activity itself which gave rise to the Easter faith of the first disciples, and, therefore, that that Easter faith was not simply a "self-induced phenomenon with the disciples"

From what has been said, it follows that we are to understand the Easter stories too as testimonies of faith, and not as records and chronicles, and that it is the message of Easter we must seek in the Easter stories. That is not to say by any means that the message of Jesus’ resurrection is only a product of the believing community. Certainly the form in which it comes down to us is stamped with this faith. But it is just as certain that the appearances of the risen Christ and the word of the witnesses have in the first place given rise to this faith. What became clear and grew to be a certainty for the church was that God himself had intervened with his almighty hand in the wicked and rebellious life of the world, had vrested this Jesus of Nazareth from the power of sin and death which had risen against him, and had set him up as Lord of the world. Thus, according to the interpretation of the early church, Easter is above all else God's acknowledgment of this Jesus, whom the world refused to acknowledge and to whom even his disciples were unfaithful. It is at the same time the intervention of God's new world in this old world branded with sin and death, the setting up and beginning, of his reign. It is an event in this time and this world, and yet at the same time an event which puts an end and a limit to this time and this world. To be sure only faith experiences this (Acts X. 40 ff.), for it cannot be observed and demonstrated like any other event in time and space. Yet it concerns this world as an act of salvation and judgment and must therefore be proclaimed to the ends of the earth.

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III. Overall Conclusions From Rudolf Bultmann’s Gunther Bornkamm’s and Ernst Kasemann’s Analysis of the Predictions of the Passion and the Resurrection Tradition

Throughout this entire analysis Bultmann has again used those primary critical canons which also were of chief importance to him in evaluating the Kingdom of God texts and Jesus’ ethical teaching found in Matthew 5:21-48. That is, the "canon of dissimilarity" enables Bultmann to discern here that the Easter accounts represent church theology presented in the mythological, legendary form of Jewish apocalyptic beliefs (and with Paul often Gnostic and mystery cult

62. Ibid., pp. 183-185.
mythology); the "two canons of the forms" here again enable Bultmann to discern why and how the church borrowed, created or developed material to meet its own developing needs; and the "canon of the isolated pericopae" is used repeatedly to explain the separate origins of the several stages, and individual narratives, of the Easter tradition. Also in frequent use throughout this analysis (but not as significant as the above mentioned primary canons) is Bultmann's "canon of internal coherence" which he employs to detect minor glosses within narratives. Also Bultmann employs his "canon of the elimination of analogous material" more frequently here than was seen in the chapters dealing with the Kingdom of God and Jesus' ethical teaching. This is because with the Easter tradition, certain of the mythological elements (especially in Paul's writings) were borrowed from Hellenistic sources (or Hellenistic Jewish sources) in order to present the Easter faith in a meaningful way to the Hellenistic Christian communities, Bultmann believes. Likewise, here the "canon of the argument from silence" takes on a fundamental importance which has not been noted in the previous chapters of this study; for here Bultmann relies very heavily on this canon for explaining the various stages of development within the Easter tradition. Using this canon Bultmann especially argues that those elements which cannot be found explicitly in I Corinthians 15:3-8 must be attributed to a later stage of the tradition, and so likewise those elements which show apparent additions to the earliest appearance narratives and the account of the empty tomb in Mark 16:1-8 must be understood as later developments within those respective stages of the Easter tradition. Finally, the "canon of the closed causal nexus" also takes on a role
of fundamental importance for Bultmann here, in a manner which has not been noted previously in this study. Here this canon also emerges as one of equal significance with the "canon of dissimilarity", the "two canons of the forms" and the "canon of the argument from silence", because in this context the material being analysed is a series of mythological miracle reports. Thus, Bultmann uses his "canon of the closed causal nexus" to argue that Jesus actually could not have had a detailed foreknowledge of the events of his passion and resurrection, and to argue that the resurrection-event could not have produced such visible after-effects as the appearance stories, empty tomb narratives and ascension accounts of the New Testament suggest. Bultmann so argues because he believes that science (and thus critical historical science) can never detect God's activity as a clearly observable cause behind an event in human history. Rather, science can deal only with what it can understand as a human or natural cause in attempting to explain historical events. Therefore, if God was active in the rise of Easter faith (as the early Christian church believed) that activity of God must be understood as entirely hidden within quite normal human or natural events which can be analysed by any scientific historian.63

Several critical observations must be offered at this point regarding Bultmann's use of critical canons. First, it would seem that Bultmann's fundamental use of the "canon of the argument from silence" in dealing with the resurrection materials enables the matter of the relative age of the several stages of the Easter tradition to be settled rather too neatly. Much of Bultmann's reasoning in dating

63. Rudolf Bultmann, Existence and Faith, p. 345; Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology, pp. 60-66.
the various stages of the tradition hinges on two factors which he has noted in I Corinthians 15:3-8 (which essentially pre-Pauline tradition he rightly argues must represent a quite primitive stage of the Easter tradition). He notes that the kerygmatic tradition here (and in Acts) does not explicitly mention the empty tomb and that this factor surely demonstrates that Paul and the pre-Pauline tradition (and so presumably all the Christian communities of the earliest period) knew nothing of the empty tomb. Thus, Bultmann thinks that Paul's silence here demonstrates that the empty tomb tradition was clearly a later creation of the church. The second pivotal factor for Bultmann is that Paul merely lists Jesus' appearances (starting with a primary appearance to Peter) and does not attempt to relate any concrete resurrection narratives. This indicates to Bultmann that the earliest church must not have known such resurrection narratives as are included in the gospels but these narratives also arose only later. Consequently, Bultmann believes that simple proclamation of Jesus' resurrection as exaltation (implicitly in a "spiritual" manner) surely pre-dates both the appearance narratives and the empty tomb stories (which both explicitly depict the risen Jesus in some bodily form).

It is possible that Bultmann could be correct in drawing these conclusions with the aid of his "canon of the argument from silence." However, it must be asked at this point if Bultmann is more certain of the probability of his conclusions here than his evidence really warrants? That is, are the foundations of Bultmann's reasoning sufficiently questionable, so that his conclusions should not be considered as holding an extremely high degree of probability for the cautious historian?

In support of the contention that Bultmann's understanding of
the development of the Easter tradition rests on a somewhat shaky foundation, several factors now should be set forth. First, F. Gerald Downing points out (citing John Lange) that the "argument from silence" can rarely be as valid as it is often implied to be (and as Bultmann here so implies). As Downing says,

"The premise takes a form such as 'If there had been an event such as Y, then a record of it would have come down to me'; or, '...then record X would have contained a reference to it.' Lange allows that the argument can have force, but only where the supposed happening (including absence of disturbance) has been suggested at a place or time of which we have some record by a writer whom we know to have been interested in such events, and to have been consistent and thorough. Failing this, the argument may have some validity, but on its own confers only a very low degree of probability." 64

In this regard it is significant to note that competent New Testament scholars (of various schools of thought) are by no means in agreement as to Paul's knowledge, or lack thereof, concerning an account of the empty tomb. When Paul in I Corinthians 15:3-4 uses the verbs ἀνεφάνετο...ἐμφάνισα...γεννησαν in this brief summary of the kerygmatic preaching of the earliest church, it is not altogether obvious that he knew nothing of an empty tomb. If Jesus was indeed proclaimed as dead, buried and raised up by God in the earliest church preaching, and if this quite early kerygmatic formulation first took shape in a Palestinian Jewish (or even in a Hellenistic Jewish) milieu, an empty tomb could very well be implied here. Stephen Neil has drawn attention to this issue by stating his view in the following words:

"The distinction between a physical and a spiritual resurrection would have been unintelligible to the people of that time - to fail to recognize this shows a serious lack of that historical imagination of which we have been speaking. The empty tomb could not prove the resurrection of Jesus or create faith in it. But the contrary is not true...they did not say simply that God had in some way

mysteriously vindicated his servant Jesus; they affirmed that the whole universe had become a different place, that the new world-order was already here, because Jesus had risen from the dead. 65

Likewise, R. H. Fuller has recently recognised that the specific eschatological reference of the language here most probably points to a Jewish apocalyptic understanding. In such an apocalyptic framework, he argues that the resurrection hope was not conceived as,

'A purely this-worldly materialistic hope of a resuscitation of corpses, but the hope of the raising of the dead to a new, utterly transformed existence. When the kerygmatic summary of I Corinthians 15:4b asserted that Jesus 'was raised', it therefore means, not that his body was resuscitated, but that his whole self in his entire psychosomatic existence was transformed and entered thereby into the eschatological existence. 66

In such an apocalyptic understanding, the resurrection indeed occurs at the "end of history" and so Jesus is to be understood as raised to a sphere beyond history. Consequently, there can be no human witnesses to the resurrection itself. Hence, Jesus can only be proclaimed as risen. Nevertheless, Fuller argues, in such an apocalyptic understanding a negative mark (or vacuum) would have been thought to have been left in the sphere of history where Jesus' earthly body had been buried and from which it had been transformed by the unseen act of God. Therefore, Fuller can say, "The empty tomb is neither narrated nor proclaimed in this kerygma but a resurrection from the grave is implied by the statement, 'God raised Jesus' since the apocalyptic conception of resurrection is precisely resurrection from the grave."67

Moreover, it would appear that Paul did in fact already so understand his (pre-Pauline) kerygmatic tradition as apocalyptic in nature, for his subsequent argument in I Corinthians 15:12-50 (cf. especially I Corinthians 15:13) indicates such. 68 Therefore, the resurrection and exaltation (or ascension) could originally have been considered as a single event in an apocalyptic understanding, and as such an implied empty tomb could still have been implicit within the most primitive church understanding of Jesus' resurrection as exaltation. 69

Additionally, it must be remembered that the several New Testament kerygmatic formulae are probably only summaries of the earliest preaching and thus do not necessarily reflect all that might have been said at the same period of time concerning the resurrection of Jesus in more expanded forms of that early preaching (assuming that the earliest preachers could no more consistently confine themselves to sermons of a few minutes than their latter day counterparts!).

Moreover, if the concrete gospel narratives actually developed sometime later from simple standard kerygmatic statements concerning Jesus' appearances, it is especially difficult to understand why the synoptic gospels preserved no elaborated stories of appearances to such influential church leaders as Peter and James, since stories concerning these leaders surely should have been developed from such kerygmatic sources as Paul's list in I Corinthians 15:3-8. However, Paul's list does not seem to have produced such obvious gospel narratives, and, therefore, it may be more probable to suppose that various

68. Ibid., p. 19.
69. Cf. Gerald O'Collins, The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, pp. 50f., where O'Collins argues that there is no valid evidence within the New Testament that the concept of death-exaltation preceded the concept of death-resurrection. In fact, if any pattern of evidence exists, it would seem to imply that death-resurrection is the older concept.
appearance stories already were circulating in the several early Christian communities, reflecting the separate appearance accounts made known to each of these churches by the individual apostles or missionaries who preached and taught in different cities of the ancient near eastern world. Likewise, when this early but more expanded preaching (or teaching) required explication concerning the resurrection, it would have been most natural for the appearances of Jesus from beyond history to have been narrated in the first place; as the empty tomb in apocalyptic thinking would still only represent the negative side (or aftermath) of the resurrection within history, and as such ordinarily would be only of secondary importance in proclamation. Thus, if the empty tomb tradition was already implicit within the earliest kerygmatic formulae, it would only have been made explicit and been stressed after the appearance narratives in all probability, and especially when apologetic needs demanded that it be emphasised, and when the more complete story of Easter was finally drawn together in the gospels. Finally, it must be remembered also that Paul does not normally show an interest in relating narratives concerning the earthly Jesus in his writings, and so it should be no surprise that he (especially) would not do so with regard to the risen Jesus. Paul's paucity of narrative information concerning Jesus, however, does not conclusively demonstrate the precise state of the apostles' actual knowledge, but rather his own theological interests.

and manner of literary presentation.\textsuperscript{71} If, then, there could be validity to the above argument that I Corinthians 15:3-8 may represent only a summary of early Christian preaching (rather than a sure and certain guide to its more expanded early forms); and if there is validity to the argument that Paul does not normally include words or narratives of Jesus in his epistles (either of the earthly or risen Jesus) because of his own theological interests; and if there could be validity to the contention that Jesus' resurrection was probably understood in apocalyptic terms already by the church at the time of the formation of one of its most primitive kerygmatic formulae (I Corinthians 15:3-8), it can thus further be argued that Paul's mere listing of the appearances (rather than the relating of appearance narratives) really demonstrates nothing concerning Paul's actual familiarity (or lack thereof) of such narratives. Indeed, R. H. Fuller further argues that the verb ἐκθέω in I Corinthians 15:5-7 probably does indicate revelatory disclosures by God of the eschatologically risen Christ.\textsuperscript{72} Therefore, if this be so, the language of eschatological disclosure here surely does not exclude the possibility of a quite early development of, and preach-

\textsuperscript{71} R. A. Spivey and D. M. Smith, Jr., Anatomy of the New Testament (Toronto: Macmillan, 1969), p. 288f. In this regard, it should be remembered that if I Corinthians had not come down to us in the twentieth century, we would have had sparse information from Paul's other writings as to his exact information concerning the Lord's Supper. Problems in Corinth, it seems, were the occasion for our precise knowledge concerning Paul's awareness of the eucharistic words. Cf. A. M. Hunter, Paul and His Predecessors (London: S.C.M., 1961), pp. 10ff., 18ff.; Gerald O'Collins, The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, pp. 43ff. where O'Collins argues that Paul's silence with regard to the empty tomb may have been deliberate for several theological and apologetic reasons, but he also acknowledges that Paul's silence on this matter is related to the larger tendency of Paul to be silent concerning Jesus' ministry as a whole.

\textsuperscript{72} R. H. Fuller, The Formation of the Resurrection Narratives, pp.30ff.
ing use of various concrete appearance narratives depicting the transformed and exalted Jesus from beyond history; but rather makes this a very real probability for the Jewish (and/or Hellenistic Jewish) churches.

Finally, it must be further noted by way of general consideration, that wherever the appearance, empty tomb and ascension narratives did actually originate and develop, they all finally did employ Jewish apocalyptic categories of description (in spite of the variations among the several gospel Easter pericopae depicting the risen Jesus sometimes in a more "spiritual" manner and sometimes in a more physical manner, for these same variations of physical and "spiritual" representation can be seen likewise in Jewish apocalyptic literature). Thus, it would seem rather improbable that the earliest Palestinian church would have chosen to have formulated its original beliefs concerning Jesus' resurrection-exaltation entirely apart from the apparently prevailing apocalyptic manner of thinking within Palestine and thus along the lines of a wholly "spiritual" (and dualistic) conceptualisation (as has been found chiefly among certain Essene writings in Palestine and in Hellenistic and some Hellenistic Jewish sources). Such reasoning as Bultmann presents, would seem to imply that the concrete apocalyptic manner of the conceptualisation of the Easter tradition as seen in the gospels arose only at a later time in churches outside of Palestine, where presumably the more "spiritual" and dualistic manner of thinking typical of the Hellenistic world was the stronger influence. It would seem rather, on the basis of general historical probability, that apocalyptic resurrection-exaltation models for understanding the resurrection-exaltation of Jesus would have pre-dated wholly "spiritualistic"
and dualistic models of essentially Hellenistic origin. However, considering the paucity of our present state of knowledge concerning the early church in its several locations, and our paucity of knowledge about the actual degree of interpenetration of Hellenistic and Jewish manners of thinking within Palestine and the Diaspora; one should still not attempt to be dogmatic in forming historical conclusions, but rather argue in terms of degrees of probability. 73

The above critical questioning regarding Bultmann's historical reasoning, based on his use of the "canon of the argument from silence," is presented here in terms of relative degrees of probability (given our present state of historical knowledge) rather than as a claim to have disproved Bultmann's arguments. For the above criticisms of Bultmann's methods do not decisively demonstrate that the empty tomb tradition was implicit within the earliest kerygmatic formulae or that Paul (and other preachers of the earliest church) definitely knew specific appearance narratives; but these criticisms do attempt to show that a significant case can be made for such a probability. Consequently, the above criticisms are meant to demonstrate only that Bultmann's "argument from silence" simply is not a sufficiently strong enough foundation upon which to build a sure understanding of the history of the formation of the Easter tradition at the present time.

Secondly, an observation must be made concerning Bultmann's use of the "canon of the closed causal nexus." As has been shown, Bultmann has set forth this canon in order to underscore the fact that the scientific historian, whether he be a Christian believer or not, must

not allow for explanations of historical events which would ignore the best current thinking within the scientific community. Consequently, in dealing with such miracle reports as are included in the New Testament Easter tradition, Bultmann concludes that the critical historian can thus only explain the overall New Testament Easter tradition as ancient mythological legend. This is so because the critical historian can perceive no visible act of God as the cause behind the formation of this tradition. The "last fact" which can be known to the historian must be something within the range of normal human experience according to scientific understanding. Bultmann finds this "last fact" in the Easter faith of the earliest church. If the historian could discern anything more than Easter faith, Bultmann believes that would imply that the historian qua historian could detect actual manifestations of God's activity.

There are several issues with regard to Bultmann's use of the "canon of the closed causal nexus" which require further examination. First, Bultmann's use of this canon, on purely a priori grounds, seems to exclude even the possibility of an event having happened beyond the bounds of history, which nevertheless may have resulted in such effects as an empty tomb and/or disclosure-experiences within history in first century Palestine. This means that the historian is really not permitted to examine the New Testament Easter tradition for evidence of anything but mythology, which in turn only testifies to the earliest church's Easter faith. However, the question must be asked as to whether a scientific understanding of the world really does exclude such a possibility on a priori grounds, as Bultmann supposes.

It must be noted that the philosophy of science today is aware
of the uniqueness of events within the natural order. Thus, today it is better understood that "laws" are formulated in the physical sciences by taking an average of numerous experiments because each experiment is strictly speaking an unrepeatable event. Furthermore, the so-called "laws" of nature are really plastic and scientific understanding of the possible is constantly in flux. This can be seen in Einstein's theory of relativity which has shattered older concepts in physics, and the smashing of the atom, which has forced physics to reconstruct its ideas again. For now at the basic level, order and closed causality are no longer to be found as they were once more simplistically conceived. This has caused a number of contemporary theologians to argue that the notion that God cannot act as a cause behind unusual events in the world is thus a speculative philosophic judgment, not a certainty of modern scientific understanding. Consequently, the historian should not rule out the possibility of the resurrection on a priori grounds prior to evaluating all possible historical evidence; for to say that an event is "inconceivable" (as Bultmann does of the New Testament apocalyptic presentation of the resurrection) merely means that a given event is currently beyond the scope of man's understanding, and that may be so because our understanding is largely dependent upon our present limited knowledge (which is ever expanding). 74

The above argument establishes no more, however, than the possibility of the resurrection (as understood in apocalyptic categories).

It surely does not demonstrate that a modern critical historian would necessarily consider a resurrection a very probable event. Van Harvey focuses on this matter clearly in the following words:

We should not say that miracles are impossible so much as we should say either (1) that we do not think miracle is a likely candidate for being an explanation for an event, or (2) that we do not know what would constitute data, warrants, or a conceivable rebuttal to the conclusion that one had occurred. Consequently, we do not know how to qualify our conclusions, whether weakly, moderately or strongly. We simply do not know what would 'count for' an absolutely unique event. 75

Thus, Harvey rightly indicates that the present debate should no longer focus on the question of the possibility of the resurrection, but rather on the issue of the probability of the resurrection.

Why is it, then, that some historian-theologians who have examined the possible historical evidence for traces of the resurrection have concluded that the evidence does indicate that an event corresponding to the general apocalyptic nature of the resurrection (as depicted in the gospels) actually did take place on the borderline of history in first century Palestine? 76 Why, on the other hand, do other historians (and historian-theologians) find the same evidence quite insufficient to demonstrate that such an apocalyptic event took place? 77 It would appear that the available evidence is interpreted in differing ways by these several scholars because of their own philosophical and/or theological presuppositions concerning

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75. Van Harvey, The Historian and the Believer, p. 229.


77. Rudolf Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, pp. 38-42; Willi Marxsen, op.cit.
the probability of whether or not God can be thought of as a potential cause behind events, which may have left evidence containing physical traces of divine activity within the sphere of history. For example, A. M. Ramsey states his presuppositions in direct contrast to Bultmann's "canon of the closed causal nexus". Ramsey says of his presuppositions:

The one is the Biblical belief in the living God, creator, redeemer, transcendent; is true. The other is that the events must be such as to account for the Gospels which the apostles preached and by which the first Christians lived. We would not use these presuppositions for the pressing of historical conclusions; but we would so bear them in mind as to avoid a sort of inhibition if the converging lines of evidence seem to point to a supernatural event at the climax of the story of Christ. 79

For, a historian who thinks that there could be no evidence sufficient to demonstrate the probability of an utterly unique event caused by God's activity (such as Jesus' resurrection) any evidence which is unearthed will repeatedly find a more probable explanation in natural causes. If no known natural causes can be cited to explain the historical evidence adequately, it will still seem more probable to that historian that there are indeed natural explanations which simply are not presently known (but which future scientific or historical research may some day produce). Moreover, if such an historian is also a theologian who personally believes in God's

78. This contention holds true for Pannenberg, even though several of his statements would appear to deny such, for Pannenberg's arguments have certainly not been convincing for scholars who have held that such an event as Jesus' resurrection is improbable on a priori philosophical and/or theological grounds. Cf. Wolfhart Pannenberg, "The Revelation of God in Jesus", Theology or History, Vol. II of New Foundations in Theology, ed. by J. M. Robinson and J. B. Cobb (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 128.

eschatological activity (as does Bultmann), that activity of God then must be understood as completely hidden within such a natural explanation for theological reasons, because no visible traces of God's activity can be detected by the historian qua historian or else faith would lose its meaning, Bultmann believes. Only a personal faith can know of God's activity and such faith gains nothing from historical research. However, for the historian-theologian who holds presuppositions like those of A. M. Ramsey, the evidence will look quite different; for in this view traces of God's activity may be visible without the act of God itself being directly discernible to the historian qua historian. Here faith must be combined with the visible historical evidence in order to reconstruct events properly. The critically recovered evidence by itself is still ambiguous; but with the use of the spectacles of faith in the Lord of history, the puzzling evidence comes into focus and takes on specific meaning. On this view a particular kind of faith (i.e. faith in the God who acts in history and so leaves tangible traces of His activity, can enable the historian to draw his evidence together in such a manner that an apocalyptic resurrection-event seems highly probable, and thus actually more capable of providing historical explanation than any other "natural" explanation. According to this view the resurrection is not wholly unlike other mighty acts of God (i.e. such as the life of Jesus or his crucifixion) which indeed do manifest visible effects in the sphere history. Yet those visible effects in history can always be understood in a number of ways apart from faith (i.e. from a psychological, political or sociological perspective). The visible effects within history by themselves do not prove the activity of God. One still requires the spectacles of faith in order to in-
terpret the evidence for such an event as the crucifixion as pointing to an act of God. Likewise, any evidence which would suggest the probability that there was an empty tomb, or that there were indeed some visionary disclosure-experiences among Jesus' followers after his death, could still be interpreted in quite natural ways (i.e. such as the body of Jesus was removed by some unknown party and the visions were just psychologically self-induced phenomena). Hence, these visible effects cannot be understood as caused by God, unless one views the effects within history from the perspective of a faith in the Lord of history.

The above discussion, then, is meant to show several things. First, in spite of Bultmann's statement of the "canon of the closed causal nexus", the resurrection (in apocalyptic form) cannot be considered an impossible event on purely scientific grounds; for science today understands that we do not possess a complete knowledge of nature. Therefore, science cannot say in advance what is impossible. However, many possible happenings (which could be imagined by the human mind) would seem extremely improbable to many historians, because (at least as yet) man has no concrete experience with such realities. Indeed, purportedly unique events will generally appear improbable (at least initially). The only way that a purportedly unique event (such as the resurrection of Jesus) presently could be accepted as a probable event, would be if extremely strong evidence could be found and also interpreted via the spectacles of faith in the God who is capable of acting in history in both usual and unusual ways. Secondly, then, whether or not extremely unusual (or apparently unique) events can be accepted as having occurred, will largely depend on one's theological perspective in combination with sound historical
evidence. This is so because the general word "faith" is rather ambiguous. There are different kinds of "faith" which presuppose differing theological understandings regarding the possible manner of God's activity. That is, these varieties of "faith" differ with regard to the theological question of whether or not tangible historical evidence of God's activity can ever be unearthed in conjunction with extremely unusual events as well as with quite natural events. One kind of faith, (i.e. Bultmann's variety) is the more radical and is concerned to free itself of dependence on the shifting tides of historical research. Thus, Bultmann's faith is indifferent to the question of whether or not Jesus' body decayed in the grave, and to the question as to precisely how the disciples encountered the reality of the risen Lord. Whatever historians reconstruct from time to time concerning these matters will not affect such a faith. However, it must be noted that even Bultmann's faith cannot be wholly indifferent to the historian's work, insofar as historical research must demonstrate that Easter faith arose in a concrete place and time among the followers of Jesus of Nazareth who actually lived and was crucified in a specific historical situation. The other variety of faith (for which A. M. Ramsey here serves as an example) cannot be as indifferent to historical research. Indeed, this variety of faith presupposes that it is possible for God to act in history in such a fashion that His activity is capable of producing visible, but ambiguous effects. Hence, only faith can understand and interpret the unearthed evidence adequately. Here critical historical spadework and a specific kind of faith combine in order to understand the theological implications of God's activity more fully. Here faith also precedes historical knowledge, but the historical knowledge unearthed is in
turn used to revise and/or develop further theological understanding. Thus, for example, if Jesus' body were discovered to have decayed in a Palestinian grave (the visible historical effect), one theological understanding of God's actual activity and purpose would be developed by the theologian; but if an empty tomb and actual visionary disclosure-experiences could claim strong support from the historical evidence (the visible historical effect), quite another theological explication would be required. Consequently, here also faith in the essential eschatological reality of Jesus' resurrection precedes historical knowledge and does not depend on historical research for its life, but here unearthed historical knowledge also will shape the more precise nature of theological understanding (and so continuing historical research may continue to re-shape theological understanding as historical research proceeds). Therefore, it appears from this analysis that Bultmann's "canon of the closed causal nexus" involves not only a particular understanding of science (which is questionable today in the extreme form in which Bultmann presents it), but a definite theological understanding of the possible manner of God's activity, which is not shared by all historian-theologians. Finally, it is interesting to note also that often the selection of relevant critical evidence actually depends upon which kind of "faith" a historian-theologian claims. For one cannot help but notice that often Bultmann deals in great depth with important critical matters omitted (or at least treated more lightly) by historian-theologians of a different theological perspective (i.e. Bultmann deals quite seriously with the possible mythological elements in the Easter tradition which are paralleled in Jewish or other ancient near eastern
mythologies, with the very real discrepancies in the narratives, with the relative age and history of the several resurrection accounts, with the probable theological motives which helped to shape particular motifs in the tradition etc.). On the other hand, historian-theologians who believe that the acts of God are capable of affecting visible tracks in the sands of history will focus on other matters as significant (such as an adequate cause for the rise of the church, why women should have been chosen as central figures in the empty tomb story if it was created as convincing apology in an ancient near eastern setting, why the early Jewish-Christians should have changed their day of worship, an adequate cause for the dramatic "psychological and/or spiritual" changes in the disciples [especially Peter and Paul] etc.).

A third observation must be made with regard to Bultmann's use of the "canon of dissimilarity." It has been noted in the previous chapters of this study that often Bultmann (and his pupils) employ this canon in a rather too sweeping manner, so that aspects of the tradition are eliminated as unauthentic which could indeed have some origin with Jesus. A further example of this should be noted here in the case of the "predictions of the passion and resurrection". Bultmann rightly notes that the language Jesus uses in the gospel tradition shows such precise knowledge of the concrete details of subsequent events, that it looks very much like a member of the post-Easter church is here recalling the events of the mighty acts of God. This factor leads Bultmann to treat these sayings as vaticinia ex eventu. The question must be raised, however, as to whether this use of the "canon of dissimilarity" is not too simplistic. For it would seem quite probable on the basis of general historical consideration, that Jesus could have had some forebodings of his future (especially
upon coming to Jerusalem). Jesus knew the history of his people well and their treatment of the prophets of old. He knew of the fate of his own contemporary John the Baptiser, and presumably Jesus was wise enough to realise that his ministry was stirring controversy and opposition from some members of the religious establishment. Indeed, a parallel from twentieth century history demonstrates this kind of awareness on the part of a modern charismatic religious leader who also had angered some members of the establishment of his society. On the night before his assassination (3 April, 1968), Dr. Martin Luther King uttered these words:

And then I got into Memphis. And some began to say the threats – or talk about the threats that were out. Or what would happen to me from some of our sick white brothers.

Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountain top. I won't mind.

Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's Will.

And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the promised land.

I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land.

So I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. 80

Dr. King here does not show a precise knowledge of the details of the events of the next fateful day, but he does show an almost uncanny awareness of the dangers near at hand (although he had faced many dan-

80. Martin Luther King, Jr., Why We Can't Wait (New York: The American Library, 1968), rear cover of this paperback edition. These words were also recorded on video-tape by the major American television networks.
gerous situations before), their potential threat to his life, and his strong faith nevertheless in God's ultimate vindication of his life and mission. Why, one wonders, could Jesus not have made a similar statement (or statements) in his situation; and that statement (or those statements) later have been re-shaped by the Post-Easter church, given its awareness of the precise details of his death and resurrection and its especial faith in Jesus' resurrection-vindication as God's Messiah? If it can be argued that this is a real probability with regard to Jesus; then again it would appear that the "canon of dissimilarity" in Bultmann's hands is too crude a criterion to establish the authentic message of Jesus with accuracy. At the very least such a probability should not be swept aside unexamined by the historian, but weighed fairly together with considerations concerning the influence of church theology.

Fourthly, several critical observations must now be made with regard to Bultmann's use of the "canon of the forms and Sitz im Leben" and the "canon of the forms and growth."

Bultmann frequently expresses a negative judgment with regard to the historical authenticity of a pericope if it shows evidence of having an apologetic Sitz im Leben in the early church. For example, Bultmann specifically makes this judgment concerning Matthew 27:62-66 and Matthew 28:11-15 (the episode of the guards at the empty tomb), which in his view surely represents a further apologetic legend built upon the more primitive core of the empty tomb tradition (as seen in Mark 16:1-8; which itself is also an apologetic legend in Bultmann's judgment). This unit of the tradition has been isolated for discussion, because it serves as a perspicuous example of Bultmann's method.
Bultmann is not alone among scholars in considering this episode an apologetic unit of the tradition, for even scholars who are less sceptical in their criticism than Bultmann have maintained that this episode has been incorporated by Matthew for apologetic purposes. For example, A. H. McNeile notes that the mention of the Sabbath as simply ἑορταὶ in Matthew 27:62 demonstrates the definitely anti-Jewish nature of this material. Furthermore, it seems most unlikely that the Jewish chief priests and Pharisees would allow themselves to come into contact with the pagan Pilate on the Sabbath of a high festival. Moreover, while Matthew has the guards reporting to the Jewish authorities, the later Gospel of Peter quite naturally corrects Matthew and has them reporting to Pilate. This improbable situation in Matthew would seem to indicate further that a fictional and apologetic influence is present in this material. Therefore, the account given by Matthew must represent an attempt to answer an accusation of the Jews that Jesus' disciples had stolen his body (Matthew 28:13). There would seem to be little question, then, that here Matthew is freely adding to and editing the basic empty tomb tradition for specific apologetic purposes. What requires further attention, however, is that even if this account contains legendary features, or is wholly legendary, added for apologetic purposes, that


82. Although it must be admitted that it is not entirely impossible that the authorities might have placed a temporary guard at the tomb during the festival, in order to avoid any further attempts by Jesus' followers to create an added disturbance. If such a placing of a temporary guard actually did occur, this may have served as the historical core incident upon which legendary apology was built.
fact alone should not necessarily argue against the historical authenticity of the basic empty tomb tradition. As Krister Stendahl has noted, if there was such a strong accusation raised within the Palestinian-Jewish community, which Matthew believed he was required to answer, it would appear that the Jewish community was not able to produce the body of Jesus. Consequently, this piece of apology may itself point toward the historical reality of an actual empty tomb (even if it does not show how the tomb came to be empty). However, it is also quite possible that both the Jewish accusation concerning the disciples' theft and the Christian apology arose outside of Palestine, at a time and place when and where empirical verification or falsification were no longer possible. Thus, no precise conclusion concerning historical authenticity can be rendered presently with final certainty.

The reason this matter has been isolated for special treatment here, however, is because it is important to realise that even if a certain block of material is found to be apologetic in nature, it should not then be a foregone conclusion that such a detected apologetic need in the life of the early church "proves" that such material is entirely without historical value. Historical authenticity will have to be determined on still other grounds. Hence, in the case cited above, it remains an open question as to whether or not the narrative of the guards may have some factual core; and even if the narrative is sheer fiction, whether or not that is indirect evidence for the inability of the Palestinian Jewish community to produce the

dead body of Jesus of Nazareth.

What has been argued here with regard to a block of material which appears to be most probably apologetic in nature can also be argued with regard to the basic empty tomb tradition (as seen in Mark 16:1-8) and the several appearance narratives, for even if these units of the tradition originally were included in the synoptic tradition because of apologetic concerns, that consideration alone should not determine what degree of historical authenticity must be ascribed to those pericopae. Consequently, the identification of a possible (or even of a probable) situation in the life of the early church which could serve to explain the reason for the inclusion of given material in the tradition in itself should not determine matters of historical authenticity. Rather, such discoveries should properly alert the critical historian to the real possibility of legendary accretions and/or creations, which he must yet test for with the use of additional canons of critical historiography.

A further but related matter must now be examined with regard to the "canon of the forms and growth". It is true that Bultmann does derive his understanding of pure forms (i.e. of parables, miracle stories, apophthegmata, etc.) from a study of such forms in Hellenistic, Rabbinic and other literature. Thus, a given form which exists in a pure state (as known from comparative study) is considered relatively older than one which is not. Moreover, Bultmann sometimes writes as if he has also determined specific laws of growth (or development) from such comparative study, so that the laws of growth which he applies to the New Testament tradition are generally known.

laws of development for various oral traditions. However, E. P. Sanders has shown recently that Bultmann really has determined the laws of the growth of the tradition from a study of the written Christian tradition itself and he has not even done this in an exhaustive manner. Bultmann determines patterns of growth from examples of the manner in which Matthew and Luke appear to use Mark and Q, and the manner in which the later Christian literature made use of the canonical gospels. Sanders maintains that, "In any case, the form-critics did not derive the laws from or apply the laws to the Gospels systematically, nor did they carry out a systematic investigation of changes in the post-canonical literature." Thus, in his own investigation of the tendencies of the growth of the tradition, Sanders noted that very few generalisations concerning regular patterns of growth actually can be verified. He notes that the material did not necessarily grow in overall length, and it did not regularly become less Semitic. Only two tendencies appear commonly enough to suggest normal patterns of growth. There was a normal tendency for more detail to be added and a definite tendency for indirect discourse to become direct discourse.

With these tendencies in mind, it would appear that the Markan account of the empty tomb probably does show signs of being in a

86. Ibid., p. 26.
87. Ibid., pp. 68, 274.
88. Ibid., pp. 230, 274.
89. Ibid., pp. 146, 274.
90. Ibid., pp. 259, 274.
rather primitive form. It observes the unities of time and place. It begins with the action of the women, which in turn issues into an encounter with the young man and his command to them. It ends in a brief description of the reaction of the women. This quite simple form is probably an indication that this pericope is a relatively old tradition that had been repeated for some time prior to its inclusion in Mark's gospel. Moreover, this pericope shows few signs of supernatural embellishment, as Bultmann's analysis itself has shown. Likewise, the other synoptic accounts do not vary greatly from the basic Markan "form". Where details are added, they may represent growth by means of features being incorporated from isolated local traditions and/or editorial adjustments. There is a definite heightening of supernatural detail in Matthew and Luke, but these features are still relatively reserved and essentially represent Jewish interpretative-supernatural description and/or apologetic concerns. John's account is apparently a separate tradition and seems to be more like a floating "tale" which was perhaps less formed and allowed more room for the taste and the dramatic ability of the narrator. This alone, however, is not a sure indication of precise age.

John certainly shows signs of literary blending and story-telling skill (as the account of the finding of the grave clothes shows). Interestingly, (in the light of Sander's findings) both Mark and

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91. The empty tomb tradition is here chosen because one can at least trace some development from narrative to narrative within this material.


John show signs of Semitic influence.\textsuperscript{94} John's tendency to individualise also is not necessarily a sign of a later formulation.\textsuperscript{95} Finally, it is questionable whether enough time actually lapsed between the time of Jesus' crucifixion and the composition of Mark to account for all of the stages of legendary development which Bultmann suggests. This is especially so when one considers that Mark 16:1-8 appears to represent a relatively old form and Bultmann considers the entire empty tomb tradition to be a third stage in the development of the overall Easter tradition (after the simple proclamation of the resurrection-exaltation in the kerygmatic passages and the appearance narratives which on Bultmann's view developed from such an appearance list as seen in I Corinthians 15:3-8). It seems especially questionable that such an elaborate development would have had time to have taken place if Mark 16:1-8 represents a pericope that did exist in the oral tradition for some time prior to the production of the completed gospel of Mark some thirty-five to forty years after the Easter-event (if a date of 65 A.D. or 70 A.D. be accepted for Mark). Therefore, in the light of the above it would seem that Bultmann's understanding of the growth of the Easter tradition is far from certain. The "canon of growth and the forms" does not appear to provide such a sure and simple criterion for tracing the development of the tradition as Bultmann supposes.

Finally, several critical observations must be made with regard to Bultmann's use of the "canon of the elimination of analogous materials". He suggests, with the aid of this canon, that Paul (and


\textsuperscript{95} C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel, p. 141; E. P. Sanders, op. cit., p. 274.
others in the earliest church) borrowed motifs from Gnosticism and
the mystery religions in order to express the meaning of the resur-
rection in the early stages of church history. When Bultmann makes
this assertion, several methodological problems arise. First, it is
doubtful that a historian should assume that a given belief which a
Christian author cites, actually existed in that same form in pre-
Christian times. 96 This is Bultmann's procedure, for as yet scholar-
ship has no sure indication from pre-Christian documents that there
was a Gnostic redeemer-myth prior to Jesus' day. Indeed, many schol-
ars contend that the Gnostic redeemer was actually modelled after
Jesus. 97 Secondly, as B. M. Metzger reminds us,

Another consideration, often overlooked by scholars who are better acquainted with Hellenistic culture than
with Jewish, is necessarily involved in the circumstance
that the early Palestinian church was composed of Chris-
tians from a Jewish background, whose strict monotheism and
traditional intolerance of syncretism must have militated
against wholesale borrowing from pagan cults. 98

This word of caution should certainly be weighed carefully, for Paul
was a student of Jewish theology who studied in Palestine before his
conversion to Christianity and other leaders of the earliest church
were also well grounded in the theological perspectives of late
Judaism. Thirdly, "Some of the supposed parallels are the result of
the modern scholar's amalgamation of quite heterogeneous elements
drawn from various sources." 99 In other words, it is a weak method

97. R. M. Grant, Gnosticism: A Source Book of Heretical Writings
Carsten Colpe, Die Religionsgeschichtlichescule, I (Göttingen:
Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1961).
98. B. M. Metzger, op.cit., p. 7.
99. Ibid., p. 8.
of historiography which selects given elements from various sources in Gnosticism, and the mystery cults, and presents them as a homogeneous unit which nicely parallels Pauline theology. As Stephen Neil says, "We must ask, in the first place, where we encounter the Gnostic myth in the neat and simple form in which it has been summarized for us by Professor Bultmann? The surprising answer is: nowhere at all. The myth is a synthetic product, pieced together from hints and shreds in different sources, many of them of uncertain date." 100 The same sort of question might be asked of Bultmann with regard to the mystery cults. Fourthly, even if the parallels that Bultmann finds between Paul's interpretation of the resurrection, Gnosticism and the mystery cults, is an actual one, certain further questions must be raised about their relationship to each other. Bultmann has failed to demonstrate that the relationship is not just one of analogy, which could arise quite naturally. Before one can assume a borrowing, and not just a similarity between general ideas in two religious systems, he must show that some historical bridge existed between the two systems. 101 Bultmann has not adequately demonstrated the existence of such a bridge (especially considering Paul's prior rabbinic training in Palestine). Fifthly, even if the bridge existed it must be shown which way the traffic flowed. Certainly it is equally possible that Christian notions influenced the mysteries and Gnosticism, as it is that they influenced Christianity. 102 In the case of the cult of Cybele, for example, it has been demonstrated that the efficacy of the rite of taurobolium was raised from twenty years to eternal.

100. Stephen Neil, op. cit., p. 177.
102. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
nity under the competitive influence of Christianity. Bultmann has not adequately shown the direction of influence. Finally, the very real differences between Gnosticism, the mystery cults and Christianity have not been properly noted by Bultmann. For example, in the mysteries the divinity dies by compulsion not by choice as in Christianity; the death of the divinity is a triumph in Christianity but in the cults it is a cause of mourning; and the resurrection is regarded by Paul and the evangelists as a dated occurrence in history whereas the mystery cults make no attempt to undergird their beliefs with historical dating as evidence. Moreover, in the mystery cults the dying and rising divinity depends on a vegetative cycle and reflects a circular philosophy of world history which leads nowhere; while in Christianity the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are understood as a once and for all act of God which reveals the ultimate purpose of God for creation. These several weaknesses in Bultmann's work are singled out in order to demonstrate that Bultmann's conclusions should not be taken as settled until it can be shown more adequately that the relationship which he suggests does indeed exist by giving proper attention to the above mentioned methodological considerations.

Since Bornkamm and Käsemann do not offer an additional independent critical analysis to Bultmann's, but rather rely on his critical work, the observations made above with regard to these several canons of critical history presumably should apply to the critical-historical understanding of Bornkamm and Käsemann as well (with the

103. Ibid., p. 11.
104. Ibid., pp. 12-19.
exception of the "canon of dissimilarity" in Bornkamm's case).

(b)

Attention must now be focused on Bultmann's use of his hermeneutical canons. Again it would seem that Bultmann's specific interests (his second hermeneutical canon) have so controlled his interpretation of the New Testament resurrection tradition, that his existential pre-understanding (Vorverständnis) has actually predetermined that he must interpret this tradition only in terms of the self-understanding (Existensverständnis) given in Easter faith (his third and fourth hermeneutical canons). Bultmann's hermeneutical procedure here has enabled him to interpret the meaning of the resurrection in personal and eschatological terms in a manner which few biblical interpreters have equalled. In this regard Bultmann's canons of interpretation are most valuable. Moreover, Bultmann has shown that his existential interpretation is capable of expounding upon the reality of, and the eschatological significance of, the resurrection even if the critical historian's verdict concerning key historisch matters pertaining to this tradition are unsettled or suggest mythological origins. In his own way, then, Bultmann has shown that Easter faith (for the Christian believer) precedes critical historical study, and the life of faith is sustained by God's grace, not by human works. Nevertheless, the question must be raised as to whether these hermeneutical canons do not also delimit an understanding of the full meaning of the New Testament Easter tradition. Do the Easter texts speak only of Easter faith, or do they speak primarily of the God who acts in history and so graciously provides the opportunity of and invitation to faith? Is this not why Paul (cf. I Corinthians
15:14 especially), other early Christian preachers (cf. Acts 2:14-39; 3:13-26; 4:10-12; 5:30-32; 10:36-43; 13:17-41) and the evangelists all emphasise the event character of not only the life and death, but also of the resurrection of Jesus? In this regard it seems that Karl Barth may have perceived something more basic in the Easter texts than Bultmann has when he says, "Yet this event is the ground of our faith and of the kerygma, and faith and kerygma are only secondary to it and derivative from it."105 Hence, whatever the critical historian may (or may not) be able to demonstrate is secondary to an eschatological interpretation of the Easter texts, as Bultmann rightly sees. However, whatever the critical reconstruction should involve, the Easter texts should be allowed to speak of their own deepest theological meaning for, "The discipline of confronting primitive Christianity, in those forms of statements which are least congenial to the modern mind, compels us to re-think, not only the Gospel, but our presuppositions."106 Consequently, if everywhere the Easter texts do speak of the activity of God as the cause of Easter faith, that emphasis ought to receive proper interpretation; even if the details of how God acted must repeatedly be debated and re-examined by critical historians. In this quite important matter, then, Bornkamm especially has moved beyond Bultmann hermeneutically (while yet accepting Bultmann's essential critical findings). Thus, Bornkamm's interpretation, being less influenced by existentialist emphases, more adequately expounds the basic insight of the Easter texts; that in the resurrection of Jesus as in his life, God's gracious activity precedes faith and so creates the possibility of the response

Finally, if the critical remarks above concerning Bultmann's use of the "canon of dissimilarity" have validity and Bornkamm's analysis thus is the more accurate; it follows that it is probable that Jesus' self-understanding (as critically understood in Bornkamm's analysis of the "predictions of the passion and resurrection") could indeed have included a belief on Jesus' part that through his own approaching death, his mission of proclaiming the Βασιλεία του Θεού actually would be vindicated by God. This, of course, does not demonstrate that Jesus possessed the sort of Messianic consciousness attributed to him by the early (and later) church, but it does give further reason to believe that the earliest Christian community developed its Messianic beliefs in response to concrete and suggestive words and deeds of the earthly Jesus which were vindicated for his followers by the Easter-event. This understanding also places a more realistic amount of weight on the Easter-event and the faith it produced than Bultmann's analysis does. On Bultmann's view, it appears that Jesus was simply mankind's preacher concerning proper human self-understanding before God, who was crucified for his trouble, leaving a shattered band of followers who then somehow overcame their state of near despair following the crucifixion and broke through first to the profound insight concerning Jesus' exaltation beyond death and history and secondly the further insight that this same crucified preacher was indeed God's Messiah. Bultmann's view, while not impossible as an explanation of the historical cause for the rise of faith on the part of the believer.
of the Christian church, nevertheless appears not very highly probable. Bornkamm's explanation does hold a higher degree of probability, for it would seem that on Bornkamm's view less was created ex nihilo by the post-Easter church.
SECTION III
In the preceding two sections of this study, Professors Bultmann's, Bornkamm's and Käsemann's most important critical and interpretative canons of historical authenticity have been set forth, then applied to selected representative sections of the synoptic tradition and preliminarily analysed with regard to their several values as working criteria for ongoing New Testament scholarship. In this process a number of observations and criticisms have been offered with regard to the application of the several canons to various texts. It will now be important to gather together the main threads of the arguments which have emerged and weave them together into a summary of the present writer's major findings. Furthermore, in this concluding section it will be necessary not only to gather up the already existing threads but also it will be helpful to add several new strands, and so finally to weave them all together into a fabric that hopefully will have its own shape, texture and usefulness for ongoing New Testament study. This end can best be served by first offering a final evaluation of each of the several critical canons of Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann.

1. Concluding Evaluation of the Critical Canons of Rudolf Bultmann, Günther Bornkamm and Ernst Käsemann

1. As we have seen throughout this study, the "canon of dissimilarity" serves all three scholars as their canon of primary importance in determining precisely what material in the synoptic tradition can rightfully be deemed historically authentic, in the sense that it is genuinely representative of the actual words and/or deeds of the earthly figure Jesus of Nazareth. This can now be properly reaffirmed, because in our entire investigation this canon has been demonstrated to be of utmost significance both as their most fre-
quently employed canon (both with regard to material finally deemed authentic and material finally deemed unauthentic) and as their most decisive canon for either establishing authenticity or the lack thereof.

In several evaluative observations offered throughout this study, it has been maintained (with the aid of specific illustrations regarding several synoptic texts) that this canon surely does have genuine merit for unearthing certain features of Jesus' life which are quite probably distinctive over against his Umwelt on the one hand and the early Christian church on the other hand. However, it should also be noted that this distinctiveness must clearly be recognised as only probable but not "proven" in any final sense. This is so because new research might, at any time, unearth dimensions of Judaism and/or the early church which presently are unknown. It is also possible that the manner in which these canons have been employed by any given scholar might be critically evaluated, and thus what initially appeared to be distinctive with regard to Jesus in that research might come to be seen as actually belonging to an already known (but overlooked) dimension of Judaism and/or the church. Indeed, it has been shown in this study that Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann each do apply this canon with differing degrees of rigour at various times, and this in part explains some of their differences regarding their respective portraits of Jesus (in spite of the fact that they are in close general agreement as to both the value and broad definition of the canon). Moreover, the present writer has also shown in his own evaluations of the use of this canon

(by all three scholars), that he sometimes is more prone to endorse the critical manner in which Bultmann applies this canon, and sometimes he believes the manner in which Bornkamm or Kasemann apply the canon is the more critically accurate.\(^2\) By way of further concrete illustration of this point, it should be noted here that Bultmann especially operates with a questionable definition of late Judaism. In his descriptive writings concerning late Judaism, it is clear that Bultmann views it essentially as a phenomenon which could be typified as an ossified religious legalism.\(^3\) If one starts with this kind of a picture of late Judaism as a critical presupposition, then certain aspects of Jesus' life and ministry may surely appear to be strikingly unusual. However, other modern scholars have made a strong case for understanding late Judaism as a much more diverse and complex phenomenon, which contained within it aspects of more residual vitality (even within Pharisaism).\(^4\) If there is truth to this contention, then Bultmann's definition with regard to late Judaism is inadequate, and thus is surely responsible for producing a portrait of Jesus which in some respects wrongly underplays elements in Jesus' life which he may have held in common with at least some others from his own time and environment. One wonders whether Bultmann's Lutheran theological spectacles, which are prone to see the sharp dichotomy of law and grace readily present in all reality, have not distorted his historical vision here somewhat in his earnest desire to find something unusual (but not of kerygmatic uniqueness

\(^2\) See pp. 112-115, 151-159, 197-201, 224-247 and 321-323 of this study especially.

\(^3\) Rudolf Bultmann, Primitive Christianity, pp. 69-119; Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, pp. 16-26.

\(^4\) W. D. Davies and D. Daube, eds., The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology; W. D. Davies, Christian Origins and Judaism; W. D. Davies, Introduction to Pharisaism; W. D. Davies, The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount.
or importance) in the self-understanding (Existenzverständnis) of the historical Jesus. Likewise, we also have seen that Bultmann tends to be more rigorous in attributing kerygmatic church influence as a causal factor in the formation of certain texts than either Käsemann or Bornkamm; especially where it would seem to matter with regard to the theological dimensions of the historian's reconstructed portrait of Jesus. This is so, one suspects, not only for purely critical reasons, but for theological reasons as well. That is, Bultmann surely desires to find a "historical Jesus" who cannot perspicuously be shown to be the necessary foundation for Christian faith; while Bornkamm and Käsemann desire to find a "historical Jesus" who is sufficiently unique that he can be shown to be at least in understandable historical continuity with the theology of the early Christian church. Therefore, one must maintain the real value of this canon as a critical tool for unearthing features of the historical figure Jesus. Nevertheless, both the possibility of new discoveries, and the varying manner in which this canon is applied, require us to clearly recognise that any results which it produces are only probable in nature.

The present writer has also argued that this canon is of no value, however, in judging materials wherein Jesus may have held views in common with either Judaism or the early church. Moreover, on the basis of general historical consideration, it would seem most probable that Jesus did hold some views in common with late Judaism, or he would hardly have been an actual human being affected by his own peculiar historical environment. As obvious as this would seem

5. See pp. 40-45 and 65-75 of this study.
to be in theoretical statement, it is almost entirely overlooked in practice by these keen advocates of the "canon of dissimilarity". Thus, Jesus is in very real danger of being cut off from his first century "Jewishness" and transposed into a modern fantasy realm of artificial "uniqueness". Likewise, Jesus most probably did hold some things in common with the early (and later) church, since he was its founder in some sense. Even Bultmann sometimes seems to recognise this, and suggests as much when he maintains that at least the eschatological consciousness of the early church surely derives from Jesus himself rather than having been an ex nihilo creation of the church. Therefore, the present writer would maintain that material which is not found to be probably distinctive (according to present knowledge) should not be treated as perspicuously unauthentic in a straightforward manner either, as it sometimes is by these three scholars. For a section of the tradition which does not show Jesus to be unique could nevertheless still quite possibly belong to the real life of the earthly figure Jesus of Nazareth. For example, Käsemann is especially guilty of apparently deciding beforehand that Jesus was wholly uninfluenced by the apocalyptic elements in his Umwelt (this much he shares with Bultmann and Bornkamm) but that the early Palestinian church allowed itself to be totally influenced by the apocalyptic when it interpreted Jesus. Thus, the question as to whether or not certain apocalyptic elements attributed to Jesus in the synoptic tradition could have actually been uttered by him, is not seriously explored or tested by Käsemann via other critical


7. See pp. 92-93 of this study.
canons. Hence, this definition of the critical "canon of dissimilarity" is especially capable of producing a "historical Jesus" (i.e. a critical historian's Jesus) who may be quite unlike the Jesus of Nazareth who actually lived in Palestinian history, because of an a priori presupposition (or pre-understanding) of the critical historian. It may be that the true earthly Jesus is one who was essentially as Käsemann supposes, but that result should not be guaranteed by the definition of the critical canon. Rather, this canon should be flexible enough that it could allow for Jesus to be discovered to be either essentially unique, or have much in common with elements in late Judaism and/or the church, or even be a blend of both in whatever degree emerges. Consequently, material found to be non-distinctive by the "canon of dissimilarity" should properly be placed in "a middle category of uncertainty" and then tested further by still other critical canons in order to determine whether or not this material temporarily placed in the "middle category of uncertainty" can be demonstrated to be authentic or unauthentic. Indeed, some material may remain in the "middle category" indefinitely. This manner of dealing with pericopae is surely more accurate and honest than immediately relegating non-distinctive material to the possibly undeserved category of the unauthentic.

Finally, it must be argued here that it is most regrettable that these three scholars, who have played such an influential role in the establishment of critical methods in modern New Testament study, have used as their primary canon a norm which in practice makes those ele-

ments which set Jesus apart from his own Jewish environment on the one hand and the Christian church on the other, appear to be the "most characteristic" dimensions of his life as well as the "most certainly authentic". The very important question must be raised as to whether or not it is methodologically justifiable to start with this as an a priori assumption. The present writer would maintain that such an a priori assumption is surely not justified, because the very fashion in which this canon is defined for use by these scholars (each in his own way as we have seen), assures a result prior to the actual examination of historical evidence. Therefore, this canon automatically requires Jesus of Nazareth to appear to be quite different from his Jewish contemporaries and his own followers, (in whatever degree is desired by a preliminary definition of the church and/or late Judaism), and thus also from the person he may actually have been, if, in fact, he did share elements in common with Judaism and the church. As has been previously pointed out, there is a hidden apologetic motive at work here. 9 Rather, by applying the canon as has been suggested above, and so further testing uncertain material (by other criteria) not found immediately authentic by the "canon of dissimilarity", it is possible that a historical critic might find that the distinctive elements in Jesus' life are not necessarily either the "most characteristic" or the "most authentic". 10 Moreover, the critical "canon of dissimilarity" as now employed by Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann carries with it the theological danger of possibly unearthing a "docetic Jesus"; in the sense that this required "uniqueness" makes him appear rather different from, and also less than, the human person


which he may have been in his true historical existence. Consequently, such a reconstructed historian's Jesus will not serve the best interests of either historical science or theological science.

2. The canon of the "forms and Sitz im Leben" has been much discussed by scholars, and especially in the English speaking world it has been contended that the error inherent within it is one of heuristic circularity. That is, the critic uses the various forms found in the synoptic tradition primarily as source material for knowledge of the ostensible needs and practices of the early church and then attempts to salvage only portions of the tradition as authentic Jesus' material which may yet have some material distinctiveness (by the standards of the "canon of dissimilarity") and because a particular form gives evidence of being in relatively pure or primitive form (by the standards of the "canon of the forms and growth"). Thus, the "canon of the forms and Sitz im Leben" is employed precisely when a given form shows evidence of not being primitive, but rather of being added to or wholly created because of some situational need that may have existed in a certain part of the early church. But the question is often raised as to the validity of using the forms of the tradition to conjecture supposed situational needs within the life of the early church (often with no other supporting evidence for such needs) and then using these hypothetical ecclesiastical needs to judge the historical genuineness of the same texts.


It must be admitted that this procedure does not supply the kind of certainty one would like to possess with regard to the life of the early church. (or Jesus), for the gospels do not grant an unmediated view of the church any more than they do of Jesus. Here also everything depends on the cogency of the inferences made, and their subsequent testing by other historical scholars examining the same material. However, it must be further noted that this is the dilemma that the historian sometimes actually finds himself in, and in such a situation he does not have any securely fixed point from which to begin his reconstruction. In this situation, however, it is not customary for historians (in any field of study) to quit the scene in despair. Rather, the historian (like the detective) must make the best of a less than ideal situation. The historian does this by forming a hypothesis that will hopefully best help him to interpret the historical data before him. If this hypothesis enables him to interpret as much of the relevant evidential data as seems possible and relate it coherently to any other authentic evidence, (that is, other evidential data deemed authentic because he has established it as such with his several critical canons) then he can argue for the probable correctness of his position with some degree of validity. Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann are thus surely not alone in following such a method; for numerous historians (and detectives) have grounded their reconstructions upon such foundations when necessary. The only way that the validity of such a procedure can be tested is by other historians creating alternative hypotheses to explain the same evidential data and coherently coordinating it with all the agreed authentic evidence.

(relative to the question or event at hand). Whichever hypothesis more adequately manages to explain the specific data, and also can coherently relate it to the other authentic evidence, is probably the more nearly correct. Consequently, the much discussed heuristic circularity inherent in this canon is neither unique to the problem of reconstruction nor a sufficient reason to suggest the present abandonment of the "canon of the forms and Sitz im Leben" in ongoing New Testament criticism. 14

Nevertheless, an argument for the general validity and need for this canon in ongoing New Testament study, is not thereby an endorsement for the specific manner in which it is regularly employed by Bultmann or Bornkamm or Käsemann. The present writer would contend from the foregoing analyses of the methods of all three scholars in actual practice (as seen in section II of this study), that the greatest reservations must be reserved for Bultmann's manner of application of this canon. This is so because Bultmann is most prone to suggest that if a unit of the tradition has an ostensibly identifiable Sitz im Leben in the concerns of the early church, then it must not have had a Sitz im Leben Jesu. At least with the parables, Bornkamm and Käsemann have moved beyond Bultmann in this regard. Still the present writer would contend that this is just the beginning of a procedure which must be carried further in future study; for there may be units of the tradition which belong both to Jesus and the church, and so could be representative of a field of continuity which lies between the founder of Christianity and the movement which he induced. If, then, a Sitz im Leben in the concerns of the early church can be conjectured reasonably (as described above), the critic should still be

required to test his material for traces of a *Sitz im Leben Jesu* by means of whatever valid criteria he may employ in the specific case. The primary failing of Bultmann (and others who uncritically follow his example) is that he merely stops too soon. One's discovery of a *Sitz im Leben* in the concerns of the early church does not then of necessity exclude further exploration for traces of Jesus' own influence; but to the contrary, such discovery should spur the additional historical questioning as to whether or not Jesus' influence can also be found here. Perhaps many times no definitive answer will be found. If that is so, then that ought to be stated clearly and the issue of a *Sitz im Leben Jesu* in such a case should be declared a present uncertainty. In other cases, if no *Sitz im Leben Jesu* can be unearthed but the free creativity of the church (or an individual) is strongly suspected, (as with legends, doubtful sayings or narratives attributed to Jesus etc.) then the probability of the unauthentic nature of that unit of the tradition, together with the supporting warrants for such a judgment, should be stated clearly while also assigning the appropriate degree of probability. In this regard, it must be noted further that even with unauthentic pericopae it is necessary to ask the question as to why this material was created. For even myths and unauthentic sayings or anecdotes may tell us something about the person or event which they purport to represent. Even fiction is sometimes a response to something real in the events of history, and it is worth exploring whether or not there are any extant clues of such reality. Finally, if a unit of the tradition is declared to possess a *Sitz im Leben* in the early church, it is still important that such a *Sitz im Leben* be made as specific as possible. Recently, this has
been pointed out by R. S. Barbour in the following words:

Often no positive account of the genesis of material deemed secondary is given at all; sometimes what is given is very jejune. Further, if a positive account is given, and appears convincing, with regard to a single saying or series of sayings or other block of material, it still has to be fitted into a satisfactory overall picture or made to conform with a general hypothesis - the criterion of coherence is relevant here as elsewhere, however difficult it may be to apply. 15

By way of example, it will be helpful to recall Bultmann's treatment of the resurrection tradition. In dealing with that block of material, Bultmann was content to speak generally of the legendary nature of the several appearance and empty tomb stories and to attribute them to the rather vague apologetic situational needs of the Hellenistic churches. In addition to the problems that can be raised with even this general attribution, (some of which we have already noted) there is the further issue of a lack of concrete precision, as to where the several stages of this tradition actually arose and why they arose specifically. Part of the apparent impact of Bultmann's argument lies in the question he is able to raise in the mind of one who might be otherwise prone to argue for the Palestinian and more factual origin of (the whole or parts of) this tradition. However, when one seeks this precision and further measure of clarity from Bultmann with regard to the several pericopae, his general and vague description of "apologetic needs" also seems less satisfactory and more questionable than it did initially. So it seems that if one only makes the rather general suggestion of some apologetic Sitz im Leben in the Hellenistic churches, one raises doubt with regard to the Palestinian and (at least somewhat more) factual origin of this tradition. But if one

15. R. S. Barbour, op.cit., p. 11.
raises the further questions as to precisely where and why these narratives arose to Bultmann's hypothesis, one also raises a significant doubt concerning the validity of his explanation. It would appear, then, that rather more exploration and further warrants are needed in order to establish Bultmann's suggested hypothesis. The pressing of this kind of questioning should more perspicuously bring to the fore the degree of probability which can honestly be attached to any given hypothesis and expose any hidden weak links in the chain of argument for a suggested Sitz im Leben. Perhaps in this way it will be more regularly seen that the "canon of the forms and the Sitz im Leben" can sometimes only be used to suggest a specific history for a unit of the tradition in the life of the early church, and no definitive judgment (either positive or negative) can be rendered presently concerning a Sitz im Leben Jesus; rather than a negative judgment regularly being assumed when a Sitz im Leben der alten Kirche is unearthed. Likewise, this procedure ought to aid in assigning a more appropriate and accurate degree of probability to any suggested hypothesis concerning a specific need in the life of the early church.

3. A third canon of primary importance for Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann is their "canon of the forms and growth". Since much of the material examined in Section II of this study was judged authentic (and therefore relatively primitive) by these three scholars, it was only in the final chapter of Section II that we were able to gain the clearest insight into the whys and wherefores of judgments rendered concerning materials believed to be clearly secondary in form. Here it was seen also that Bultmann offered the fullest explanation for judging the age of these legendary and secondary pericopae.
Bultmann also provided the basic analysis of each phase of development within each stage of tradition (i.e. within the simple proclamation stage, the appearance narrative stage, the empty tomb stage and the ascension stage). In this regard also Bornkamm and Käsemann fundamentally appear to accept Bultmann's analysis, and only render comment on points of difference.

In the concluding portion of the final chapter of Section II, it was noted that a thoroughgoing recent study by E. P. Sanders has provided some important cautions concerning Bultmann's "canon of the forms and growth". First, Sanders shows that Bultmann essentially derived his understanding of the growth of the forms from an analysis of the tendencies of apparent developments within the written stages of the Christian tradition. Bultmann cited other parallel oral traditions only when they gave further support to a specific contention of his, or where a clear example existed of a particular type of primitive form (i.e. of a parable, miracle story or legend etc.). Second, Sanders noted that very few generalisations about tendencies of growth can actually be demonstrated. The only two general tendencies which he discovered were the adding of more concrete detail in later developments and the transforming of indirect discourse into direct discourse.

In the light of these rather sparse findings, it would appear that future use of this canon will require more specific arguments to be made (with supporting warrants) in each individual case wherein an expansion upon a more primitive form of that tradition is suspected. Only as each argument is tested, is it likely that its validity or uncertainty will appear. Moreover, it should be noted that even

17. Ibid., pp. 259, 274.
patterns of development which can be demonstrated for written traditions, cannot necessarily be accepted for the oral period. In the literary stage, certain definite theological and literary motives governed redactors in their selection and use of Mark and Q, which would not probably have occurred as consistently, or in the same way, during the oral period. For example, it is not wholly clear that later oral traditions would have added the same kind of detail which might have been added by an editor who possessed a written copy of the more primitive material. One suspects that some story-tellers have a tendency to condense narratives while others have a tendency to expand. Likewise, a consistent theological perspective cannot be isolated with an individual pericope, and thus, it is not as easy to tell what theological views may have shaped a single pericope at a given oral stage of development. Finally, clear recognition needs to be given to the fact that we simply do not know accurately how long various pericopae existed in the oral stage prior to being reduced to writing (and thereafter being reshaped as literary pericopae). Once again our paucity of information concerning the early church hampers the critic from forming rigid "laws of the oral tradition" in the fashion that might be possible if we knew more of the everyday experiences of the life of the early church in its several locations and varieties.\(^{18}\) Hence, we do not know at what stage of oral development the several pericopae were reduced to writing (for no scholar imagines that all pericopae were reduced to writing at the same time in churches which were spread over such a large geographical area and subject to such diverse heritages and influences). In any case, the

oral period was very brief (perhaps twenty to forty years) by comparison with other known oral traditions which might otherwise serve as paradigms for understanding the patterns of development and change. Consequently, each argument for growth in the tradition must be presented and tested individually in the manner suggested with regard to the "canon of the forms and Sitz im Leben." That is, those hypotheses which can finally best explain the evidential data and relate it most coherently with the other relevant "authentic" evidence will claim the highest degree of probability. One today must be less optimistic about "ready-to-hand laws of growth" than Bultmann was and even his second generation pupils have been able to be (i.e. such as Bornkamm and Kasemann). This factor of reality does not make this canon worthless, however. It only makes its use less definite and, therefore, more difficult to apply than these three scholars have generally believed.

4. Another major critical canon employed by all three scholars is the "canon of the closed causal nexus". No critical canon has caused as much debate in modern discussions of biblical interpretation as this canon; as this canon, together with Bultmann's existential interpretation of the New Testament, are the fundamental components in his programme of demythologising. By this canon Bultmann eliminates any literal interpretation of the supernatural aspects of the New Testament. As we have seen, Bornkamm and Kasemann are in essential agreement with Bultmann's use of this critical canon (if not wholly with his existential interpretation).

It is important here to recognise that in setting forth this critical canon, Bultmann was essentially calling attention to the fact that this criterion is constantly used by scientific historians in all fields of historical study. In this regard, it is surprising
that this should have seemed so controversial to many theologian-historians. Nevertheless, as was pointed out in the last chapter of Section II, there is a positivistic ring to Bultmann's statement of this canon; in that he suggests the apparent impossibility of activity on the part of God as a cause for events within historical experience. It would seem more accurate today not to suggest that science "knows" that such acts of God are impossible; for today science understands more fully than ever that we do not possess a complete knowledge of nature and thus are not able to predict what is impossible. Nevertheless, science does reckon with the normal regularities of nature and functionally predicts on the basis of the known. Therefore, if a historical document reports an event which purports to be wholly unique due to God's activity, the scientist (as scientist) has no categories by which to understand such a claim, and thus will normally seek an explanation which will be consistent with the regularities he does understand in normal physical and human experience. Consequently, Bultmann is right to say that the historian (who here functions with the reasoning categories supplied to him by the physical, chemical and biological sciences) has no categories with which to understand or reckon with "unique acts of God." 19

The problem arises, however, over whether or not this normal manner of operation for historians should be followed with regard to research in the life of Jesus of Nazareth; for by any measure, the relevant evidential documents in this case repeatedly suggest the unique activity of God as the cause for numerous aspects of Jesus' life. Should the normal historical procedure thus be allowed to determine

on a priori grounds that the divine causal explanations suggested in
the New Testament are not correct, and some other "natural" explana-
tion must be found. In brief, if it is even a logical possibility
that God was indeed uniquely active in the events of Jesus' life as
the New Testament suggests, then is it not foolish to apply a canon
to these texts which by its definition cannot recognise such divine
activity? This would seem rather like putting a blindfold on one's
eyes and then complaining that it is impossible to see under these
circumstances, one might contend!

The present writer finds himself both agreeing with Bultmann's
(and so in this case with Bornkamm's and Käsemann's) apparent inten-
tion and yet also holding to the intent behind the essential criticism
just rendered concerning Bultmann's use of this canon. That is, it
would seem that the biblical historian should not attempt to deny
that historians in every field of historical study do operate with
the assumption that it is beyond the historian's ability to detect
divine activity within historical events. The historian as historian
simply has no categories for understanding or measuring purported
causes which transcend the normal causes which scientific understand-
ing is equipped to deal with in the regularities of nature and human
experience. Therefore, historical science (as such) cannot offer
theological explanations, nor should it pretend to do so. Neverthe-
less, it does not seem feasible that the biblical interpreter should
be required not to use the hypothesis of divine activity if such
should be suggested by his evidence, or if he holds such already by
virtue of his prior Christian faith and desires to test it; and if by
using such he is best able to understand and coherently explain the
several pieces of evidential data that are relevant to his recon-
struction. To be required to find a "substitute explanation hypothesis" from some philosophical source, which yet offers something less than the suspected divine activity, seems a futile exercise; especially if it will not enable the evidential data to be explained as fully or coherently. However, if such an hypothesis as the free activity of the God of history is used as a causal explanation, it must be clearly acknowledged that this presupposition does not arise from normal historical science as such and that without this imported theological interpretative presupposition the evidential data could never be shown to contain more than human or natural meaning. Thus, it would seem that any such theological canon must be properly seen as an interpretative norm added to, but used to explain, the evidential data assembled by other critical canons. This would mean that the historian should not be excluded from reconstructing any evidential data that he is able to with the aid of his several critical canons; but if that evidential data is to be explained (or interpreted) with the "God hypothesis", then that hypothesis must be introduced on a clearly acknowledged philosophical or theological basis and not on a critical-historical basis. For example, with regard to the issue of the events of the life of the earthly Jesus and the early Christian church, it will be necessary for any Christian theologian who wishes to use the "Lord of History" hypothesis to explain the events, to acknowledge such as an interpretative norm which does not arise from critical historical science as such. Hence, if, for instance, such a scholar were to offer an explanation of the New Testament resurrection tradition, he should subject the relevant evi-

idence to the several critical canons acceptable to historical science in order to discover as much as he can concerning what transpired to give rise to this literature. That means that such questions as the following are in principle open to the critical historian to explore: Was Jesus’ tomb actually discovered to be empty, or is this tradition wholly mythological? Did the disciples have visionary experiences of or encounters with the risen Jesus which they believed to be given them by God, or are these accounts wholly mythological expressions of self-understanding? Did the exaltation motif once exist entirely apart from both the appearance narrative tradition and the empty tomb tradition? Was the early proclamation of the resurrection (as seen for example in I Corinthians 15:3-8) already apocalyptically understood? In what way was this tradition related to the other aspects of the Easter tradition? Was there a uniform development of the Easter tradition, or did separate elements freely arise in different parts of the early church? Precisely, when and where did the several parts of the Easter tradition arise? All these questions (and more) may not find satisfactory answers; but they are surely not beyond the critical historian’s scope of exploration in principle, by means of his critical canons. However, if an interpreter wishes to offer an explanation of his critically established evidence which entails the hypothesis of God’s activity as a cause for the several pieces of authentic evidence, he then moves beyond the realm of normal critical historical science into the realm of theological explanation of historical evidence. If, for instance, it could be critically established that the empty tomb tradition has some real factual basis, historical science (as such) could offer no more than a natural explanation for the tomb being found empty (such as theft by parties unknown). If
this evidence were to be interpreted as God's raising of His Son, however, then this would require a self-conscious theological interpretation. Conversely, if the empty tomb tradition were found to be wholly mythological by the critical historian's methods, the cause of the rise of that mythology could only be explained by some natural explanation by the critical historian as historian (such as a "new self-understanding" induced by the earthly life of Jesus but only fully realised by his followers in days of reflection following his death). However, the rise of the mythological origin of the empty tomb tradition could also be explained on theological grounds (such as it being an early church mythological expression of the faith of Jesus' followers, which arose because of God's activity in raising Jesus [in ways unknown or made known by other means such as in appearances, visions or dreams]). Similar examples could be offered with regard to God's activity in conjunction with Jesus' birth, baptism, certain events of his life and/or his crucifixion. Thus, this manner of dealing with the question of God's activity frees the historian to do his work fully, as a historian, and yet likewise frees the theologian who would seek to offer his interpretation of the authentic historical data to do so on theological grounds. In this way, the confusion of roles should be minimised and the historian should not shy from discovering all that he possibly can. Currently, one sometimes suspects that important pieces of evidential data, which have strong claims to historical authenticity, are simply ignored or buried by theological interpreters of historical evidence on supposedly critical grounds, whereas actually the grounds are theological and apologetic. This is true for critics of all theological persuasions, when they confuse their theological and critical roles. Of course, it equally holds that if such a theological presupposition
or pre-understanding cannot explain the evidential data adequately, it must (like any interpretative principle) admit its failure. Greater clarity on this issue should, however, greatly enhance future research.

5. The "canon of the elimination of analogous material" has not been isolated in this study as one of the major criteria used by Bultmann, Bornkamm and Kasemann. This is due in part to the fact that much of the material analysed in this study was deemed essentially authentic by these scholars, and much of what was not so deemed, was eliminated as either church theology or borrowed Jewish material. Had Bultmann's analysis of the gospel miracle stories played a larger role in this study, a more frequent use would have been noted. However, this canon was encountered especially in Bultmann's analysis of Pauline themes used to present the message of the resurrection to the Hellenistic world. There Bultmann contended that Paul borrowed themes from Gnosticism and the mystery cults in order to present the present and personal dimensions of the reality of the resurrection. In that context certain cautionary suggestions were offered concerning the use of this canon. Those concerns should be briefly recapitulated here.

Undoubtedly, the gospel tradition was influenced by sources from the Hellenistic world via the Hellenistic Christian communities. First, however, one must be careful to judge properly in each case whether or not these various "analogies" are indeed true analogies, or only share some naturally common features which could have arisen entirely independently of one another. For example, with miracle stories it is not sufficient to call attention to the general analogy

between the "form" of pagan miracle stories and the gospel miracle stories and then suggest that this analogy proves borrowing or free creativity by the church from an unknown Hellenistic model. An oral or literary form is only a mode of expression, not a positive guide to historicity. Fact and fiction may share a common form. Second, if a true analogy can really be established, then a point of contact needs to be demonstrated in order to show precisely where and how one source influenced another. Finally, one should always be clear as to which way the influence flowed.  

6. It has not generally appeared throughout this study that the "canon of the isolated pericopae" is a canon of major importance for Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann because it is not used to judge the basic historicity of the sayings or narratives of Jesus in the tradition, but only to judge the links between the pericopae as unauthentic (with the partial exception of the passion narratives). Nevertheless, it is employed to indicate the self-contained status of each unit of the tradition and thus it is a criterion of some real and regular significance. Moreover, the present writer would maintain that this canon is of much more fundamental significance than could be realised from the pericope by pericope analyses which have been undertaken. This is so precisely because the employment of this canon has chiefly contributed to the final portraits which Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann are able to produce from the several authentic but isolated pericopae. When a chronological manner of treating the life of Jesus is abandoned, what results is the grouping together of the separate pericopae according to themes unearthed among the apparently authentic sayings and narratives about Jesus. The practical effect of this has been that Jesus is portrayed by all three scholars as

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essentially an eschatological preacher and a teacher concerning the Will of God. A few of the acts of Jesus are used to illumine Jesus' words, but essentially it is the distinctive words of Jesus which emerge as definitive and are interpreted so that they might speak to modern man. Because of the "canon of the isolated pericopae" we know next to nothing about the chronological course of Jesus' life (beyond the fact of his baptism, that his ministry took place largely in Galilee, and that he died in Jerusalem) or his "self-consciousness" (beyond his general eschatological mission-consciousness). When one combines this result with the fact that the "canon of dissimilarity" (as used by these three scholars) gives us essentially only an insight into that which is apparently distinctive about Jesus, it then becomes clear that the portraits of Jesus which this method is able to render gives us something less than the Jesus of the total synoptic tradition, and also Jesus as he might be able to be reconstructed with valid critical methods today. R. S. Barbour has recently called attention to this factor. In analysing the essential portrait produced by Käsemann (but also methodologically Bultmann and to a somewhat lesser degree Bornkamm), he says:

But it is noticeable that in this picture there is nothing about Jesus' impatience at the faithlessness of his generation, his belief in demons, his miracles, or his prophecies of woe and his proclamation of judgment; about inability to work mighty deeds where there was no faith; about suffering and the Son of Man; about the testing in the wilderness; about Gethsemane and the cry on the cross; about any change or development in the life of Jesus. All that material is either not distinctive or suspect on other grounds. And taken individually, logion by logion, pericope by pericope, it may perhaps, much of it, plausibly be held to be under some suspicion for one reason or another. But taken together it constitutes a witness to the painful course of Jesus' obedience to the Father which on general historical grounds it would be hard to reject (strong as would be our theological or apologetic motives
for wanting to retain it). If the Gospels are products of the faith of the early church, as of course in many respects they are, it is remarkable that the figure they portray has so much of righteous indignation, of hesitation in the face of suffering, of kenosis about him. Käsemann's and Bornkamm's delineations of the mission of Jesus do not have very much to say about that whole side of the picture; but without it the balance is certainly different from that of the Synoptic Gospels as a whole; and, be it noted in the direction of a less unmistakeably historical figure. For without some reference to possible change and development, to action and reaction between Jesus and the individuals and groups whom he encounters, it is doubtful whether a modern secular historian would recognize a properly historical figure at all - by which I mean not a figure who existed in history but a figure of whose existence and significance some historical account can be given.

I have dared to speak of the course of Jesus' human obedience to the Father - less daringly of course than the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who says that he learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and in saying so does not appear to be referring solely to the trial and crucifixion. Here again we see a feature of the portrait of Jesus which is characteristic of those who use the avenue of approach we have been discussing; it is essentially the message, or more widely the words, of Jesus which fill in the picture....The Jesus who is brought before us by these methods proclaims, and indeed embodies, if only proleptically, the Kingdom of God; but it is not essential to the picture that he passes through that testing which enables him in the deepest human sense to be described as man, that wrestling with and taking the measure of the depth of evil in human affairs which is surely not just a theological assumption but an ineradicable historical element in the whole story as the Gospels tell it. 23

Professor Barbour has brought to light a most important truth here; for it cannot be denied that if one uses the "canon of dissimilarity" as these three scholars do, and thus eliminates as "unauthentic" aspects of the gospel picture of Jesus which are not unique; dimensions of his true humanity may well be wrongly lost because of the inadequacy of the critical criterion. It should be further noted that in this procedure only the most distinctive acts

of Jesus are likely to survive the critical historian's scrutiny, for much of his activity would look too Jewish and ordinarily human to pass muster. Then if the gospel picture of Jesus is further subdivided by the "canon of the isolated pericopae" into "little islands of distinctiveness", the impact which should shine through the much repeated gospel vision of his very human struggles and his human emotions of response to situations of uncertainty, hostility or suffering, will all the more readily evaporate into the atmosphere of ordinariness. This is so because the stories are no longer linked to one another, and so the multiple impression disappears which should allow for an awareness of his true humanity, on what Barbour has called "general historical grounds". Hence, profound dimensions of Jesus' real humanity may well be falsely buried (in shallow graves to be sure) on each of the isolated pericope islands. There can, of course, be no going back to the "old days" prior to the work of W. Wrede and K. L. Schmidt, however. Essentially, we must recognise that the precise chronology of the ministry of Jesus probably can never be known (short of some new archeological discovery?), although perhaps something more of an outline can be demonstrated in future than these three scholars suppose. Rather, what must be further developed now are better criteria which will enable us to recover the impact of the real but non-distinctive dimensions of Jesus' life, which were more readily seen when the Markan chronology caused the story to appear to cohere (but as we now know in an artificial way) and so repeatedly brought to the fore those human characteristics of Jesus' life witnessed to in numerous places in the synoptic tradition. This might be aided by a more precise use of the "canon of dissimilarity" (along the lines already suggested) and by carrying further the use
of the "canon of multiple attestation" (which we will discuss shortly) and the development of still other canons not employed by these scholars (one of which will be discussed shortly as a possibility).

With this background, it is now easier to see why (from a critical methodological perspective at least) Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann concentrate so heavily on the distinctive words of Jesus to the exclusion of his acts, and especially those acts which might be a guide to his genuine humanity. For it must be argued, as Hugh Anderson rightly has, that the "being" or "person" of the true earthly figure of Jesus cannot be known apart from his acts. Again in this regard, it must be underscored that it will be as important to know as much as can be known of both the words and the deeds of Jesus, so that both his "distinctiveness" and his "non-distinctiveness" will appear in balance and present Jesus to us today in the fullness of the person that he was in the days of his flesh. Here the words of Professor Anderson are most helpful.

And in all events, in all philosophical naivete, it may be asked whether in fact, so long as we continue to operate within the realm of normal psychology, if a man's words are the only or even the surest key to the secret of his being. The sin of hypocrisy is a perennial human failing, and it is not at all inconceivable that a man's deeds may belie his words, and his words may belie his deeds. 25

If any illustrative example were wanted for this truth, none could be more vivid than the recent case of Richard M. Nixon, whose public words (at least) were at variance with some of his private words, deeds, and ostensibly, therefore, basic dimensions of his "person".

So with Jesus it will be important also for the historian to know as much as can be known of both word and deed.


7. We have noted that the "canon of the argument from silence" is an important, if not major, canon for Bultmann, Bornkamm and Kasemann. It is frequently used to suggest that items not mentioned, especially in an ostensibly primitive pericope or strand of the tradition must not then have been known at that time, or must not have been a characteristic of Jesus. Two chief examples of the use of this canon in the writings of these three scholars which have been noted, and which will have far-reaching implications if one accepts them, are Bultmann's arguments about the shape of the earliest Easter tradition, from what is not explicitly mentioned in I Corinthians 15:3-8 (i.e. the empty tomb and descriptions of the risen Jesus' bodily appearance) and the argument that Jesus was not really apocalyptic in his outlook, from the fact that Jesus does not seem to have been preoccupied with time schedules or elaborate descriptions of the end time in the authentic gospel pericopae in the way that many apocalypticists of late Judaism were. The problem with this canon, as we have seen, is that it assumes that the text has not been altered, and that the author of the text should have been interested in those things which the critic is looking for, and that the author of the text must have been wholly consistent in the fashion presupposed by the historical critic.26

Thus, as F. Gerald Downing suggests, "Silence is a golden opportunity for invention."27 Moreover, as he shows by a striking example, it can often be made to cut whichever way the critic wishes. He offers the following example, "compare 'If Jesus had been married, we would


27. Ibid.
know that, and his wife's name', with 'If Jesus had not been married, it would have been remarked upon'. In this regard, it is interesting to note that another of Bultmann's former pupils has recently argued in the opposite direction from these three scholars concerning whether or not Jesus was apocalyptic in some sense. Walter Schmithals has recently argued, 

To be sure, in view of the Palestinian setting of his proclamation, the fact that in his proclamation universalistic utterances appear to be lacking says nothing. Moreover, the apocalyptic character of Jesus' preaching is not contradicted by the fact that there is no tradition of an outline of history from his lips whereby his own present time is identified as the end-time; for such surveys are by no means indispensable to apocalyptic, and besides, they make sense only in pseudonymous writings. Consequently, it would seem that this canon is highly questionable, because by locating a gap of silence in a text a critic may then go on to read into that situation a number of things which may or may not have been so. Hence, only a very low degree of probability can be established by its use. The present writer would insist, then, that this canon can only have any real validity where the argument it is used to support can find additional solid warrant from correct use of one or more of the other valid critical canons. This canon used alone can provide only a very weak warrant for historical reconstruction.

8. As has been shown the "canon of consistency", although recognised by Bultmann is applied much more regularly by Bornkamm and Käsemann in establishing their portraits of the earthly Jesus. Indeed, in Bornkamm's hands especially this canon, combined with the "canon of multiple attestation", has become productive enough that it has largely

28. Ibid.

contributed to Bornkamm's recovery of the call and response of the disciples, the miracle, and the ministry to outcasts traditions. Moreover, in the same way it has contributed to Bornkamm's especially vivid picture of Jesus' έξουσία. Likewise, even Bultmann now appreciates the value of the additional use of this canon by his pupils, for he has endorsed the result they have achieved with it. Consequently, the value of this canon is real and it must be used more frequently in future New Testament study in order to produce further fruitful results. However, it should be noted that the worth of this canon is greatly increased when it is employed in conjunction with other canons (i.e. such as Bornkamm and Kasemann do with the "canon of multiple attestation").

In spite of the real value inherent within this canon, a very real weakness must be noted also, especially in the manner in which it has thus far been employed by Bultmann's pupils. That is, this canon is perspicuously dependent upon the "canon of dissimilarity" in the hands of these scholars, for only that which can be found to be distinctive by their use of the "canon of dissimilarity" can be used as a touchstone here. That means that the several weaknesses already noted with regard to the "canon of dissimilarity" apply here also. If the manner in which that canon is used can be improved, further benefits can be accrued via the use of the "canon of consistency" as well. Likewise, if any further canons can be developed or known canons can be fundamentally improved so that a more substantial block of reliable material can be established, then proportionally the "canon of consistency" will become an even more produc-

tive tool. Finally, R. S. Barbour has noted another difficulty residing with this canon which makes it rather problematic in application. He says,

"We may agree that some use of a criterion of this kind is inevitable and right. But again difficulties immediately occur. By what standard are we to judge coherence? What seems coherent to the modern scholar or historian or theologian may not have seemed coherent to the first-century Jew or Christian; and what now seems incoherent may not have seemed incoherent then."

This warning would seem to be especially important and applicable to Bultmann; for (as has been shown) his existential manner of interpreting Jesus is often highly questionable and if he is wrong in understanding Jesus, his Umwelt or the church; any items in the synoptic tradition which are not consistent with his existential understanding will further delimit the valid use of the "canon of consistency". Of course, what is here said with regard to Bultmann has its application for all historical critics.

9. The "canon of internal coherence" is used to a limited degree by all three scholars and does have significance (both for these scholars and future New Testament study) but it cannot thus be deemed a canon of major importance. Interestingly, one of the possible weaknesses residing in this canon is similar to that just mentioned with regard to the "canon of consistency", for what may appear to be incoherent to any particular modern scholar, may not have seemed incoherent to Jesus or the author of the New Testament text. Thus, a similar caution must be employed with the "canon of internal coherence" as was noted above with regard to the "canon of consistency."

10. As we have seen, the "canon of multiple attestation" is also more useful to Bornkamm and Käsemann than it was to Bultmann. It was

employed by Bornkamm especially in conjunction with the "canon of consistency" in order to establish several aspects of the tradition as reliable which Bultmann had not established in his earlier reconstruction of Jesus (although he now allows that the result produced by this canon is indeed valid). The worth of this canon also increases when it is used both in a formal and a material sense\(^{32}\) and/or when it is employed in conjunction with other critical criteria. Hence, this canon too should be further applied and tested in future New Testament study.\(^{33}\) However, this canon is likewise not without its difficulties and if it is to be employed in the future most fruitfully, those difficulties should be recognised. It can be argued that a general impression is no stronger than its component parts and thus when the "canon of multiple attestation" is applied alone it carries that inherent weakness with it.\(^{34}\) As F. Gerald Downing has noted, "If there is no confidence in even one example of a class of evidence, the 'general impression' generated is evidence only for later opinion."\(^{35}\) Consequently, a somewhat better form of the use of this canon emerges when the general impression is measured preliminarily, and then the separate pericopae are evaluated individually in order that what emerges in this criticism is properly allowed to modify any weakness in the overall impression.\(^{36}\)

\(^{32}\) R. S. Barbour, op.cit., p. 4.


\(^{35}\) F. Gerald Downing, op.cit., p. 103.

In our previous discussion of the "canon of the isolated pericopae", it was suggested that still further criteria might be developed in future New Testament study, which either share elements in common with the canons which have been here analyzed in the writings of Bultmann, Bornkamm and Kasemann or have been brought to the fore by an awareness of the weaknesses implicit within these canons. One such possibility has been mentioned in recent literature which would seem to hold some promise. Some years ago Marc Bloch suggested that historians commonly find evidence most fruitful for genuine reconstruction if it inadvertently mentions a characteristic of a person, or an aspect of an event, which it would not seem to be in the best interest of author to have mentioned. This canon might well be deemed the "canon of unintentional information". Indeed, it has actually been used by New Testament scholars for some time, but is not often set forth explicitly as a canon for regular use. It has struck the present writer that there might be real value in a conscious resurrection of this canon and its testing in future study with some of that material which Bultmann, Bornkamm and Kasemann have omitted in their studies, because of the limitations involved in the employment of their canons. Such testing might be especially useful with that material which attests to the temptations of Jesus, his anger, his ostensible fears, or other dimensions of what might be aspects of his genuine humanity. Whatever weaknesses might be involved with such a canon could best be uncovered by its conscious

38. The author can remember first being impressed with the untapped potential of this canon, when as a first-year theological student he heard Professor B. M. Metzger use it to argue for certain elements in the synoptic tradition which were unflattering to certain apostles; Cf. R. S. Barbour, op.cit., p. 26-27, where he mentions T. A. Roberts' largely neglected suggestion in this direction in his work, History and Christian Apologetics.
use, so that by its testing, refinements with regard to its better use might emerge. It does not seem too bold to suggest its application and testing here, however, both because it would seem to have potential for dealing with certain pericopae which have not received much attention via the canons we have analysed, and because it would seem to have certain elements in common with the primary "canon of dissimilarity" which is so heavily employed today. Like so many of the canons which we have analysed in this study, it would no doubt increase in value if it could be employed jointly with other valuable critical criteria.

On the overview then, it can now be properly maintained that Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann are all essentially consistent in the employment of their critical canons. That is, all three scholars do apply their several critical canons in a manner consistent with the definitions they have each given (or accepted) for their specific canons with an extremely high degree of regularity. This feature of the work of all three scholars should be appreciated fully, for the care and rigour with which they each apply their historical methods could well serve as a model to be emulated by any serious student of history. The consistency of employment of one's critical canons produces a quite useful reconstruction of a historical person or event, which thus can be most adequately judged by other historians as to its

39. R. S. Barbour, op. cit., p. 27.

40. For example, it would seem probable that it might be used initially with the "canon of multiple attestation" and the "canon of dissimilarity" as evaluated above to analyse those units of the tradition which suggest possible dimensions of Jesus' ministry.

41. This does not mean that Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann do not each occasionally deviate in practice from the definitions of their several critical canons (for all scholars do at some points), but rather that they are exceptionally careful in this regard. In those few cases where some deviation has been suspected, it has been noted in the text of this study.
overall validity, precisely because there is a genuine coherence in the final picture produced.

Before moving beyond the matter of the critical canons of Bultmann, Bornkamm and Kasemann, however, one further matter must be discussed which is of real significance for understanding what actually happens in the employment of their critical canons, and critical canons generally. It is sometimes supposed that in the employment of critical canons, the historian is simply reconstructing a picture of a past event in perspicuous correspondence with the "real historical event". Hence, if the critical canons of objective historical science are employed consistently and correctly, then "true facts" will emerge which can thus be arranged via historian's varying interpretative (or hermeneutical) canons into several different "interpretations" or "interpretative pictures" of the past event. On this view, whatever set of interpretative canons is most adequate will thus allow that historian to best arrange his "objective facts" so as to produce the most coherent representation of that past event, which in turn will correspond most closely to the real nature of that which actually happened. Additionally, it will be remembered that on the view of these three scholars, the proper interpretative canons also will allow the innermost meaning of that past event to challenge the self-understanding of persons living today, and thus the practice of history produces a dialogue with the past concerning authentic meaning in personal human life (or "authentic historicity" in a profound sense).


43. See pp. 24-51 and 62-75 of this study.
The analysis undertaken in this study, however, would indicate that it is too simplistic an explanation of the historian's method to suggest that all historians can or will use precisely the same critical canons in exactly the same fashion. Hence, even at the critical level of historical work, "interpretation" enters into the picture. This has appeared most perspicuously in the above analyses of the "canon of dissimilarity", the "canon of the forms and Sitz im Leben", the "canon of the closed causal nexus", and the "canon of the argument from silence"; but it surely plays a part in the definition and employment of all critical canons. The present writer does believe that such analysis as has been undertaken in this study can serve to uncover certain inadequate definitions and employment procedures for critical canons. Hence, as the criticisms offered here are further weighed by others and themselves tested and criticised, it is likely that somewhat more agreement can develop with regard to the use of critical canons, and consequently also more consensus should emerge with regard to certain aspects of historical reconstruction. However, it is doubtful if the development of, and the use of, certain critical canons will ever be wholly uniform in practice; for all historians do (and must) bring their own conscious and unconscious pre-understandings with them, which they use in a controlling fashion in conjunction with their specific critical canons. This was seen perhaps most clearly with regard to the "canon of the closed causal nexus". Therefore, it would seem that the most helpful procedure here would be that of making one's a priori pre-understandings as clear as possible in the definition of and subsequent employ-

ment of one's critical canons. In this way, some further fruitful debate can be undertaken as to precisely which definition of a particular canon, including the issue of which pre-understanding, best enables historians to explain (or interpret) the greatest amount of available evidential data most coherently. Only as such a priori presuppositions are openly acknowledged (or at least unearthed by later analyses), will it be possible to make any real progress in debate and consensus. All of this means, however, that it is more accurate to admit that even at the critical level, a significant degree of "interpretation" does take place; and that only by analysis, criticism and cross-criticism concerning the validity of particular pre-understandings and the reconstructions they are capable of producing in actual practice, can emerging agreement among scholars begin to take shape. Consequently, this is not to suggest in a wholly relative fashion that one critical canon is simply as good as another, or that one interpretative definition and use of a particular critical canon is as good as another; but rather that only by the slow and difficult task of testing all critical canons and their underlying interpretative pre-understandings, will historical science be able to make progress. Moreover, the very need for analysis of and testing of critical canons itself indicates that even at the critical level of historical work, "interpretation" is surely a fundamental element in the constructing of what are called "facts". This means, however, that "interpretation" and pre-understanding function not only at the geschichtlich level of history, but are already operative at

the historisch level as well. In this regard, the present writer would maintain that statements of Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann concerning the historisch level of history as being a "factual" level established by the standard canons of "objective historical science" are somewhat misleading, for the implication of this language is that the "facts" produced at this level are rather more certain and solid than they actually are, if the analysis of this study is at all accurate. For the analysis undertaken here has indicated a number of subjectively held pre-understandings which play a quite significant role in the historical reconstructions of "facts" by these three scholars at the historisch level. Greater clarity concerning this issue in future should serve the cause of establishing even greater uniformity of actual critical method, as unnecessarily delimiting pre-understandings are increasingly isolated and rejected by an emerging consensus of the community of historians, and in areas where uniformity does not seem probable (as in the case of the "God hypothesis" as a causal explanation for facets of historical events) at least the real issue of standard historical procedures versus exceptional philosophical and/or theological pre-understandings which are employed by some scholars in given contexts will be better recognised in their true colours, and so hopefully can more honestly be evaluated as to their usefulness (or lack thereof) in any given attempted historical explanation.

II. Concluding Remarks Concerning Hermeneutical Canons

Throughout this study an evaluative analysis of the hermeneutical canons of Bultmann, Bornkamm and Käsemann has also been undertaken.
Now in summary of that which has been noted, first it will be important to recall the central thrust of the several comments offered with regard to Bultmann's work. It has been maintained that Bultmann is surely correct to recognise: (1) the need to interpret the whole of a historical text from its parts and the parts from the whole (2) that the specific interests of a historian will control his questioning of the historical text (3) and that a historian must have a life-relationship to, and pre-understanding of, the subject matter of a historical text. However, problems here have arisen in conjunction with Bultmann's fourth and chief hermeneutical canon, because he also contends for: (4) the key significance of the historian's "existential openness" to "existential encounter" with the inherent self-understandings, or understanding of human existence (Existenzverständnis) contained in his historical documents, as the proper pre-understanding for all historical interpretation, and especially for biblical interpretation. 46

The problem that has been noted repeatedly in this study is not that Bultmann uses the categories of existentialist philosophy (especially Heidegger's) to provide for a pre-understanding of those aspects of his historical texts which deal with the understanding of human existence contained in the texts, for all interpreters do use some philosophical categories for pre-understanding (whether they are used consciously or not). Moreover, it must be appreciatively granted that much of the biblical material surely does deal with understandings of human existence, and in this regard these existential categories serve excellently. Indeed, the purpose of pre-understanding is not

46. See pp. 30-51, 115-121, 201-205, 333-335 of this study.
to pre-judge what the text should say by substituting the categories of an alien philosophy for the message of the text; and in this regard, Bultmann's use of existentialism is most valuable because it supplies no abstract philosophical system as such. It has been noted repeatedly in this study also that this use of existential categories has enabled Bultmann to recover dimensions of the biblical texts which few other interpreters have been able to unearth with their pre-understandings.

Nevertheless, a problem does arise with Bultmann's use of his fourth canon which sometimes unfortunately overshadows his quite positive contributions. In practice, Bultmann's use of his fourth hermeneutical canon is problematic because the self-understanding of human existence finally becomes the sole norm of biblical interpretation, and thus Bultmann consistently interprets the biblical texts entirely from this perspective, even if that means twisting meanings, ignoring facets of the text or critically re-shaping aspects of the text so that they will yield to his interpretative norm. This means, for example, that any dimension of the biblical text which apparently has the activity or knowledge of God, or the purpose of God in community or world history (rather than simply in personal history) as its main concern, must either be put aside or wholly translated into concerns about personal self-understanding. In this way, Bultmann does actually pre-judge what the text is allowed to say by his own existential pre-understanding, even though he denies that a proper hermeneutical procedure ought to pre-judge the content of the text in this way. Hence, Bultmann's practical failing is not that his interpretative canons are of no value, but rather that they are capable of rendering only a partial exegetical reconstruction and understanding of certain biblical texts. Consequently, the present writer would contend that the basic
weakness of Bultmann's hermeneutical procedure is that it is not capable of fully interpreting given sections of the New Testament, and Bultmann consistently refuses to acknowledge this failing. Norman Young has cogently drawn attention to this weakness in the following illustrative words:

       It was once thought that all swans were white; in fact, this assertion was used in logic text-books as an example of a universally true proposition. Then black birds in every other detail the same as swans were discovered in Australia. It was concluded not that these birds were "essentially unswanlike", nor that they represented an aberration whose existence could be acknowledged but then ignored, but that there was something wrong with the method of classification that could not adequately deal with them. 47

It must be acknowledged that Bultmann's failing in this regard is not unique, however, for no such exclusive hermeneutical approach will allow all the diverse elements of the New Testament to speak equally. However, the best hermeneutical method ought genuinely to strive for pre-understandings which are flexible enough to respond to the several dimensions of the text in all its inherent richness, and also be capable of change if the dialogue between the parts and whole of the text call into question any inadequate initial pre-understanding. This means that no single philosophical system (or philosophical approach) is likely to be sufficient, however valuable it might be for dealing with given texts (or aspects thereof). Therefore, it is not that philosophical tools should be excluded from the practice of interpretation (how could that be possible?), but rather that (in eclectic fashion) several such tools might be required for proper biblical interpretation. Above all, genuine efforts must be made to listen to the whole message of the text, even in all of its strange-

47. Norman J. Young, History and Existential Theology, pp. 54-55.
ness; and if a preliminary philosophical aid to understanding does not suffice, then a modification, or a different aid, should be readily tried. Hence, pre-understanding is not wrong; but the job of pre-understanding may be more complex than even Bultmann has realised.48

The present writer does believe, however, that this study has indicated that Bornkamm's and Kásemann's use of their several hermeneutical canons generally represent something of an improvement upon Bultmann's use thereof. This is so because the pre-understandings involved in their exegetical work are not so strictly limited to existential self-understanding (Existenzverständnis) as is the case with Bultmann. For Bornkamm and Kásemann the fourth interpretative canon specifically involves the pre-understanding that Jesus' self-understanding could (and their subsequent investigations suggest, did) include his awareness of his own role as the historical agent of the eschatological crisis for mankind. Hence, in their interpretations Jesus is presented as the proclaimer not only of a new message of eschatological self-understanding, but is presented as personally aware that his own activity actually marked the inbreaking of the βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ and that his authoritative words also interpreted the pure Will of God in this eschatological crisis. In this awareness, and because of it, Jesus can be understood historically as the cause of his own significant death and the rise of the eschatological community which came to be called the Christian church. In this way, Bornkamm and Kásemann both present a portrait of Jesus (whether Jesus' awareness was justified or not) which gives a more coherent explana-

48. Ibid., pp. 39-55.
tion for more of the probable authentic historical evidence which can be unearthed with the critical canons, and so supplies a more historically feasible explanation for the rise of the unique phenomenon of the Christian church. Moreover, in doing this neither Bornkamm nor Käsemann presents a portrait of Jesus which is clearly self-authenticating; but like the several kerygmata of the early church, their portraits do require persons to make their own personal decision as to whether or not Jesus' understanding of himself is justified. Thus, they (like Bultmann but in a different way) recognise the limits of the historical method; for they do not attempt to use their interpretative canons to try to "prove" that God was uniquely present in the life of Jesus. Historical interpretation can show only that Jesus' life and self-awareness most probably raised the question, but did not supply the answer as to whether or not God was uniquely present in his existence. Only a personal decision for belief or unbelief on the part of one attempting to understand Jesus can answer that question, not the historian's methods. Specifically, the issue comes into clear focus with regard to the several miracle reports of the gospels. Bornkamm especially affirms that Jesus' activity probably did include healings and exorcisms, which Jesus understood to have been caused by God. Whether these were, in fact, caused by God's activity or not, however, the historian cannot decide; but he can present the miracles as Jesus most probably understood them. When Bornkamm, as historian, deals with the gospel data concerning the resurrection, his pre-understanding deals similarly with the early church's belief about the resurrection. The historian cannot show that God was actually active in the Easter event, but he can interpret the church's faith so as to make that belief a perspicuous challenge
to belief in its theological as well as its anthropological aspects. Furthermore, this interpretative treatment involves reconstructing certain of Jesus' intentions and inner thoughts (concerning the meaning of his own life) and in that way does represent a psychological presentation of Jesus. However, a distinction must be made between this variety of psychological reconstruction and that found in the work of certain other historical interpreters, who claim to offer a reconstruction of the development of Jesus' self-awareness in its several stages, and/or even a description of his personal faith.  

Bornkamm and Kæsemann stop short of that kind of psychological reconstruction. They do this because they believe that they can only interpret the psychological dimensions of the evidential data which have a highly probable claim to critical authenticity, and the "canon of dissimilarity" and the "canon of the isolated pericopae" make a developmental presentation of Jesus' faith or mission-consciousness seemingly impossible to reconstruct. Consequently, they interpretatively present only those aspects of Jesus' personal consciousness which have a high claim to critical authenticity. Thus, the present writer would maintain that these pupils of Bultmann have not exceeded the justifiable limits of the historical method, for any interpretation which joins together quite solid units of the authentic evidence coherently falls within the scope of a proper methodology. What is not valid, is the kind of fictional conjecture as to the course of the development of Jesus' mission-consciousness and/or his personal faith which is based on very little (or no) pieces of solid,

authentic, evidential data. Consequently, in the judgment of the present writer, a psychological presentation of Jesus' life can only properly claim a degree of validity in direct proportion to the amount of authentic evidential data it can coordinate consistently. 50

In spite of this more positive evaluation of Bornkamm's and Käsemann's use of their interpretative canons, however, it is also necessary to suggest certain improvements which should be achieved in future New Testament study. First, if the several critical canons can be applied more effectively in future, it is quite possible that rather more can be reconstructed concerning aspects of Jesus' inner life. Specifically, it will be necessary to explore whether or not authentic evidential data concerning such matters as the Jewishness, anger, fears and temptations of Jesus can be incorporated in our historical portraits. If so, these dimensions of his humanity still would have to be explained coherently in relation to his εἰρωνεία as seen in the portraits of Bornkamm and Käsemann (and as noted previously that understanding of Jesus' εἰρωνεία will need some modification by means of a better use of the several critical canons). It is quite important to reconstruct not only isolated pieces of authentic evidential data, then, but also to understand precisely how that data can be properly related. 51 In the judgment of the present writer further work must be undertaken with regard to this issue lest our historical reconstructions be in real danger of becoming too selective concerning Jesus' self-understanding for questionable apologetic


reasons. Secondly, a similar concern must be expressed with regard to the deeds of Jesus for as it has already been noted, it is possible that the several critical canons could be used more effectively in future to recover rather more of Jesus' activity, and that data too must then be coherently coordinated with what is now known so as to present a more wholistic understanding of Jesus' person. Finally, it must be asked whether a Christian historian's belief in the activity of God in history for man's salvation, which is so central to a proper understanding of the authentic evidential data for Jesus' life, in the Christian historian's view and in the view of the gospel editors, must be treated so ambiguously as a pre-understanding when offering reconstructions of Jesus' life. As noted previously, the several critical canons can be applied more freely, honestly and understandably if their application is not controlled and confounded by the false pre-understanding that the activity of God can be somehow concretely demonstrated by the historian's critical work as such. The belief in God's ability to act in history is indeed an interpretative pre-understanding which may be accepted or rejected. Moreover, since the concept of God's ability to act in history is understood somewhat differently by different philosophers and theologians, precisely how it is understood by any given scholar should be defined with clarity. It could be that one's pre-understanding in this regard might change significantly in the process of historical labour, if the authentic evidential data cannot be explained most fully and

coherently by means of one's initial pre-understanding. Indeed, the nature of pre-understandings is such that they must not be allowed to control the authentic evidential data in an arbitrary fashion. Rather, the discoveries which emerge in one's ongoing historical labour should also be allowed to call into question, and re-shape if necessary, one's pre-understanding; or it simply will become a rigid bias. Bultmann especially gets into difficulty with regard to this pre-understanding, for on the critical and hermeneutical levels he manifests a rigid understanding of the "closed causal nexus" in analysing the gospel materials (as a historian) but at the eschatological level he attempts to reverse his pre-understanding in order to affirm (somehow) the real activity of God (as a Christian believer and theologian). The problem arises as to how he can manage this and yet retain any measure of integrity in the estimation of other scholars; especially if they are not Christian believers. To one who does not share his neat division of the historical into the historisch, geschichtlich and the eschatologisch, Bultmann's procedure looks like double-talk; for it seems impossible to affirm the "closed causal nexus" so regularly and vigourously when analysing Jesus' life historically, and then turn round and affirm the activity of God so certainly when expounding upon the meaning of the church's kerygmatic understanding of that life. 55 To a lesser degree, this same problematic ambiguity still resides in Bornkamm's and Käsemann's work in that they tend to deny the pre-understanding of God's activity any real place in conjunction with their analyses of individual pericopae at the critical level (and especially with the several gospel miracle

reports) but nevertheless introduce it at the level of a hermeneutical treatment of the meaning of Jesus' life (especially as seen as a whole).\footnote{Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, pp. 48-54; Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 180-186.} It is difficult to see how one can function with the pre-understanding of a "closed causal nexus" in criticism on a pericope by pericope basis, and then expect to interpret the several authentic pericopae in a coherent historical manner precisely by means of the concept of the activity of God, without causing some confusion and the suspicion by other historical critics of an illegitimate use of sleight-of-hand.\footnote{R. S. Barbour, Theologians of Our Time, pp. 166-168; Van A. Harvey, op.cit., pp. 139-146, 158-159.} It would seem a better procedure to acknowledge openly one's pre-understanding of either a "closed causal nexus" or one's pre-understanding of the possibility of activity of God in history in clear terms, and then function with that pre-understanding at all levels of historical labour. In this way, it should be clearer as to what is ascertained by common critical procedures and what is grounded upon the especial pre-understanding of God's activity in history (which pre-understanding cannot be shared by all historians).\footnote{Cf. T. A. Roberts, op.cit., pp. 144-174; John Hick, Faith and Knowledge, pp. 200-216.} Moreover, if concrete historical labour calls into question either the precise definition of that pre-understanding or its workability; then, of course, the historian ought to be willing to modify his pre-understanding. In this way, however, it should be more consistently perspicuous as to precisely what pre-understanding is actually being employed, and whether or not it is most effectively able to explain the greatest amount of authentic
Indeed, the further but related important issue needs to be raised at this point as to whether a Christian historian can really avoid the use of the pre-understanding of God's revelatory activity in history (in some definition), for the New Testament documents themselves know of no cold, empirical, evidential data apart from the interpretative pre-understanding of God's revelatory activity in the history of Jesus. In this regard, the words of Professor John McIntyre are most instructive.

The other view is to say, with Professor N. Kemp Smith, that fact is not something from which but to which interpretation proceeds; fact is reached at the end of a process of interpretation of data. To develop this view, part at least of what we mean by the "givenness of Revelation" is that in regard to Revelation believers are not only observers of empirical data (which are at the same time open to unbelievers) but are also provided with the interpretation, which enables them to apprehend, and to be apprehended of, certain facts. Revelation is not therefore, reached by means of processes of inference from, and private interpretations of, certain objective uninterpreted data; it is a situation in which the data, as defined above, are presented to him in interpreted form as fact. What the unbeliever observes, what could be called the historisch in Bultmann's language is an abstract from what is for the Christian a living situation; it is analytically posterior to it and not prior. Bultmann looks on Revelation as a body of data to be manipulated to suit a philosophy, whereas indeed it is a set of facts, an ultimate reality, with which all philosophy and philosophers must come to terms, and by which they will be finally judged.

Therefore, it would seem that the Christian historian should recognise that his historical canons (critical and hermeneutical) can never really be used apart from the pre-understanding of God's unique salvific and revelatory activity in the concrete history of Jesus, but rather the Christian historian should openly acknowledge


that his reconstruction is accomplished only with this pre-understanding which is "given" in the gospels themselves. In so doing, however, he only raises afresh the question of faith or unbelief for his readers, for his historical treatment of Jesus can never "prove" that "God was in Christ", but only by means of historical methods presents the challenge of faith to personal decision.

III. Concluding Remarks Concerning the Value of Historical Research Into The Life of Jesus

What then is the purpose and value of the historian's ongoing quest of the historical Jesus, especially as it has emerged in the understanding of the present writer in the process of this present study?

First, it would appear that the quest for historical knowledge concerning Jesus of Nazareth cannot be silenced in an age in which the Christian message must be presented to persons who have been educated with some understanding of, and a fundamental respect for, the historical method; for the Christian proclamation of God's salvific revelation in and through the history of Jesus of Nazareth will fail to speak meaningfully to many modern persons, if the endeavours of historical criticism and interpretation are not also undertaken in order to understand historically who Jesus really was in the days

61. This is so unless, of course, one takes the view that the New Testament documents do not actually speak of God's specific and unique activity in the history of Jesus; but that Jesus is only a paradigm of God's general graciousness, which can be ascertained in all history. But this involves a different theological pre-understanding, and so a different "interpretation" of the basic meaning of God's activity in history than Bultmann's, Bornkamm's, Käsemann's and most Christian historian-theologian's, other than some theological liberals have held. Cf. Van A. Harvey, Ibid., pp. 246-289, especially for a defense of this alternate position which is grounded in the idealistic philosophical tradition.
of his flesh. If Christian historian-theologians, with their several pre-understandings and critical and hermeneutical canons fail to undertake the task; non-Christian historians, with their secular and varying philosophical pre-understandings and critical and hermeneutical canons, will not fail to do so. Hence, if scholars from within the Christian community should refuse to engage in such historical research for whatever reasons, (historical, theological, apologetic etc.) the Christian church today would be left in the uneasy position of appearing to advocate an unreasonably "blind faith" in a "Jesus" who possibly could have been simply a mythological figure, or a person of quite different character from the one presented by the church.\(^{62}\)

An essential aspect of the problem is that the general populous (in the modern industrial nations at least and increasingly this applies to more and more of the world's population) are sufficiently conscious of the value of historical science in a general way, but few are specifically enough aware of the details of historical methodology to understand the inherent complexities involved in forming historical reconstructions of Jesus' life.\(^{63}\) Therefore, any work which purports to give a truthful historical insight into the life and character of Jesus of Nazareth rarely is capable of being evaluated fairly, even by most educated modern persons.\(^{64}\) Consequently, it would seem imperative that Christian scholarship not simply abandon its responsibility


\(^{63}\) Etienne Trocmé, *op.cit.*, p. IX.

\(^{64}\) The present writer was made keenly aware of this while teaching undergraduate students for a year in a University in Washington, D.C. During the course of that experience he was asked to engage in a local radio discussion with Hugh Schonfield concerning his book *The Passover Plot*. In the process of later discussing that radio conversation with several students and faculty members, the present writer can recall being alarmed at how little understood sound methods of historiography actually are, even among otherwise educated persons. Few possessed the criteria to begin to evaluate such a book as Schonfield's *The Passover Plot* (New York: Geis, 1965).
to communicate effectively with modern persons, showing wherein Christian historical scholarship both agrees and differs from non-Christian scholarship, and wherein Christian historians differ from each other in their historical endeavours. Only in such a context can modern Christianity speak meaningfully of its claim to a unique historical revelation, and thus distinguish such claims from mere superstition or propaganda. 65

The question must be answered, however, as to precisely what function such historical knowledge has. The foregoing study has convinced the present writer that one function of such historical research is that of enabling an inquiring non-believer to gain some genuinely probable insights concerning Jesus from Christian as well as non-Christian historical scholars; established by their several critical canons, interpretative canons and pre-understandings. The reconstructions of Christian scholarship can thus better be weighed against each other and against non-Christian reconstructions in order to compare and contrast how, and how coherently, each is able to explain the available evidential data. In this process some inquirers will surely have certain misconceptions removed and the challenge of the recurring question as to precisely who this man Jesus is will be set vividly before those moderns who are concerned to understand Jesus with the aid of modern historical methods. For even the various Christian historical reconstructions of Jesus will not be able to coerce faith or prove that "God was in Christ". That is quite beyond the province of the historical method as such, as has been shown throughout this study (in conjunction with the analyses of the several

65. Leander E. Keck, op.cit., p. 58.
scholars' work which has been here considered). However, the removal
of misconceptions, the raising of personal questions about the person
of Jesus, and the understanding of human existence and divine purpose
which Jesus apparently sets forth as challenge in word and deed, sure-
ly is of genuine value to an increasing number of persons seeking
meaning in human existence in a modern world, if a significant part
of the coming to faith is a wrestling with meaning in human existence
as Bultmann himself contends. Indeed, it seems entirely probable
to the present writer that one could read such a historical account
of Jesus' life as Bornkamm's Jesus of Nazareth and hear therein the
call to faith in a way not wholly unlike the experience of those who
encountered the provocative and enigmatic Jesus of Nazareth in the
days of his flesh; for in such an account Christian interpretation
and pre-understandings have been combined with the use of critical
canons to present the challenge of Jesus to modern man. In any such
historical work, kerygmatic interpretative understanding is inter-
twined with critically reconstructed data and thus, as in the gospels
themselves, kerygma and history interpenetrate one another. So also
in the sermon on a synoptic text which calls for Christian faith to-
day, the insights gained from the employment of critical canons is
combined with Christian interpretation (which may indeed employ a
variety of philosophical aids) and pre-understandings to produce the

66. Cf. Leander Keck, _op. cit._, p. 55; Viktor E. Frankl, _Man's Search
For Meaning_ (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1971); Viktor E. Frankl, _The
Doctor and The Soul_ (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971); Viktor E. Frankl,
The Will To Meaning_ (New York: Signet, 1969); Robert C. Leslie, _Jesus

invitation to faith in the preached Word. Thus, the work of the Christian historian may help to elucidate the significant grounds for faith in Jesus without being able to prove or compel faith. Always the human freedom of any individual must be used to evaluate and decide for or against Jesus; whether Jesus is presented, for example, as he was in the days of his flesh, or in a Pauline kerygmatic formula (which could be simply read, interpreted by a scholar or proclaimed in the preached Word), or in a historically informed kerygmatic sermon about Jesus, or in a book wherein critical historical scholarship, theological pre-understanding and interpretation are intertwined. Whether Jesus in any of these presentations is trustworthy or not, must be decided upon by personal faith or unbelief. Even Christian interpretation or proclamation cannot compel faith; it can only make the challenge to personal decision more explicit. However, as in a commitment of friendship or love, even if there are apparent evidential grounds in the words or deeds of a potential friend or lover to challenge one to believe that the other is indeed trustworthy and so to invite one to entrust one's life to that other, those apparent grounds cannot be objectively "proved", but must be personally verified or falsified in the act of commitment or trust in the one who "appears" to be trustworthy.68

Secondly, the various attempts at historical reconstructions of Jesus are often spoken of in a disparaging manner because the process of historical reconstruction is always only probable and never final; due to constantly changing and (hopefully) improving methods, the

changing perspectives of changing times, and the potential discovery of new evidential data etc. Thus, it has been said (at least from Lessing on to the present), that the shifting sands of historical research can never produce a sufficiently solid enough foundation upon which to erect the necessary certainty for faith. This kind of statement, however, seems to the present writer to distort the real situation unduly and misunderstand the positive functions of historical research (which have never really abated in the modern Christian community). On the one hand, it is impossible for the Christian church ever completely to avoid the risk involved in the proclamation of a historical revelation. Even Bultmann (although his efforts are representative of one of the most thoroughgoing attempts in modern scholarship to minimise the destructive potential of historical research into Christian origins) was not able to make Christian faith wholly immune from the destructive potential of historical criticism, for he has consistently insisted upon the necessity of the Dass of Jesus' real historical existence for Christian faith, which the historian might disprove (in principle at least) or call into question if he could ever demonstrate that Jesus of Nazareth (in all probability) never existed as a real historical person. Hence, even Bultmann has not finally removed Christian faith from the risk involved in historical research. However, in the ongoing process of two centuries of such historical research, the actual result has been to demonstrate Jesus' real historical existence, and a great deal about

69. In such a case as this, of course, if Jesus were demonstrated to be a myth (in all probability), Christians would still have the option of either abandoning their faith or reformulating a theological understanding along the lines Van A. Harvey has suggested in The Historian and the Believer.
the nature of his life, even if the production of a historical biography is (in a strong degree of probability) an impossibility today.

Finally, it should be noted that theologians (especially the dialectical theologians) who have offered quite critical remarks concerning the ever changing historical reconstructions of Jesus, rarely are as critical of their own theological work which they also usually recognise as in constant flux (both within a given theologian's own work and in theological science generally, which is constantly changing from age to age, due to changing methods, perspectives and insights etc.). Hence, using the analogy of the work of systematic theology, it is illuminating and instructive to take note of the difference between the basic experiential data of the Christian faith which constitutes the basis of Christianity (dogma) and the secondary and derivative implications drawn from this basic data (doctrinal or theological formulations) which attempt to relate theological insights to one another and to other fields of human knowledge. These secondary theological formulations are not considered to be unchangeable or essential to Christian faith, but rather quite fallible human attempts to understand the basic data of faith; and thus they are constantly changing, developing, being criticised by the theological community and being ever reformulated. A dogma thus has a quite different

70. See Van A. Harvey, op.cit., pp. 127-163.

71. The present writer can recall hearing Karl Barth questioned by a student in Princeton (in April, 1962) concerning an ostensible contradiction between a statement in one of Barth's earlier writings and one in a later writing. When Barth was questioned as to how he could have written both things, he replied: "One time I lied!" Professor Barth then went on to explain that frequently he has changed his understanding and formulations in theological matters, as indeed theological science does generally in its development from age to age. For a further helpful insight into this truth within Barth's work, see James D. Smart, The Divided Mind of Modern Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), wherein he traces something of the development in Barth's thinking. Interestingly, this same book shows how little Bultmann's methods and theological insights have changed during his career.
epistemological status from a derivative theological formulation.

The basic data (dogmas) actually define Christianity, whereas the derivative theological formulations do not and must properly change with the changing Sitz im Leben of the church. Given individuals within the community of faith, however, sometimes have been prone to confuse a particular doctrinal formulation with a fundamental dogma and so elevate a doctrinal formulation to a level of sanctity and permanence it does not rightly deserve. Nevertheless, each new doctrinal formulation, and the methods of theological science employed to construct the formulation, must properly change and develop with the ever changing needs of the church. Of course, each theological formulation and the corresponding methods of its construction enjoy varying degrees of validity and usefulness, both with regard to its own Sitz im Leben and the ongoing work of theology generally. The better insights and methods are incorporated into the ongoing work of theological science and the valueless insights and methods are soon jettisoned.72 Analogously there is a fundamental difference between the kerygmata of the New Testament, and this includes the kerygmata which interpenetrate the narratives and words of Jesus in the gospels, and the various portraits of Jesus which have been derivatively constructed from this New Testament data by the several critical canons, hermeneutical canons and pre-understandings of historians. The historical reconstructions of Jesus, like the several derivative theological formulations, will change with changing times; and thus the better insights and methods of historians will be incorporated in the ongoing process of scholarship, while the valueless insights and methods will be jettisoned.

However, these changing historical insights and methods should not be confused with the basic New Testament data concerning Jesus (or the original events and faith from which the New Testament data have arisen and the faith to which it has given rise down through the ages of history). As R. S. Barbour has recently cogently stated:

Traditio-historical criticism has the task, among others, of showing us what manner of man Jesus was; and it has that task, not simply in order to prove that Jesus' character and mission are sufficient ground for our explanations of the growth of the Christian faith, but in order to bring us face to face with the fact that if God truly entrusted himself to the changes and chances of the historical process (and most Christians do not really believe that he did) we can do the same. If we do, and only if we do, are we likely to encounter him afresh. 73

Consequently, if this distinction is kept in view, it can be seen that ongoing historical reconstructions and developing historical methods in New Testament scholarship can serve the church by providing ever new perspectives concerning both the real humanity of Jesus, and so the meaning of true humanity, and the divine presence in Jesus' existence, and so the nature of God Himself, just as changing theological formulations also serve the church in each new situation. 74 This means therefore, that the historian's work is of some real value to the church in order that faith might understand itself ever more profoundly. However, this does not make Christian faith dependent for its life on the historian's historically conditioned labour any more than faith is dependent for its life on the historically conditioned labour of systematic theologians who serve the church from age to age.


74. Cf. Leander E. Keck, op.cit., pp. 208-259, especially for insights into how the historian's work can aid our understanding of God's character; see also D. M. Balle, God Was In Christ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), pp. 48-54.


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