The Eschatological Motive for World Mission in the New Testament

by

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UXORI DILECTISSIMAE

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Introduction.

This study must begin with a definition of "eschatological motive", in view of the fact that theologians have given a widely differing content to the term.

The "consistent eschatology" of Albert Schweitzer would interpret the term exclusively of the end of the world expected in the immediate future. The followers of C.H.Dodd would apply the principles of "realised eschatology", while R.Bultmann, with his "reinterpreted eschatology", would hold that eschatology is a "salvation occurence" when a man becomes a new creature in response to the preaching of the Gospel.

There are New Testament insights in these three approaches, but it is the conviction of this study that "eschatological motive" cannot be interpreted exclusively in terms of any one of them. The truth breaks beyond the narrow limits of these approaches - in fact, of any approach.

If it is dangerous to work with too limited a conception of "eschatological motive", the conception, on the other hand, could be embarassingly general. It is rightly claimed that in Christ past, present and future alike have eschatological significance, and that every contact with Christ is eschatological. The Gospel has an eschatological character, and the Church is an eschatological phenomenon. All this is, of course, profoundly true. But against such a background, our study would involve the influence of Christ and the Church on the New Testament missionary movement,which would be unprofitably general.

"Eschatological motive" in this study indicates the motive for world mission involved in the belief that human history is moving towards a chronological end (finis), which will also (and more significantly) be a teleological end (telos), involving the maturing of God's purposes for mankind. But that belief about the "Last Things", including the Parousia, the Last Judgement and the Resurrection of the Body, does not float in theoretical air; the

New Testament anchors it securely in the historical fact that the coming Son of Man, by His Incarnation, Death and Resurrection, has already gripped human history to make it the sphere of the operation of His absolute power, and to speed it on its way to its divine goal. That crucial "Coming" of the Kingdom is the guarantee of the Kingdom that is still to come. Realised and unrealised elements are, therefore, inextricably involved in the eschatological convictions of the New Testament. No clear-cut division between the eschatology of grace, and the eschatology of glory, can be traced in the New Testament.

Part I of our study uses Mark I3.I0 as the locus classicus, and follows the conservative view that this is an authentic word of Jesus, giving an important indication that for Jesus, and the primitive Church, the end was conditioned by world-wide missionary preaching. The passage is used to bring into focus the New Testament relationship between eschatology and mission. Other approaches to the eschatological material of the Gospels are considered, notably those of Albert Schweitzer and C.H.Dodd.

Part 2 of the study deals with eschatology and mission in Paul (the missionary, the thinker and the man); in Acts (with a special chapter on Stephen); in I and 2 Peter; and in Revelation.

PART I

Chapter I

The Authenticity of Mark I3.IO

In Mark I3.IO we meet a Jesus who says, "The Gospel must first be published among all nations". The authenticity of the picture has been assailed from many standpoints - critical, historical and theological. The verse has become a battleground for widely differing interpretations.

Linguistic and Textual Considerations

F.C.Burkitt and others have pointed out that there is an extensive textual tradition which runs I3.9 into I3.IO, with a full stop after ἔθνη .(I) The text, then, would be - εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς καὶ εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. πρῶτον δεῖ κηρυχθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον.

This form of the text is accepted by G.D.Kilpatrick.(2)

Kilpatrick denies that the words εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη involve the evangelization of the Gentiles. He claims that they may refer merely to a Diaspora mission to Jews in the synagogues.

He has also carried through a careful study of the use of κηρύσσειν . The usual construction for persons addressed is κηρύσσειν + the dative. When κηρύσσειν εἰς is used in the ancient versions there is a tradition at least as strong for "preach in" or "among", as for "preach to". He concludes:

"If we follow the punctuation of the printed texts we ought to render I3.IO 'And the Gospel must first be preached among all nations'...There is strictly speaking no mention of preaching the Gospel to all nations".

Kilpatrick similarly interprets I4.9 of preaching in a Diaspora setting, and comments:

"With these two verses our clearest references to preaching to Gentiles disappear from Mark".(3)

(I) "Christian Beginnings", by F.C.Burkitt, London I924, I45-I47. Burkitt sees an authentic word of Jesus behind I3.IO, but does not find world-wide evangelization in the verse.
(2) Studies in the Gospels, ed. D.E.Nineham, I45 ff.
(3) Op.cit., I49.

It can surely be claimed that Kilpatrick's interpretation is unwarrantably sweeping, for the following reasons:

I. The Greek is ambiguous. Kilpatrick himself points out that interpreters in antiquity were divided. Many took εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη with the previous clause. Others, who linked the words with πρῶτον δεῖ κηρυχθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον were divided, some following the interpretation "among all peoples", others "unto all peoples". A proclamation "unto all peoples" cannot be ruled out with any certainty.

2. In any case, we must be cautious about a strict differentiation between "among all peoples" and "unto all peoples". "Among all peoples" does not necessarily tie down the proclamation to one religious group among all nations, i.e. the Jews.

Linguistic and textual consideration, therefore, leave open the issue of the universalistic sweep of Mark I3.IO.

Historical and Theological Considerations.

The question of the authenticity of the verse must be decided primarily on historical and theological considerations.

The verse has been treated as a composition by the evangelist; as a gloss introduced by a scribe; and as a Pauline addition.(I)

The crucial arguments in support of these views hinge on the attitude of Jesus and the missionary practice of the Church.

The attitude of Jesus.

Bultmann, Klausner(2), and many other distinguished scholars have maintained that the attitude of Jesus was not universalistic, and so the universalistic setting of Mark I3.IO cannot be ascribed to Him.

(I) Pfleiderer's theory that Paul was the father of the universalism in the verse was to exert considerable influence. (Uber die Composition der eschatologischen Rede Matt.24.4ff., in Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie, I868, I48-I49).

(2) Jesus of Nazareth, London I925, 363-368, especially the passage on the "Jewishness of Jesus".

Bultmann writes most emphatically:

"He never thought of a mission to the Gentiles...The humanistic concept of universality is wholly foreign to him. If the Kingdom of God were conceived universalistically, a claim of man upon God would be established...Man as such is not predestined for the Kingdom".(I)

This has the effect of shifting the discussion on to unnatural ground. It is rather like knocking down a target, which in actual fact is not presented in the Gospels, or anywhere else in the Bible. We cannot maintain that Jesus shared humanistic conceptions of universality. We can grant immediately that Jesus did not believe that man, as man, had an inevitable claim upon God, and a predestined place in the Kingdom. But Biblical universalism presents a very different picture. It arrives at the same conclusion as humanistic universalism, that man is of incalculable value in the sight of God: but it starts from radically different premises. Universalism is grounded, not on native human worth, but on grace. Man's only claim upon God must be expressed in the cry, "God be merciful to me, the sinner". Election is only in the Cross, where Christ died for those who were "without strength".

Kilpatrick has also argued most vigorously against a universalistic Jesus. He finds an "entirely Jewish" Jesus in Mark's Gospel, who "worked and thought within the limitations of His time and place". For Kilpatrick there is only one reference to witness to Gentiles in Mark's Gospel - the predicted appearance before governors and kings (I3.9-II). He translates εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς "for a witness to them", and not "against them". Healing (I.44), preaching (6.II), and suffering (I3.9), "are characteristic of the time before the end. We may suggest that the content of μαρτύριον at I3.9 is

(I) Jesus and the Word, London I935, 43-47.

eschatological, that the sufferings of the disciples are a part of the woes before the end and are a testimony to governors and kings that the end is near. This is not the same as preaching the Gospel to them. We may conjecture that this testimony is given to the governors and kings because the end involves them".(I)

Similarly, claims Kilpatrick, there is only one contact in Mark with the Gentile world (with the Syro-phoenician woman in 7.24-31). The act of healing is "grudgingly performed".

To Kilpatrick, Jesus' attack on particularism is indirect - in His attitude to the Sabbath, to the dietary laws, etc. So He "weakened some of the provisions that kept Jews and Gentiles apart and had their consequences in the Apostolic Church. The vision of Cornelius, Acts 10.9-16, 11.5-10, may be read as a kind of commentary on Mk.7.1-23".(2)

The following comments must be made:

a) If Jesus was "entirely Jewish", it is difficult to see why He roused such virulent opposition from others who also were "entirely Jewish". Many stories in the Gospels contradict Wellhausen's sweeping assertion, "Jesus was not a Christian; he was a Jew". Burkitt's description of Christianity as "Judaism recreated"(3), is much more adequate.

b) The suffering disciples appear in a rather naive light if we accept Kilpatrick's interpretation of εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς How could non-Jews be expected to read the eschatological signs of the times in the appearance of the disciples of Jesus before them? They had no Jewish eschatological background. Apart from the interpretation of these events through the preached word, these happenings were inevitably above their heads. The interpretation that suffering presented a wonderful opportunity for Gospel witness is to be preferred. cf. Phil.1.12.

The exclusion of the preaching of the Word from εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς is rather puzzling. Similarly, how can it be maintained that Paul's synagogue-preaching as related in Acts was "primarily a preaching to Jews and we cannot at that stage speak of a Gentile mission"?(4)

(1) Op.cit., 156.
(2) Op.cit., 157.
(3) The Earliest Sources of the Life of Jesus, London 1922, 67.
(4) Op.cit., 155. Kilpatrick acknowledges, as he is bound to do, that Paul's audiences may have included Gentiles.

It is,of course, true that Paul's missionary strategy as a missionary to the Gentiles was "To the Jew first" (Rom.I.I6), but there can be no doubt that Paul was conscious of a mission to the Gentiles (Rom.I.I4), and seized every opportunity to preach to Gentiles.

3. If there is a witness to Gentiles, in the content of verse I0, even in the limited sense allowed by Kilpatrick, it is difficult to see how the possibility of a Gentile mission in the mind of the Jesus of verse I0 can be denied so emphatically. Evem one witness to Gentiles surely necessitates modification of the statement :"Universalism is absent from Mark. There is no preaching the Gospel to Gentiles in this world, and there is no interest in their fate in the world to come".(I)

Kümmel also concludes that verse I0 cannot be an ipsissimum verbum of Jesus. His mission was "directed solely to the Jews" (Mk.7.27; Lk.I9.9; Matt.I5.24): but when Gentiles believed His message He did not turn them away (Mk.7.24ff; Matt.8.5ff=Lk.7.Iff; Lk.I7.IIff). "Jesus was undoubtedly convinced that His message concerning the Kingdom of God was of decisive importance for the Gentiles also...And He expected that at the end of the days the Gentiles would stream in". (Matt.8.II=Lk.I3.29). (2) But Kümmel cannot reconcile Mark I3.I0 with the other missionary instructions of Jesus.

As we follow the steps of Kümmel's argument we seem to be ascending an intellectual ladder to the conclusion that Mark I3.I0 is an authentic word of Jesus, but the last step is not taken. Kümmel,however, has gone much further than Kilpatrick in that direction.

Schweitzer would limit still more definitely the full harvest of the Gentiles to the End-time. He holds that Jesus' preaching was explicitly particularistic (Matt.I0.5,6; I5.24). Salvation is "of the Jews", but it is not for the Jews only. Jesus was universalistic in His thinking. In the consummation the gates of the Kingdom would be thrown open to all who qualified for the Kingdom by moral and

(I) Op.cit., I57.
(2) Promise and Fulfilment, London I957, 85.

spiritual considerations, rather than by biological ones (Matt.8.II-I2; I2.4I,42). Even during His public ministry He was sometimes astonished by the faith of Gentiles (Matt.8.I0; I5.28).(I)

But there could be no question of carrying through a mission to Gentiles. That would have involved taking into His own hands what God had reserved for Himself. It was God's plan to make up in the consummation the numbers of the Elect from the ranks of the Gentiles. They would fill the places of Jews who had forfeited their places by their conduct.

Accordingly, claims Schweitzer, there is nothing in the ministry of Jesus to correspond to the missionary zeal of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt.23.I5).

> "That missionary universalism, which for the scribes had taken the place of the 'eschatological' universalism was the logical negative of the latter".(2)

One seems to be moving here in a realm of theory rather than of precise Biblical evidence.

Moreover, surely it can be claimed that missionary universalism and eschatological universalism can exist side by side. If preaching to Jews is no contradiction of eschatological conviction, what inescapable contradiction is involved in preaching to Gentiles?

Bosch comments pertinently:

> "A coming near of the Gentiles, without repentance, as it were by virtue of magical power, would contradict the view of Jesus, and could not be deduced from Matthew 8.II, where the decisive consideration is that the Gentiles, in contrast to the 'sons of the Kingdom' come near on the basis of their <u>obedience</u>".(3)

It is clear that Schweitzer would agree with M.Werner's refusal to accept the historical character of Mark I3.I0:

(I) The Mystery of the Kingdom, tr. by Laurie in I9I5, II7-8.
(2) The Mysticism of St.Paul, I78-I80.
(3) Die Heidenmission in der Zukunftsschau Jesu, Zurich, I959, I68.

Der Gebrauch des Wortes (i.e. Evangelium) wird daher auch an den Stellen unhistorisch sein, wo Jesus eine Verkündigung des Evangeliums durch die Jünger für die Zeit nach seinem Tode in Aussicht nimmt"(I3.I0; I4.9).

The only issue to be decided in relation to I3.I0, according to Werner, is whether Paul had himself coined the conception of world-wide preaching, or whether Bousset was right in his picture of Paul being carried along on "der volle Strom der neuen universalen Religionsbewegung", which was already there at the outset of his work. He feels that Paul's own letters, and the book of Acts, come down on the side of the second alternative. (I)

We will have occasion to refer to C.J.Cadoux's strong and impressive exposition of Jesus' universalistic characteristics. But even Cadoux has reservations about Mark I3.I0.

"We have no option but to infer that these Marcan reports are, at least in their present form, historically dubious, on the same grounds as we must so adjudge the explicit injunction of a world-wide mission ascribed to the Risen Jesus". (2)

He speaks of the "strange-two-sidedness in Jesus' outlook".(3)

One notes that the Gospel writers show no indication of a similar impression of two-sidedness. Universalistic and particularistic utterances are offered, sometimes almost side by side, without any apparent sense of ingongruity.

Even as it is claimed that the picture of a Gentile world mission does not fit into Jesus' missionary instructions, so it is argued that it does not square with His view of the future. Reference is made repeatedly to Mk.9.I, I4.62, I3.30, Matt.I0.23. Such passages, it is maintained, demonstrate that Jesus did not contemplate world-wide preaching.

Pfleiderer illustrates excellently the run of the argument.

(I) Der Einfluss paulinischer Theologie im Markusevangelium, I02-3.
(2) The Historic Mission of Jesus, London I94I, I58.
(3) Op.cit., I60. The reference is to the treatment of the Syro-phoenician woman.

He compares Matthew IO.23 with the reference to world-wide preaching in Matthew 24.I4, and finds a "most obvious contradiction"between the verses. The role of Matthew 24.I4 was to "tone down the impatient expectation of an immediate Parousia". Primitive preaching had held aloft a world-clock that was running down too fast. Something had to be done about it. Universalism was the outcome. It postulated a longer period for the development of Christianity,and gave the impression that this postulate had been foreseen by the primitive Church. Paul was the guiding spirit in this reorientation of the missionary message. (I)

It will be necessary to scrutinise the above passages with great care. If there is a satisfactory solution for the "obvious contradiction" between Matthew IO.23 and 24.I4, the nerve of Pfleiderer's argument is cut. Here let it suffice to say that Paul had no difficulty in holding together the conception of a speedy Parousia and the conception of world-wide preaching. What was possible for him was surely possible for Jesus.

THE MISSIONARY PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH

It is repeatedly claimed that the slowness of the early disciples to realise their world-wide missionary responsibility is a telling point against the authenticity of Mark I3.IO. It is, in fact, probably true to say that this is the most formidable obstacle in the way of accepting the authenticity of the saying. If such a statement had clearly come from Jesus, runs the argument, there could not have been even the beginning of a controversy about a Gentile mission. "Had Jesus said anything so explicit", says Kilpatrick, "it is hard to see how any controversy could have arisen about the preaching to the Gentiles". This same point weighed particularly with Kümmel in his conclusion that Mark I3.IO could not be one of Jesus sayings. He held that "the dispute in the early Church about the right to preach to the

(I) Op.cit., I48-9.

Gentiles could not be understood if there existed out of the mouth of Jesus an unequivocal command to do so".(I)

But surely the point of tension in the primitive Church was not whether there should be an approach to the Gentiles, but the terms on which Church membership was to be offered to them. (2) The debates of Acts I5, and Peter's uncertainty in Acts I0 and II, do not prove that Jesus gave no instructions about a Gentile mission; they only serve as a reminder that He did not leave blueprints about circumcision and many other matters which were bound to arise in a Gentile mission.

It must be remembered that Paul was not the originator of preaching to non-Jews. We have cases of such preaching in Acts I-I2, before Paul. The early disciples were loyal to the past but they were not fettered by it. Peter's contact with Cornelius convinced him that God was "no respecter of persons" (Acts I0.34). When he submitted his report in Jerusalem that the "Gentiles had received the word of God", God was glorified by the Church because He had "granted repentance unto life" to the Gentiles also (Acts II.I5-I8). It was generally realised that this was the work of the Holy Spirit.

Too much must not be read into the missionary tardiness of the early Church. G.R.Beasley-Murray (3) mentions two considerations which would influence preaching to the Gentiles.

I. There was the conviction that the Jewish people should be won, before there should be a general attempt to win the Gentiles. This type of conviction is as dangerous as it is understandable. Missionary enterprise in every generation has been enervated by those who have said: "Evangelism, like charity, must begin at home. We believe in preaching to pagans in our own land before going to foreign countries". The difficulty is that

(I) Op.cit., 85.
(2) A Commentary on Mark Thirteen, London I957, 44, by G.R.Beasley-Murray.
(3) Op.cit., 44-5.

the task of preaching to pagans in any land is never finished to the satisfaction of any dedicated preacher. And so the task of preaching in other places would never begin, if it hinged on the exhaustive discharge of the task in any one setting.

2. There was a Jewish belief that the nations would be converted immediately before the Day of the Lord.

The question of the influence of this belief on the early missionary movement is an interesting one. As has been noted already, Schweitzer and Kümmel believed that Jesus entertained this view. J.Jeremias has quoted passages from the Gospels, in which he sees the belief that the harvest of the Gentiles would be gathered in by the angels only at the end of the world. (I) Munck, with good justification, holds that none of these passages is convincing (2), but he acknowledges the possibility that at first Jewish Christians believed that preaching to Jews would last until Christ's return, and would bring about the salvation of the Gentiles at the Last Judgement.(3)

Sweeping generalisations about the convictions of the primitive Christian missionaries must, however, be avoided. The evangelism of the early Church would have many undertones, postulates and standpoints, even as modern evangelism has different patterns and inspirations. It is possible that some Jewish Christians expected the conversion of the Gentiles by an act of sheer divine power before or after the Parousia, or by the instrumentality of the angels. Such an expectation might have bred a mood of quietism which would have been inimical to positive and ambitious evangelism.

Again, it must not be forgotten that the slowness of the

(I) Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas Bulletin 3, pp.25-28. Among the passages are Matt.25.3If; Mk.II.I7; Matt.5.I4; Mk.4.32; Matt.I2.4If; Matt.II.2I-24; Mk.I4.9; Matt.5.35. Jeremias restricts Matt.8.IIf. to the "situation after the last judgement of Israel". Jesus "takes up the conception of the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations". cf.Is.2.2ff. Such a restriction is hardly justifiable.
(2) Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, London I959, 262.
(3) Op.cit., 272.

Church to realise its world-wide responsibilities may be explained by lack of apprehension and obedience, rather than by lack of explicit instructions from Jesus.

A I9th.century observer of the Church's slowness to evangelize the world, might have concluded that the New Testament included no clear instructions from Jesus about world evangelism. At this period the authenticity of passages like Mark I3.I0 and Matthew 28.I9 was almost unquestioned. Missionary tardiness, therefore did not prove that Jesus never enjoined world evangelism: only that the Church was blind to its missionary responsibilities, even as it was blind to its social responsibilities.

T.F.Glasson refers to the Rev.Sydney Smith, who wrote a series of articles in the Edinburgh Review in I908-9. He developed four reasons for giving up the task of the conversion of Hindoos and others. Glasson's comment is most pertinent:

"It would be precarious to conclude from this that Sydney Smith's Bible lacked the missionary commands of the New Testament!"(I)

It can be claimed that the early Church was similarly slow to appreciate the full significance of Jesus' words. Time alone could bring home the full significance of "all nations". Many in the early Church had the idea that Gentile converts would become quasi-Jews, that their salvation did not only mean being "in Christ", but in Christianized Jewry. If the disciples were "fools and slow of heart to believe" all that the prophets had spoken (Lk.24.25), there is little cause for surprise that they did not fully understand the sweep and radical character of their missionary responsibility. Vincent Taylor speaks of "the want of apprehension shown by Jesus' disciples", as one of the characteristics of Mark's Gospel.(2) The same want of apprehension can be traced through all the Gospels.

(I) The Second Advent, London I945, I47.
(2) The Gospels - A Short Introduction, London I938, 6I.

Finally, the argument from the missionary tardiness of the Church to the unauthenticity of Mark I3.I0 is two-edged.

If it is possible to argue, with many able scholars: "If Jesus had enjoined a world mission, the Church would not have been so slow to obey Him"; it is equally possible to say: "If Jesus had been opposed to a Gentile mission, if He had been 'entirely Jewish', if His whole attitude and express instructions (Mk.7.27, Matt. I5.24, I0.5-6) had indicated His particularistic leanings, if the healing of a Gentile had to be wrung from Him by pressure tactics, would it have been possible to contemplate a Gentile mission at all?" The example and teaching of Jesus would have been an unanswerable argument against it. The great pioneers of the New Testament missionary movement show not a vestige of the feeling that they were taking another way than the way of Jesus. On the contrary, they show every symptom of the belief that they were following the Pioneer of their salvation in the power of His living Spirit.

Positive Defence of the Universalism of Mark I3.I0

A vigorous defence can be made of the universalism of Mark I3.I0. Like every other verse in the New Testament it must be studied against its Jewish background. The Old Testament and contemporary Jewish practice and belief may assist us in the interpretation of εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη .

The Universalism of Jewish Missionary Interest

The divine promise to Abraham, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed", finds many echoes in the Old Testament. This is particularly true of the prophetic writings. There is a marked development from the attitude of the Jewish nationalist, to whom, on occasion,

the nations were viewed as deadly foes to be destroyed by the sword of the chosen people. To the prophets, the nations were to "come to the light" through the instrumentality of God's Servant.(I)

It is also clear that books like Jonah and Ruth show a warm sympathy for non-Jews. C.J.Cadoux speaks of these books as "indirect protests against the narrow Jewish nationalism".(2) It has even been claimed that Ruth was a protest against the denunciation of mixed marriages by Nehemiah and Ezra. But, as H.H.Rowley, has pointed out, this point can hardly stand. The book tells us that Ruth was a proselyte before she married Boaz. Judaism did not forbid marriage with a proselyte.(3)

Cadoux also speaks of frequent universalistic expressions in late Jewish writings, and of the "freer and more liberal atmosphere breathed by the Greek speaking Jews...outside Palestine", which offered a more fertile soil for missionary work. He quotes the highly significant sentiment of the great Rabbi, Hillel: "Be ye of the disciples of Aaron...loving mankind and bringing them nigh to the Law".(4)

H.H.Rowley's book "Israel's Mission to the World", concentrates on post-exilic Judaism, which he feels has received unfair treatment as a "petrification of the faith that was once fresh and living in the prophets".(5) But in this very period there were writers who had a vision of the love of God embracing the whole world.

Rowley has a most sympathetic chapter on the

(I) Is.2.2-4; II.I-I6; 25.6-7; 42.6f.; 45.22f.; 5I.4f.; 55.5; Jer.3.I7; I2.I5f.; I6.I9f.; Psalms I8.49f.; 22.28f.; 62.8,I0f.; 96.I-3,7f.; I02.I6-I8, 22f.; II7; Amos 9.7-8; Hab.2.I4; Zeph.3.9f.; Zech.8.22-23.
(2) Op.cit., I48.
(3) Israel's Mission to the World, London I939, 47.
(4) Op.cit., I50. (5) Op.cit., 2.

particularism of Israel.(I) He sees it as the necessary preparation for universalism, not as its deadly foe. In Babylon, Yahwism would not have survived without particularism. If it had not been introduced to Palestine by Nehemiah and Ezra, the deadly disease of syncretistic religion would have ruined Israel's spiritual health. Without the "Puritan" party the battle with Antiochus Epiphanes would have been lost: Judaism would have been swamped by the Hellenistic tide.

Rowley has an extraordinarily effective picture of Judaism: "...while Judaism never set out in exuberant faith to conquer the world, it did attract and welcome converts to its faith. It built a wall around its garden, to prevent the over-running of its beds by the careless feet of strangers who prized not its flowers, but it kept a door through which it could admit friends who desired to rejoice in their beauty".(2)

Rowley sees this open door as a necessary preparation for Christianity. He can actually claim that the Great Commission "had already been implicit in much that had gone before...Had Paul not set forth on his missionary journeys, another would inevitably have done so".(3)

Jesus' reference to the proselytizing zeal of the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23.I5 is especially interesting: "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte".

J.Munck finds the verse "obscure" and "strange in Jesus' mouth." He suggests that it is a mirror of the later Church's criticism of the lack of success in Jewish proselytizing. While multitudes of Gentiles are sweeping into the Kingdom through the preaching of the Gospel, the most strenuous efforts are required to bring even <u>one</u> proselyte into Judaism. Or perhaps the Church was referring to proselytizing in connection"with the matrimonial alliances and political intrigues of the Herod family"(4)

If, however,this is a genuine saying of Jesus, Munck holds that it may refer only to Jews won over to Pharisaism.(5)

(I) Op.cit., 39-7I.
(2) Op.cit., 50.
(3)Op.cit., 87.
(4) Op.cit., 266.
(5) Op.cit., 277.

Munck's difficulties with the verse arise from his viewpoint on Jewish missionary interest.

He states categorically that "Judaism had no interest in any mission to the Gentiles".(I) In his opinion Schürer has exaggerated the influence of Deutero-Isaiah in breaking down Jewish particularism. Nor is Munck impressed by Schürer's reference to conditions in the Diaspora where extensive Jewish literature sought to prove the folly of Gentile idolatry. He feels that the main motive here was a desire to protect the believing Jew from pagan influences. Finally, Munck believes that it is important to "distinguish with modern research, between the missionary idea and interest in proselytizing".(2)

It must be freely admitted that it would be very easy to exaggerate Jewish universalism. Jewish life in the Rabbinic tradition became more and more self-centred, with inevitable loss to zeal for proselytism. W.Barclay quotes a Rabbinic saying :"The best of the Gentiles kill; the best of the serpents crush".(3) Contemporary apocalyptic writers did not show any uniform pattern in their view of the place of the Gentiles in the age to come. Some said that they would be destroyed; others that they would join the Jews in the worship of God. It must have been confusing in the extreme for many an ordinary Jew. Which pattern was he to accept?

But the fringes of God-fearing Gentiles about the synagogues should warn us against arriving at sweeping conclusions from the more bitter and exclusive pronouncements of certain Rabbis. Considerable numbers of Gentiles were converted to the Jewish faith, and the moral purity of Judaism exerted a magnetic attraction on many Gentile women. Jeremias refers to I0,000 female proselytes in Damascus alone, and reminds us that

(I) Op.cit., 255.
(2) Op.cit., 270.
(3) Ambassador for Christ, I63.

Nero's consort, Poppaea Sabina, was a proselyte.(I)

We must not, of course, read back Christian universalism into Jewish universalism. W.Manson's sobre appraisal of Jewish evangelism before Christ is surely accurate. It is "indirect evangelism", the overspill from Israel's own redemption. God's grace to Israel is destined to exert a magnetic appeal on other nations. In Manson's opinion

> "There is no hint in the Old Testament that God's purposes of grace will be offered to the Gentiles on their own ground,...or that their redemption will be accomplished apart from Israel".

Coming to Zion means incorporation in Israel.(2)

But one cannot avoid feeling that Munck has not given sufficient weight to clear universalistic tendencies in Judaism. It is difficult to accept that the extensive literature which aimed at exposing Gentile idolatry was exclusively, or even chiefly, aimed at a target within Judaism. Undoubtedly there was an apologetic motive, to shield the faithful from corrupting influences, but it is unnecessary to deny a missionary one also. Paul, with his intimate knowledge of Judaism wrote that the Jew was proud that he was "a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness" (Rom.2.I9). One is reminded of Isaiah 49.6. But instead of offering light to the Gentile, the Jew was confusing the Gentile by his disobedience to the law (Rom.2.2

Again, the distinction between"the missionary idea and interest in proselytizing" could be drawn too stringently. Munck quotes with approval Aalen's dictum:

> "There is no real missionary conception in these writings (i.e. the Jewish writings of the period), if we understand by mission a message or missionary initiative going out from the centre, striving to reach the Gentiles where they are, and meeting them just as they are, for their own sake". (3)

(I) Op.cit., I8.
(2) Article on "The Biblical Doctrine of Mission", in International Review of Missions, Vol.42, No.I67, p.262.
(3) Op. cit., 270.

But when it is granted that such an understanding of mission is absent from these writings, does this not amount to saying that the Christian missionary motive has greater depth and sweep than the Jewish missionary motive? It could not be claimed (and certainly is not claimed in this study) that Jewish universalism and Christian universalism are interchangeable. Fullness of grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. He enriches everything He touches, including the missionary movement.

There seems no good reason for taking Matthew 23.I5 from the lips of Jesus, and for putting it on the lips of the Church. The suggestion that it gives us a glimpse of the politico-religious manoevrings of the Herod family leaves a greater impression of obscurity than the traditional interpretation of the verse. Again, there seems no adequate reason for restricting the proselytizing to making better Jews, i.e. Pharisees.

If this assessment of Jewish missionary interest is correct, it follows that we must avoid exaggerating Jewish universalism, on the one hand, and minimizing it, on the other. Of the latter tendency the protest of Montefiore seems warranted:

"Noone would imagine in reading Merx or others of his stamp, that there was any ethical or spiritual side to the 'Jewish' Messiah. The Juden-messias would appear to be a sort of Napoleon, protected and inspired by the narrow 'Jewish' God. The impartial historian will not deny that there was a 'particularist' a nd 'national' side to the Jewish Messiah...But it is not impartial to deny or ignore that there was another side also. Jesus had not to go beyond Isaiah for a conception of the Messiah which was both Jewish and ethical, far more ethical indeed than the 'Man' of Daniel 7.I3!! (I)

If the Old Testament found room for Gentiles coming to the light; if the Pharisees showed a desire to draw Gentiles within the household of the true faith; if certain apocalyptic writers found a place for the Gentiles in their dreams of the future, is it remotely conceivable that there was no room in Jesus' thinking

(I) Quoted by J.W.Bowman in "The Intention of Jesus", 67-68.

for a proclamation to all nations?

Kümmel refuses to acknowledge the force of this argument. "It is no sign of a restricted range of vision in Jesus that He does not concern Himself with and arrange for winning the Gentiles, but leaves it to God's future; and what seems for us a postulate of eschatology need not on that account have seemed indispensable to Jesus".(I)

This hardly answers the contention. There is, of course, a danger of reading back our own eschatological presuppositions into the eschatology of Jesus, but there is also a danger of guillotining the eschatology of Jesus to fit our theological predilections. Kümmel does not deal adequately with the charge that a complete absence of any thought of a Gentile mission would involve a restricted range of vision in Jesus. Those who trace the finger of Paul, rather than of Jesus, in Mark I3.I0, and persuade others to a similar discovery, may find some of their "converts" exclaiming, "A greater than Jesus is here - greater in vision, and greater in love for all humanity".

Further, Kümmel's picture of Jesus calmly leaving the future of the Gentiles in God's hands strikes a discordant note. Faith for Jesus never meant quietism. His faith that the future of Israel was in God's hands was inflexible, but He was passionately and actively committed to the salvation of Israel. There is no evidence that He followed a radically different procedure in relation to the Gentiles. Many passages point in the opposite direction.

The same kind of comment may be made about Jeremias's position which has clear affinities with Kümmel's. To him, too, the gathering of the Gentiles is "God's powerful eschatological action", at the end of the world. He sees this as a "call to humility", and "an unveiling of the greatness of missionary work", as a "prolepsis of the eschaton". (2)

(I) Op.cit., 86.
(2) Op.cit.,28.

But every type of mission work involves a "call to humility.". Surely it must be conceded that Jesus was as "humble" in relation to the Jewish mission as to the Gentile mission. Neither Jew nor Gentile could be brought into the Kingdom by human effort. Fundamentally, an act of God was required.

It is, therefore, our conclusion that there is great force in the argument that Jesus was not less advanced than clear universalistic tendencies in His background.

We must now consider Jesus' own outlook in greater detail.

Jesus' Universalism.

W.Bauer has an interesting reference to the background of Jesus' ministry. He points out that the "half-Gentile Sepphoris" was only 5 miles from Nazareth. Jesus, as a Galilean preacher was "not in a position to exclude Gentile hearers...The Galilean Jesus represented Judaism in a form inclined to a universal outlook".(I)

R.Otto, in supporting Bauer's position, finds in the New Testament "the harmonious picture of a man who was not a Jew in the orthodox and one-sided sense". The Preacher, ministering in Bethsaida and Capernaum to a mixed public, and the Healer, who did not restrict His compassion to the Jews alone, both help to build up the picture.(2)

Whatever force there may be in such considerations, we find the strongest case for Jesus' universalism in His own attitude and words. He was not fettered by narrow nationalism. Undoubtedly He would have endorsed John's scalding rebuke to those who were entrenched placidly behind the high walls of spiritual privilege: "Think not to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham to our father': for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham".(Matt.3.9)

(I) Jesus der Galiläer, 27,29, quoted by Otto in "The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man", London I938, I7-I8.
(2) Op. cit., I7-I8.

It is not difficult to find passages in all the Gospels in which Gentiles come into prominence, and in which there is generous praise for them.

Universalism in Luke.

Universalism is especially prominent in Luke. The angelic choir brings a message of "goodwill to men" (2.I4). Simeon sees a "light to shine upon the Gentiles" shining in the Infant Jesus (2.32). In the account of the preaching of the Baptist, Luke cuts his quotation from Isaiah 40.3ff., at the words, "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God"(3.6). Nineveh's readiness to repent (II.32); the intellectual and spiritual thirst of the Queen of Sheba (II.3I); and the faith of the centurion (7.9), are all used to preach pointed sermons to Israel. God remembered the plight of Gentiles like the widow in Sidon, and Naaman the Syrian, while multitudes of Jewish sufferers seemed to be unnoticed and unvisited (4.26,27).

The message of such passages is unmistakeable: there is a place for the Gentiles in the mercy and will of God. Gentiles may be responsive when Jews have hearts of stone.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Luke includes a prophecy of Jesus that the Gentiles would find a place in God's Kingdom. East and West would sit down together.(I) The vineyard would be given to "others" because of the disgraceful behaviour of the Jewish husbandmen (20.I6)

Jesus' interest in Samaritans fits naturally into this universalistic picture. (2)

Universalism equally characterizes the Risen Lord. A message of forgiveness must be carried to all nations beginning from Jerusalem (24.47)

(I) Luke (N 13.29) adds "the north and south", to the "east and west" of Matt. 8.II. Bultmann grants that this saying may go back to Jesus, but sees the happening as a "miraculous eschatological event", rather than as a result of preaching. Op.cit.,45.
It is difficult to see any good reason for this restriction of meaning. It is certainly not explicitly present in the context.

(2) 9.52ff., I7.I5ff., I0.30ff.

Universalism in Matthew

If there is one Gospel which is a stronghold of particularism, it is Matthew's Gospel.(I) Matthew has a strong interest in prophecy and in Messiahship. Jesus is described eight times as "Son of David", while Mark and Luke only use the term twice each, while John never uses it.

It is all the more revealing that universalism cannot be eradicated from Matthew's Gospel.

Matthew's Jesus is no blind captive of the past, as indicated by His attack on the Pharisees in chapter 23 - the most scathing attack on the Pharisees in the whole New Testament.

There are several parallels to the universalistic Lukan sayings already quoted.(2)

But Matthew's universalism does not merely echo the universalism of other Gospel passages. Several passages are especially noteworthy.

C.J.Cadoux holds that Matthew 5.I3-I6 is "of great importance". He links Jesus' thought of His disciples as the "salt of the earth", and the "light of the world", with the Old Testament view of Israel as the salt and the light of a world inhabited chiefly by Gentiles (Isaiah 49.6). "The words ...express Jesus' sympathetic grasp of the universalism found in the Old Testament".(3)

The great Judgement scene of 25.3I-46, in which the Son of Man appears as Judge of all nations, also deserves special mention.

The two passages which refer to a world mission - 24.I4, and 28.I8-20 - are especially interesting in the setting of this thesis.

(I) See especially, 5.I7ff., 23.2f., I5.24, I0.5f.
(2) E.g. Matt.I2.4I=Lk.II.32; Matt.8.I0-I2=Lk.I3.29.
(3) Op.cit., I55.

The Great Commission.

Scholars have varied strikingly in their attitude to the Great Commission.

Adolf Harnack flatly denied its authenticity. Jesus, the preacher to the Jews, "cannot have given any command upon the mission to the whole world...it is easy to show that it is neither genuine nor a part of the primitive tradition".(I)

Harnack, however, has a footnote which is in strange contradiction to this sweeping denial. In it he admits that the Great Commission is a fitting climax to Matthew's portrayal of Jesus. The visit of the wise men from the east at the beginning of the Gospel, and passages like 8.II, 4.I3f., I2.2I, 24.I4, are all part of the picture. His reference to these facets of the Gospel is rounded off by the honest admission "that no positive proofs can be regarded for regarding 28.I9f., as an interpolation".(2)

One is left wondering which voice to accept. Moffatt's comment seems to be justified: "Partly owing to its contents, partly to its omissions, Harnack's chapter on the universal outlook of Jesus is at once the most controversial and perhaps the least convincing in the volume".(3)

We have noted that T.F.Glasson is unwilling to acknowledge the force of some of the usual arguments against the authenticity of 28.I9, and yet he writes: "We cannot, of course, rest anything upon Mark I6.I5, or Matthew 28.I9,20."(4)

A.B.Bruce does "rest" powerful and worthy words upon the passage, but he handles it with extreme caution: "This great final word of Jesus is worthy of the Speaker and of the situation. Perhaps it is not to be taken as an exact report of what Jesus said to His disciples at a certain time and place. In it the real and the ideal seem to be blended; what Jesus said there and then with what the Church of the Apostolic Age had gradually come to regard as the will of their Risen Lord".(5)

(I) Mission and Expansion of Christianity, London I908, Vol.I,36-7.
(2) Op.cit., 40.
(3) Hibbert Journal, Vol.I, 58I.
(4) Op.cit., I48.
(5) Expositors' Greek Testament,(The Synoptic Gospels, London I897, 340).

D.Bosch has clear conservative leanings. He quotes with approval O.Michel's view that Matthew 28.I6-20 is the "key to the understanding of the whole book".(I) He says roundly of Bultmann's tracing of the hand of Hellenistic Christianity in Matthew 28.I6-20, Luke 24.44-49, and Acts I.4-8:

"This attempt to eliminate the mission command from the oldest tradition proceeds from dogmatic presuppositions".(2)

But with equal conviction, Bosch describes the "desire to determine the original text of the mission command" as "ein aussichtloses Unterfangen". We are dealing with a "word in Christ", rather than a "word of Christ". He views the Trinitarian baptismal formula of 28.I9 as stemming in all probability from Matthew himself.(3)

On such a controversial subject there is no room for dogmatism, but it is the author's conviction that the case against the authenticity of the Great Commission has not been proved. It has rested on three foundations.

Textual considerations

In I90I, F.C.Conybeare claimed external evidence against the text of Matthew 28.I9-20, in the shorter form found in Eusebius. Conybeare has not carried world scholarship with him. This is not surprising when one considers that the longer text appears in all the manuscripts and versions, and that Eusebius himself quotes the longer form as well as the shorter one. Nestle's Greek text of the New Testament, which includes every important textual variation, makes no reference to the Eusebian shorter form.

Trinitarian considerations

There can be little doubt that the Trinitarian language in the verses has made their whole subject matter suspect in

(I) Op.cit., I84.
(2) Op.cit., I86.
(3) Op.cit., I87-I88.

the eyes of many scholars. It has been claimed that primitive baptism was "in the name of Jesus", and that the developed baptismal formula points to a later period for the whole passage.

This raises detailed issues which are beyond the scope of this study. It must be pointed out, however, that even if we grant that the Trinitarian formula was a later addition, this does not prove that the missionary command belonged to the same period, and that it represents a missionary development corresponding to a baptismal development. It is possible to trace the missionary command back to Jesus without demanding that the developed Trinitarian baptismal formula should be traced back to Him.

Historical considerations.

Undoubtedly the gravest objections to the authenticity of the Great Commission are historical. A.T.Cadoux expresses the typical objection when he says that it is difficult to believe that if the Great Commission comes from Jesus, the disciples would have been "so completely oblivious of any duty" to make disciples of all men,as appears from Galatians and the early chapters of Acts. (I)

This brings us back to ground that has been traversed in some detail in relation to Mark I3.I0. We have argued that the disciples were not oblivious of a duty to make disciples of all men. The discussion in the early Church was not about the reception or rejection of Gentiles, but about the terms on which they would be received.

The authenticity of the Great Commission, will, therefore, stand or fall by the assessment of considerations which have a lready been adduced in the discussion of Mark I3.I0.

It cannot, of course, be proved that any word of the New Testament goes back to Jesus. But if the main difficulties in

(I) The Sources of the Second Gospel, London I935, I90. Similarly, A.H.McNeile, The Gospel according to St.Matthew, London I9I5, 435.

receiving any given word can be removed, an important step has been taken towards believing in that word as an adequate representation of the mind of Jesus. It is our belief that there are no adequate arguments against the authenticity of the Great Commission.

The universalistic passages in Matthew have led many acute scholars to the conclusion that universalism is an important element in Matthew's Gospel.

Vincent Taylor writes:

"Nothing is more characteristic of Matthew than his addition to the parable of the Vineyard, 'The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof'.(2I.43)"(I)

Similarly J.Moffatt claims:

"Jesus the true Messiah, born and trained under the Jewish law, and yet Lord of a Church whose inward faith, organization, procedure and world-wide scope transcended the legal limitations of Judaism - this is the dominant conception of Matthew's Gospel from beginning to end".(2)

Universalism in John.

Any outline of Jesus' universalism would be incomplete without some reference to the Fourth Gospel, which throws such a clear light on His universalism. "Salvation is of the Jews" (4.22) but it is not limited to them. Immediately after the story of the Samaritan woman we have a glimpse of mission fields that are "white already to harvest"(4.35). We are told of "other sheep" outside the true fold, who must be brought into it by the death of the Shepherd (I0.I6). The Cross occupies a crucial role as the necessary prelude to the world mission. When the Greeks desire an interview with Jesus, He tells His disciples that the Corn of wheat must first fall into the ground in death before there can be an abundant harvest (I2.34). After His death

(I).The Gospels, A Short Introduction, London I938, 88-9. Pfleiderer claimed that the verse was a later interpolation breaking the continuity between verses 42 and 44. Therefore it could not be used to substantiate the authenticity of 24.I4. Op.cit.,I48. This savours too much of adjusting the facts to fit the theory. The statement that the verse is an interpolation is arbitrary.

(2) An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, Edinburgh, I9II, 244.

He will exert a magnetic draw upon "all" (I2.32). The universal significance of the Cross is underlined again and again (3.I4-I8; II.5I-52). Jesus did not die for the Jews only.

Even as it was expedient that Jesus should die to inaugurate a wonderful harvest (II.50-52), so it was expedient that He should go away that the disciples might be empowered by the Holy Spirit to cooperate in the ingathering of the harvest (I6.7). In the inspiration of the Spirit they would carry through even greater works than Jesus' own (I4.I2). The promise surely finds its most significant fulfilment in the world-wide mission.

It is completely impossible to deny the existence of particularistic and universalistic elements side by side in the Gospel tradition. There have, however, been various attempts to explain this phenomenon.

Wellhausen saw irreconcilable inconsistencies between verses like Matthew I0.5f., and I5.24, on the one hand, and verses like 24.I4, 26.I3, and 28.I8-20, on the other. He concluded that Matthew was "mit sich selbst nicht einig".(I)

The so-called inconsistencies have been explained in terms of a head-on collision between opposing parties in the Church. Universalistic passages have been manipulated to fit particularistic predilections, or vice versa. If this were a correct reading of the facts, it would be permissible to comment that the manipulation has been done only partially and half-heartedly. The theory might explain a particularistic Matthew or a universalistic Luke; it can hardly explain a Matthew who brings the world mission into prominence at the end of his Gospel, or a Luke who records Jesus' explanation that salvation had come to Zaccheus's house in terms of his descent from Abraham (I9.9). Bosch is surely right in explaining such theories as the fruit of philosophical and idealistic presuppositions, rather than of New Testament study.(2)

(I) Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien, Berlin I9II, 62f.
(2) Op.cit., II4.

It is equally gratuitous to assume that the particularistic and the universalistic elements in the Gospels are the monument to an evolution in the mind of Jesus from particularism to universalism. The question has been asked: "Was the refusal to help the daughter of the gentile woman a last struggle of Jesus against this new turn of his destiny?" (Jeremias). Jeremias is rightly "very reluctant" to fall back upon such a solution, pointing out that journey's end for the incarnate Jesus was always a death for all in Jerusalem.(I)

There is not a vestige of evidence that the Jesus of the later period would have argued vehemently with the more "Jewish" Jesus of the earlier period, if such a confrontation had been possible.

There is another approach which believes that the choice in the question, "Was Jesus universalistic or particularistic?", is an unreal one, and that Scripture presents Jesus as both universalistic and particularistic. (2)

W.Manson has given a powerful and convincing exposition of this approach, in his article on "The Biblical Doctrine of Mission", to which reference has already been made.

He points out that Jesus not only fulfilled the Old Testament; He transcended it. "We have to take the idea of fulfilment and the idea of transcendence together if we are to make the right approach to Christian universalism".(3)

Passages like Romans I5.8-9, Mark 7.27, Matthew I5.24, Matthew I0.5-6, demonstrate that for Jesus "the salvation of the rest of the world was to be through Israel". The righteousness of Israel would exert a magnetic draw on other nations. It is not

(I) Op.cit., 20.
(2) See Bosch. Op.cit.,III-II5.
(3) Op.cit., 265.

necessary to interpret the above passages in the sense that Jesus' ministry was intentionally and ultimately limited to Jews. They need only mean that the historic mission must begin with a mission to Jews; it must be wrought out under certain limitations; it must be crowned by a death in that limited context.

But Jesus could not be held within that limited context. He did not come to be a slavish imitator, or a blind prisoner of the past. He came, both to fulfil the past and to transcend it (Mk.I.I4-5). He is not only the key, unlocking the door through to an understanding of the best in the past; He is the Judge of the past, with greater things to unfold than the past had ever anticipated. "Jesus is Himself Fulfilled Judaism" (W.Manson).

It may be claimed, therefore that the mission to the Jews was the necessary introduction to the mission to the Gentiles. Munck sees Jesus' particularism "as the expression of His universalism",(I) not as the contradiction of it. Bosch gives powerful support to the same interpretation:

> "Only in unconditional faithfulness to Israel can He also be faithful to the world...His restriction to Israel does not shut out the Gentiles; it shuts them in. Only in this way is a Gentile mission possible at all. It is possible, not in spite of Jesus' 'particularism', but precisely because of it".(2)

In a military campaign a bridgehead has to be established. But no commander is contented with that. He looks ahead to the prosecution of the whole campaign. The above interpretation makes Jesus' mission to Israel the bridgehead. He left it to His disciples to prosecute the campaign on a world front.

This no more than echoes the teaching of John's Gospel, as already indicated. The Cross was the necessary prelude to the mission to the world. "Only on the other side of the Cross does the mission begin" (Bosch - 3).

(I) Op.cit., 27I.
(2) Op.cit., II5.
(3) Op.cit., I60.

This standpoint is nowhere contradicted in the Synoptic Gospels. Nowhere is His death connected exclusively with the few, the Jews; it is for the many.(I)

Moffatt goes even further. He holds that Jesus had "more hope for the world in general than for His own people". He laid down His life "not in a mood of eschatological determination", but "to redeem the wider circle".(2)

If, then, He did not come, primarily, to preach the Gospel, but that "there might be a Gospel to preach", as R.W.Dale claimed, there is nothing surprising in the fact that His ministry was predominantly concerned with the "lost sheep of the house of Israel". He "came unto His own" because He desired to make all men His own. The continuation of His ministry in the acts of the Holy Spirit was to reach the lost straying across the whole world.

Our conclusion is that a world mission accords perfectly with many passages of Scripture. If the authenticity of Mark I3.I0 must be denied, it will be necessary to query the authenticity of many other passages in the Gospels with a leaning to universalism.

There seems no good reason to reject Beasley-Murray's conclusion:

> "On critical, historical, and theological grounds, there appears to be no sufficient reason for refusing the authenticity and plain meaning of Mark I3.I0".(3)

(I) Mk.I0.45.
(2) Theology of the Gospels, London I9I2, 68-69.
Similarly Jeremias, writing of Mk.I0.45 (op.cit., 24): "Polloi ...has not the indo-garmanic exclusive meaning (many, not all) but the inclusive meaning frequent in Hebrew: the great innumerable multitude".
(3) A Commentary on Mark I3, London I957, 45.

Chapter 2.
The Eschatological Motive in Mark I3.

Mark I3.I0 must be interpreted in the light of the whole sweep of the chapter, which is a source of first-class importance for any consideration of the missionary convictions of the primitive Church.

It is impossible to treat in detail the many complicated critical problems which have received careful treatment in Beasley-Murray's works on Mark I3. The present writer agrees with Beasley-Murray's position that the chapter is a collection of Jesus' eschatological sayings: but the importance of the chapter for our study does not hinge on the relationship of every verse in the chapter to the mind of Jesus. It is unquestionable that the broad lines of the chapter mirror the eschatological convictions which the early missionaries would express in their preaching.

The Importance of Missionary Preaching.

The words δεῖ κηρυχθῆναι indicate that a divinely ordained necessity is involved in missionary preaching.

Lohmeyer, however, interprets κηρυχθῆναι of an apocalyptic proclamation of the Gospel from heaven. "The verse speaks of a divine necessity to proclaim the Gospel; here it is not, as the δεῖ shows, an historical task of believing missionaries, but a moment of the apocalyptic drama".(I)

He sees parallels in Matthew 24.I4, Revelation I4.6f., Colossians I.23, I Timothy 3.I6.

This interpretation has dubious Biblical foundations. There is no reference to angelic proclamation elsewhere in the chapter, and, certainly, no clear reference in verse I0. Nor is the theory supported by other Markan texts which use κηρύσσειν.

Similarly, the parallels quoted by Lohmeyer are unimpressive.

(I) Das Evangelium des Markus, Göttingen I937, 272.

The most important is Revelation I4.6. The picture of the angel flying "in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach", occurs in a chapter which speaks of the final triumph of the Gospel, and of a final call to men to repent and to worship God. T.F.Torrance sees it as a reminder that "there is an angelic counterpart to all that happens on the earth".(I) Missionaries may plant and water. God alone can give the increase. The Word is offered from human lips, but its real source is in heaven. The unseen hosts support it and guarantee that it shall not "return void".

Cadbury explains Sec along the lines of ecclesiastical policy, rather than of a divine necessity grounded in the teaching of Jesus. He holds that Christian teachers used apocalyptic forecasting to "bring pressure to bear upon the conduct of men". Sometimes it was found necessary,in speaking of the Parousia, to"press both the certainty and nearness of the event. At other times, when this approach had succeeded only too well and converts had become so expectant as to be in danger of disillusion by delay, the Christian teachers felt it incumbent upon them to emphasize that it was not so imminent. Certain other things 'must happen first', including the preaching of the gospel to all nations".(2)

This seems to assume that Mark I3.I0 originated in the mind of the Church, rather than in the mind of Jesus. We have argued that there are good grounds for coming to the reverse conclusion, as the verse is in harmony with the life and teaching of Jesus.

One wonders if this theory does not postulate a very gullible Christian public, on the one hand, ready to switch to whatever viewpoint was presented by their teachers at a given time; and Christian teachers, on the other hand, whose right to

(I) The Apocalypse Today, London I960, I22.
(2) The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, ed. by W.D.Davies and D.Daube, Cambridge, I956, 320.

teach lay in their flair for supplying the right text and the right attitude at the right time, geniuses in the art of bringing the low temperature of the lukewarm, and the high temperature of the fanatical to the correct level. It will be necessary to discuss thoroughly the teaching of Mark I3 about the imminence of the End. Here, let it suffice to say that passages which stress an imminent Parousia stand beside other passages which echo the note, "The End is not yet". If this chapter could hold together these paradoxical notes, it is surely possible to maintain that Christian teachers could do the same. This seems to be more convincing than to maintain that teachers changed their message to suit changing circumstances. Christian people in every age look for continuity and consistency in the message preached. They might be prepared to accept a switch from belief in an imminent End to belief in a delayed End: it is difficult to believe that they were prepared to accept whatever emphasis their teachers believed was necessary to exert pressure on their conduct. Cadbury's explanation of Sει does not bring us far enough.

Grundmann's exposition is more satisfying:

"Es ist das Sει des geheimnisvollen Gottes, der im eschatologischen Geschehen seine Plane mit der Welt durchführt. Nicht blinder Schicksalsglaube, sondern Glaube an Gottes ewige Plane formuliert dieses Sει ".(I)

Sει brings us into touch with a necessity of divine grace. There is no attempt to explain the necessity in terms of the eloquence, wisdom, spirituality or success of t he missionary preachers. There is no encouragement for man's inveterate tendency to claim more for himself than he is entitled to claim. Man would like to imagine that the whole scheme of salvation would fall apart without human faithfulness. Human pride needs the Miltonic reminder:

"God doth not need either

(I) Article on Sει , Theologisches Worterbuch zum Neuen Testament II, 23.

man's work or His own gifts. His state is kingly: thousands at His bidding speed, and post o'er land and ocean without rest".(I) God could have made other plans for the proclamation of the Gospel. He did not choose to do so. His choice of human witness was determined by nothing outside of Himself. His witnesses, therefore, must echo the words of the greatest of missionaries: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord".

The context attaches a two-fold significance to δεῖ

I. Persecution must not be allowed to sabotage the preaching of the Gospel.

2. Preaching is a necessity for the furtherance of the divine purposes of salvation and judgement.

There have been interesting differences of opinion about the force of εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς

The words have been taken to mean "for a testimony against them" (i.e. the Jews). On the other hand, it has been held that persecution would give an opportunity to bear witness, aimed at the salvation of the hearers.

Strathmann claims that μαρτύριον in the New Testament always refers to the evidential significance of the witness, rather than to the act of witnessing or the content of the witness.(2) He says of Mark I3.9 and Matthew I0.I8: "In the context μαρτύριον can by no means be understood to refer to the wooing witness of missionary preaching, which offered the opportunity of conversion. This witness has only the object of proving the opponents' guilt".(3)

Lohmeyer holds that Mark has altered the force of εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς to make the words refer to the preaching of the Gospel. The original force of the phrase was "Zeugnis wider sie" - "Das Leiden für Ihn ist gleichsam das offenbarende Gottesurteil über ihre Gottlosigkeit".(4)

(I) To his Blindness.
(2) Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, 477-520.
(3) Op.cit., 507. Schlatter takes a similar view in Der Evangelist Matthäus, Stuttgart I948, 702.
(4) Das Evangelium des Markus, Gottingen I937, 272.

The New Testament evidence does not make it necessary to restrict μαρτύριον to a witness issuing in judgement. Using the analogy of the trial scene of Isaiah 43.9-I3, 44.7-II, Cranfield claims that Christian witness is, firstly, a testimony to God's goodness and grace - a witness on behalf of God: secondly, it is addressed to men and aims at their conversion: thirdly, the witness will turn to judgement, if it is not received. He accepts Strathmann's view of the evidential significance of the witness, but sees the evidence as evidence for the truth of the Gospel, which can become saving truth as well as damning truth.(I)

Bosch brings out the two-fold significance of the Gospel, in a most striking fashion, by laying Matthew I0.6,and I0.I6 side by side. If the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" reject the saving witness, they are "changed into wolves".(2)

There seems no good reason to believe that missionary testimony was aimed at judgement rather than salvation. Such a belief would surely involve the bringing into prominence of the reverse side of the Gospel picture, rather than the full view of God's saving action. Whenever the light of the Gospel is presented, inevitably shadows of sin are revealed, but the purpose of the presentation of the light is not to reveal the shadows, but to reveal to all who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, the shining of the day beyond the shadows. The rejection of the light involves judgement, but judgement is the "strange work" of God (Is.28.2I).

(I) Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.6, No.3, 29I-293.
This seems to be a legitimate interpretation of New Testament usage. Calvin comments on εἰς μαρτύριον πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (Matt.24.I4 :"This was the proper season for calling the whole world to God,...wherever the Gospel is preached, it is as if God Himself came into the midst of them".(Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, I30)
Similarly, Rawlinson interprets ἀποβήσεται ὑμῖν εἰς μαρτύριον (Lk.2I.I3) in the sense, "It shall turn to you for a testimony", which perhaps means, "It will give you an opportunity to bear witness".(Gospel According to St.Mark,I85)
(2) Op.cit., I6I.

The Bearing of Missionary Preaching on the End

If πρῶτον is linked with οὔπω τὸ τέλος (v.7), v.10 seems to teach that the End is conditioned by missionary preaching. On this construction, missionary preaching becomes an eschatological sign, or promise. The End cannot come until the Church is obedient to the Master's command to preach the Gospel everywhere. Obedience will hasten the End; disobedience will retard it.

Many interpreters have put a different construction on the use of πρῶτον .

I. It has been interpreted in a non-temporal way, meaning "above all". This would imply no more than that preaching must be given high priority in this age.

This approach is dubious when it is remembered that πρῶτον has a temporal meaning elsewhere in Mark. It is doubtful if there is a parallel to this usage anywhere in the Synoptic Gospels.

2. Kilpatrick prefers a temporal interpretation, but his approach is different from that of this study.

He sees two possibilities.

A) πρῶτον is to be linked with οὔπω τὸ τέλος (v.7). Kilpatrick says of the preaching of the Gospel before the End: "It is to be hoped that it will" (i.e. be preached) "but this is an odd point to mention here. There is no question of delaying the preaching of the Gospel".(I)

It is only an "odd point" if we cannot believe that the End is conditioned by missionary preaching, and that slackness in the discharge of the missionary task delays the End.

Surely Church history from the earliest times reveals that there has, in fact been a strange delay in carrying the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the world. Missionary enthusiasts have to fight a perennial battle against those who

(I) Op.cit., I52.

"delay the preaching of the Gospel" because of slothfulness or materialism, or even because of theological presuppositions.

B. πρῶτον is to be linked with vv.9-I0, or with v.II.

The force of πρῶτον in the first instance would be: "The Gospel must be preached before your arrest" (v.9) With the second alternative πρῶτον would point forward to καὶ ὅταν ἄγωσιν ὑμᾶς παραδιδόντες . The meaning would follow some such line as: "Wherever you are, preach the Gospel without fear. Then, when you are arrested you can depend on the aid of the Holy Spirit".

It seems most natural to give to πρῶτον its usual temporal meaning, and to interpret it in the light of οὔπω τὸ τέλος (v.7). The parallel in Matthew 24.I4 - καὶ τότε ἥξει τὸ τέλος strongly suggests this interpretation.

This view of missionary preaching as a sign of the End, has been strongly criticised.

It has been maintained that the picture of Jesus speaking of a sudden End preceded by signs cannot be authentic. On this view Mark I3 is inconsistent within itself, and inconsistent with the teaching of Jesus elsewhere.

There are three main bulwarks for this argument.

I. Jesus refused to give signs (Mk.8.II,I2).

2. Jesus proclaimed a sudden and unexpected End. This does not harmonise with an End preceded by signs.

3. It has been claimed that οὐ ... μετὰ παρατηρήσεως (Lk.I7.20), rules out the possibility of a glorious Kingdom heralded by striking signs. T.W.Manson, e.g. writes:

> "The Kingdom does not come in such a way that one can make a programme of its coming. There are no premonitory signs and portents which may be observed so that one could say, 'Look at this and that; it cannot be far away now'".(I)

It is impossible to deal adequately with these criticisms without alluding to the larger and related question of Jesus' relationship to contemporary Jewish apocalyptic teaching, which

(I) The Mission and Message of Jesus, London I940, 596.

laid great stress on signs.

Jesus' Relationship to Jewish Apocalyptic

Unquestionably there are similarities in form between Jesus' eschatological teaching and the beliefs of the Jewish apocalyptists. That is inevitable as the roots and background of both viewpoints are to be found in the Old Testament. For example, much of the material in Mark I3 is based on Old Testament material - from Zechariah, Isaiah, Joel, Psalms and Daniel.

But Jesus and the Jewish apocalyptic teachers differed strikingly in the use they made of the common material. The differences are more striking than the similarities.

I. A Different View of History

Jewish apocalyptic took a pessimistic view of history. R.H.Charles held that between the middle of the 5th.century B.C. and the end of the 2nd century B.C., Jewish thought about the last things took a swing away from this world to a transcendent heavenly order.(I) All the evidence indicates that the same tendency was strongly at work among Jesus' contemporaries. C.H.Dodd describes the devaluation of the present, characteristic of the Jewish "tracts for bad times" which emerged from this period, in the words:

"The mightyhand of the Lord is to be seen in events of the remote past, and will again be seen in the future, but in the present the power of evil obscures it".(2)

It is our belief that no such devaluation of the present was inherent in Jesus' message, and that He believed in a divine victory, not merely above and beyond history, but within history.

2. Jesus' eschatological teaching was more restrained than Jewish apocalyptic.

(I) Religious Development between the Old and New Testaments, London I9I4, 70ff. Previously, says Charles, the prophets had looked upon the present world as the scene of the Messianic Kingdom. The new view appears in Is.65-66. "Gradually it was borne in alike on saint and sage that the present world could never be the scene of the eternal Messianic kingdom..." Charles held that Jesus shared this conception of the Kingdom.

(2) The Apostolic Preaching, I96.

Dibelius gives us these five characteristics of Jewish apocalyptic:

a) History is written as prophecy.

b) There are elaborate descriptions of the heavenly scenery.

c) Astronomical speculation.

d) Use of animal symbolism, including mythology and astrology.

e) The message comes in a vision, or through an angelic deliverance.(I)

These fantastic characteristics are absent from Mark I3, and, in fact, from all the eschatological teaching of Jesus.

3. Christian eschatological thought is Christological.

The Person of Christ becomes the link between the present and the future, and the key to the working of God in present and future. W.Manson states this crucial difference between Jewish and Christian thought, in the words:

"Eschatology is made plastic to Jesus Christ...The Christian eschatology of glory cannot therefore, be dismissed as a lag-over or residuum from Judaism. It arises from the very nature of the revelation made in Jesus".(2)

This is no longer a coming; it is the coming of the Son of Man.

In R.H.Lightfoot's words:

"In one way or another it is all connected with and hangs upon the person and manifestation of the Son of Man".(3)

This means that Christian thought finds the stress, not on eschaton but on Eschatos.

Cullmann has argued, strongly and convincingly, that this meant for the Primitive Church a shifting of the centre of time. The centre could no longer be sought in a glorious coming in the future; it had already been located in God's mighty acts in

(I) A Fresh Approach to the New Testament, London I936, II4f.
(2) Eschatology, in Scottish Journal of Theology, Occasional Papers, No.2, pp.2 & II.
(3) The Gospel Message of St.Mark, Oxford I950, I2.

Christ Crucified and Risen.

"The criterion of the Christian character of an apocalyptic viewpoint is precisely the question whether the centre of the line is the crucified and risen Christ or whether it is the returning Christ".(I)

This means that the Christian hope is even more intense than the Jewish hope, because of the knowledge that the victory has been won already. This is the salient difference between the Christian hope and the Jewish hope, without which Christianity would be no more than a "Jewish sect".(2)

H.R.Mackintosh explains this shifting of emphasis in Jesus' own teaching by the fact that His teaching has for its centre, not any presentation of the future, but the Father. "The Kingdom is only beginning in the Person and Work of Jesus but it is a decisive beginning".(3)

This adds, not merely intensity, but realism to the Christian hope. It has to reckon with the fact that divine love has been crucified in history, but it goes on to affirm with passionate conviction that love is not only crucified love, but triumphant, glorified love.

The school of Consistent Eschatology would, of course, deny the legitimacy of such conclusions. It would restrict the stature of Jesus to that of a typical apocalyptic teacher, subject to the eccentricities of his day. M.Werner deplores the common tendency to underestimate the influence of contemporary apocalyptic thought-categories upon the mind of Jesus. He feels that the personality of Jesus is "recognisable as a phenomenon of late-Jewish apocalyptic"..."Jesus was in fact wholly at one with

(I) Christ and Time, London I957, 90.
(2) Op.cit., 86.
(3) Immortality and the Future, London I9I5,

late-Jewish apocalyptic", in His view of the consummation and the new world order.(I)

At a future stage in this study it will be necessary to examine in detail the positions of Consistent Eschatology. Here, we can only state our conviction that it is as impossible to understand Jesus in terms of Jewish apocalyptic thought, as it is to understand Him in terms of the rigid particularism represented in His day, to which reference has already been made. The evidence seems to bear out the greater accuracy of Bowman's assessment of Jesus as standing in the "prophetic, eschatological, evangelical"tradition, rather than in the apocalyptic tradition. Bowman, in fact, claims that "Jesus may well be called the great counterapocalyptist of the Jewish tradition".(2) Perhaps Bowman draws the distinction in unduly sharp lines, but some such distinction seems to be necessary.

Cullmann, however, traces two lines of thought in Judaism which helped to prepare the way for "the Christian conception of 'mission' as the eschatological 'sign'".(3)

I. Elijah would preach repentance in the last days. (Mal.3.I, Ecclus.48.I0,II)

This conception of a great prophetic messenger preparing the way of the Lord is extremely interesting. That it was a common conception for Judaism and for the primitive Church appears clearly in such passages as Matthew II.I4, I7.I0, Luke I.I7, and John I.2I.

Munck also holds that Judaism regarded preaching as an "eschatological call to conversion".(4)

(I) The Formation of Christian Dogma, London I957, I3-I4.
(2) Op.cit., 6I.
(3) The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology,4I5.
(4) Op.cit., 39.

2. Judaism held that the Kingdom would come when the number of the elect had been completed. (I Enoch 47.4, 2 Baruch 30.2.)

Obviously this has important bearing on conceptions about the conversion of Israel and the Pauline view of the "fulness of the Gentiles".

We may round off this brief discussion of Jesus' relationship to contemporary Jewish thought with Otto's admirable conclusion that Jesus' preaching both reflects and transforms Jewish eschatology. (I)

We must turn now to a detailed consideration of the denial of the possibility that Jesus spoke of an End preceded by signs.

<u>His refusal to give signs.</u>

Mark 8.II,I2, and other passages in which Jesus refused to give signs, cannot properly be used against the authenticity of the signs in Mark I3. It is of crucial importance to remember that Jesus was addressing the Pharisees in Mark 8.II,I2. He was refusing to use His miracles as a spiritual identity card to flash before the eyes of doubters. He would not pander to Jewish clamouring for a sign. His miracles could never be tools to create faith where faith was absent, to bolster up His reputation before the staring crowds, and to shatter the criticisms of those who had made themselves His enemies. But, just as clearly, the miracles of Jesus were as much a part of His message as His words. They were signs that He was the Messiah; they were sermons in action. They were signs that men were witnessing an unparalleled invasion of the Kingdom of God. (Matt.II.3ff., Lk.II.20) He pronounced woes upon His contemporaries just because they had failed to read the signs of the times.(Matt.II.2I-24.)

The Fourth Gospel paints the same picture. σημεῖα is the characteristic word for the miracles. δυνάμεις never appears.

(I) Op.cit., I4.

Again the significance of the miracles is not for the staring crowds or for hostile critics, but for the disciples. Once more we note the reserve of Jesus when confronted by a faith which seemed to be founded on miracle. Jesus would not "commit Himself" to a faith like that.(2.23-25. Cf.6.26.) The disciples alone can read the "glory" of Jesus in the signs. They are led further along the way of faith to which they are already committed. (2.II.)

If,then, He gave to His disciples signs of the Kingdom that had come in His Person and ministry, what possible objection can there be that He gave signs of the Kingdom that was still to come? Luke I7.20.

Dogmatism about the interpretation of Luke I7.20 is quite out of place.(I)

The verse teaches clearly that there was a mode of παρατήρησις which Jesus rejected. Again, it is important to remember that He was replying to the Pharisees' question about "when the Kingdom of God should come". The passage on "Preliminary signs and calculations of the days of the Messiah", in Strack-Billerbeck's commentary from the Talmud, supplies an interesting background.(2) On the basis of Daniel's 70 weeks it was calculated that Messiah's Kingdom would begin in A.D.70. Josephus also refers to the burning by Roman soldiers of 6,000 women and children who believed the testimony of a prophet that God would miraculously deliver them.(3)

The verse may present Jesus' strong denunciation of that mode of παρατήρησις which expresses itself in a calculation of dates, and in an attempt to look for the Kingdom in a certain place. The Kingdom was already in their midst in His Person and

(I) Beasley-Murray says: "It would be hard to find a more ambiguous saying of Jesus, and in the matter of its interpretation there is no room for dogmatism". Jesus and the Future, I73.
(2) Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, Vierter Band, Zweiter Teil, 977ff
(3) Wars of the Jews, 6,5,2.

work.

The contention of T.W.Manson, and many others, that it is impossible to draw up a detailed programme of the coming of the Kingdom, is thoroughly in line with Jesus' eschatological teaching, but it is going beyond the facts to maintain or imply that all references to signs in Jesus' teaching must be excluded as unauthentic. After all, Luke I7.20 is not the only reference to Jesus' eschatological teaching in Luke's Gospel. We also find a rebuke from Jesus to "hypocrites" who did not "discern this time!"(I2.54-56.)

Otto denies that Luke I7.20 involves the rejection of παρατήρησις .(I) He finds the core of the passage in ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστιν , rather than in οὐκ ... μετὰ παρατηρήσεως. Jesus, he says, "is speaking of the Kingdom which.. is already present in its first dawning". For that reason "the apocalyptic methods of parateresis are not in place".

While, then, the passage does teach that Jesus rejected the Pharisaic mode of παρατήρησις , there is no need to claim that there cannot be a mode of παρατήρησις which Jesus could, and did accept. The rejection of signs seems to result from placing them in an emotional and fanatical connotation which is quite foreign to the Jesus of the New Testament.

One has the feeling that such a picture of signs is behind Bowman's strong argument that Jesus did not point to signs of the End: he interprets Mark I3.6,7,2I,22,32,33 in the sense:

"'This event is no sign', 'that event is no sign' - 'indeed no sign will be given of the end of the age or of the Messiah's coming'"..."Of that which is within history 'signs' may be expected

(I) Op.cit.,I32.
In our interpretation of Lk.I7.20 we are adopting the translation, "in your midst" (ἐντὸς ὑμῶν). "In your hearts" would suggest that the Pharisees knew the mystery of the new birth, which is highly unlikely.

but of that 'far-off divine event' when Eternity shall break into Time, no 'sign'...will ever appear". It will come "unheralded and unsung".(I)

It is very dubious if this is an adequate intepretation of the evidence. If Jesus had meant to rule signs of the End out of the picture, the method used strikes one as singularly obscure. It must be emphasized that Jesus' use of signs is by no means bound to the treating of them as mathematical calculations in the tradition of the apocalyptic teachers.

The question mark in Bosch's mind about speaking of the world-wide mission as "eine Bedingung für die Parusie" arises from the same suspicion of the chronological use of signs. He writes:

"Man rede darum lieber nicht von der Weltmission als einem Vorzeichen des Endes".

He mentions two reasons:

I. The Mission is "vollkommen unberechenbar".

2. "We can never state if, and when, and how, the Gospel is preached in the whole world...The Mission asks no question about the date of the End, but preaches and watches in faithfulness and confidence, and leaves everything else to God. The question about the 'When' is an intrusion into the almighty power of God. Jesus has taken from eschatology all possibility of chronological reckoning, and has outmoded every question about the 'When'".(2)

One can readily accept these excellent sentiments without being suspicious of the idea of "world mission as a sign of the End." Many great scholars have seen a theological and ethical content in signs rather than a chronological one. Wendland sees their significance in their revelation of the universality of the coming sovereignty of God; Cullmann, in their pointing to the eschatological character of the present age; J.Weiss, in their stressing of the Church's mission to the world.(3)

(I) Op.cit., 57 and 6I.
(2) Op.cit., I7I.
(3) Jesus and the Future, I79., (Beasley-Murray)

The present character of the sovereignty of God appears in the judgements of God (Mk.I3.7f.) and in the triumphs of the Gospel, (Mk.I3.I0). His sovereignty will be consummated in the future coming of the Messiah with His chosen community (Mk.I3. 24-27).

Even as there are signs of the Kingdom that is already present, so there will be signs of the Kingdom still to come. But these signs are not given as an exercise in speculation, as a sop to curiosity, or as a spur to emotional excitement. They are not an ancient counterpart to Old Moore's Almanack, to give the Church prevision of things to come. The stress is upon the present-day impact of the doctrine. Beasley-Murray sees Jesus "as a Pastor rather than a Teacher" in Mark I3, calling for a spirit of alertness in His Church. The End will come suddenly and unexpectedly upon unbelievers, but it will not take Jesus' disciples by surprise, if they are obedient to their Lord's command to watch. They cannot pinpoint a day or an hour; they cannot point to a place where the coming Lord will keep rendezvous with His people, but they will be ready. For that very reason the sudden End cannot catch them unprepared.

Such an approach is an adequate explanation of the undoubted fact that we find in the Gospels, sayings about the suddenness of the End, side by side with sayings which acknowledge a measure of presentiment.

The conviction that both Jesus and Paul stressed the need of watching rather than the study of signs of the Parousia does not cancel out all pointing to signs of the Coming. On the contrary, if our approach is correct, signs are used to emphasize the necessity of watchfulness. Cranfield says admirably:

"...The signs are reminders of the coming Lord

in the midst of history. They are pointers to the relevance of the End to the life of the present...by pointing to the coming Lord they summon us to renewed faith and repentance, obedience and joy - now".(I)

In this, Mark I3 is in thorough agreement with the general testimony of the Gospels and need not be looked upon as a "foreign body inside the evangelical tradition" (Bosch).(2)

"Hastening" the End

Even scholars who are prepared to view missionary preaching as one of the signs of the End, differ in their account of its precise significance. The idea of missionary preaching hastening the End, in any sense, is obnoxious to Continental scholars especially.

Cullmann lays aside the idea:

"We can work joyfully and courageously, not in order to 'hasten' the coming of the Kingdom, but because we know that the Kingdom comes from God".(3)

Kümmel writes even more strongly:

"The Jewish idea that repentance could hasten the coming of the Kingdom is certainly quite foreign to Jesus".

He claims that Wilder in his book "Eschatology" (p.84f.) can quote no authorities to support the contention that Jesus shared this Jewish view.(4)

Again, Kümmel's exposition of the parable of the seed growing secretly, (Mk.4.26ff.) is interesting for this side of our study. He claims that there is no summons to the preacher to scatter the seed

"untroubled by the apparent lack of success and to leave all the rest to God, for after all the preacher has not the least temptation to wish to hasten the coming of the Kingdom...This parable has rather a comforting meaning that the Kingdom of God comes surely without our being able to hinder or to hasten it".(5)

(I) Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.7, 300.
(2) Op.cit., I53.
(3) The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, 4I0.
(4) Op.cit., note to 87.
(5) Op.cit., I29.

The force of this position arises from its conception of the sovereignty of God. "The very heart of Biblical eschatology", states Cullmann, "is its emphasis upon the divine omnipotence".(I) Eschatology is the word of the new creation. Man is as impotent to usher in the new creation, as he was to usher in the primal creation. Man cannot bring in the Kingdom; God alone can. Any thought of hastening the Kingdom by missionary preaching impugns the sovereignty of God.

Bosch has a powerful and moving exposition of this point of view. He obviously dislikes the description of the Church's mission in relation to the End by the use of verbs like beschleunigen and herbeizwingen. In his eyes the desire to "force the Kingdom of God near is human forwardness, self-righteous Pharisaism, refined Zelotism".(2)

He is extremely fond of speaking of mission as "ganzlich Gottes Sache"..."Gott selber missioniert, nicht wir. Die Mission ist Gottes eschatologische Tat". The use of Sei and the passive form κηρυχθῆναι both point to God as the "eigentlichen Urheber und Vollbringer der Mission". Mission is primarily the sending of the Son, and only secondarily the sending of the disciples. This is God's act rather than man's introducing us to a Gospel rather than to a preacher.(3)

Bosch also draws a distinction between mission and suffering.

"Suffering is the proper role and contribution of the disciples. Mission, on the otherhand, is not their affair but God's".(4)

Bosch's exposition of Mark I3.I0 is of particubar interest to us. He finds "not much more" in the verse than in Matthew 4.I7: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand". He emphasizes that the text runs, "Repent for (denn) the kingdom of heaven is at hand", and not "in order that (damit) the kingdom of heaven may come near"..."Because the kingdom of heaven is near, the

(I) The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, 4I5.
(2) Op.cit., I7I.
(3) Op.cit., I98, I70-I.
(4) Op.cit., I67.

Gospel must ring through the whole world.(I)

In this exposition there is much that is necessary and admirable. It would be difficult to equal it as a warning against a self-sufficient desire to hasten the Kingdom, and against an exaggerated view of what may be accomplished by mission. It is possible to magnify man's role in mission out of all proportion.

Concerning the controversial term "hasten", it must be freely acknowledged that there is no explicit reference to "hastening" the Kingdom in Mark I3. Equally, there is no explicit reference which forbids the use of such an expression. We make the claim, however, that there is a strong implicit reference in the chapter, and that the New Testament evidence elsewhere warrants some such word as "hasten".

One may doubt Bosch's bracqueting of Mark I3.I0 and Matthew 4.I7. The context brings Mark I3.I0 into close relationship with the final End. This is not true of Matthew 4.I7. Realised eschatology (so clearly present in Matthew 4.I7) is involved in Mark I3.I0, but the wider canvas of futuristic eschatology is also required.

It is relevant to ask if there was any preparation

(I) Op.cit., I7I.

in the world of Jewish thought for the idea of hastening the Kingdom. Cullmann says that the Talmud and the apocryphal books of the New Testament period debated the question, "Who is preventing the Messiah's coming?" One school of thought gave a straightforward chronological answer. They said that the world would end in A.D. 240. The school of Eliezer, on the other hand, maintained that Messiah would come when Israel had repented. Cullmann attacks both schools for their undermining of the divine sovereignty, fettering God's omnipotence by human repentance, on the one hand, and by human aptness for calculation, on the other.(I)

Bosch says that the Judaism of Jesus' day recognized four conditions for the coming of the Kingdom: repentance, Sabbath observance, study of the Torah, and charity. The Messianic Kingdom could be hastened or delayed - everything hinged on these conditions. "These conditions have no place in Jesus' sayings".(2)

Even if we agree with Bosch and Munck that "the idea that the mission" (i.e. to the Gentiles) "had any place in eschatological events was quite foreign to Jewry"(3), it is not impossible that certain aspects of Jewish thought helped to pave the way for the role of mission in Christian eschatological thought. The conception of Israel's repentance paving the way for the coming of the Messiah, and of her disobedience hindering it, may well have influenced Jesus. Here, as in so many other ways, He may have seen Himself "fulfilling", but in a broader way than typical Jewish thought had ever envisaged. The obedience of the world, and not merely of the Jewish part of the world, was involved.

The following three observations seem to be relevant in studying Bosch's distaste for the idea of hastening the End by

(I) The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, 4I0 & 4I4.
(2) Op.cit., I69. There is much interesting material about "Preliminary signs and calculations of the days of the Messiah" in Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Strack-Billerbeck) Vierter Band, Zweiter Teil, 977-I0I5.
(3) Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, 38.

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missionary preaching:

I. It is interesting to note that Bosch has to strengthen his statement about the importance of missionary preaching, in disagreeing with Schweitzer's view that the mission of the Endzeit will be initiated by the divine fiat, without human proclamation.

Previously he had referred to the role of the preacher in the words:

"...der [illegible] ganz unwichtig; wichtig ist nur, dass er verkundigt und was er verkundigt".(I)

Later, in opposition to Schweitzer, we have the words: "Der Verkundiger ist an sich nicht wichtig, aber insofern er verkundigt, ist er von ausserordentlicher Wichtigkeit". He continues:

"God does not preach Himself, nor does He send books: but He does send messengers to men".(2)

When this study speaks of missionary preaching "hastening" the Kingdom, no claim is made for the importance of the preacher "in himself", but a strong claim is made for the "extraordinary importance" of the preacher "in Christ", in the setting of Christ's gracious purposes for the salvation of men.

2. One may wonder if Bosch has not overstated the distinction between suffering and preaching.

Surely there is a definite sense in which both suffering and mission are "God's affair". God suffers in the suffering of His people and He offers Himself in their preaching.

When Jesus said, "Without me ye can do nothing", (Jo.I5.5) He clearly meant that the whole range of victorious living would be impossible without Him - including preaching and suffering.

(I) Op.cit., I66-7.
(2) Op.cit., I68.

We can hold that, in a primary sense, mission and suffering are "God's affair", but, in a secondary sense, they are both the affair of the disciples.

3. Bosch's position does not contradict the view of the End as conditioned by missionary preaching.

This comes out clearly in the statement:

"Die Mission ist nicht nur Trägerin einer eschatologischen Botschaft, sondern sie ist selbst ein Faktor der Endzeit".(I)

Similarly, he says:

"Das Datum der Parusie ist von der Weltmission abhangig, die ganzlich Gottes Sache ist".(2)

Again, his view of the need to avoid any tendency to bring into exaggerated prominence either the divine side of missionary work, or the human side, is in line with the convictions of this study. The stressing of the divine side puts us in the"power of a blind fatalism"; the stressing of the human side makes us "fanatics and Zealots. Only when we take both sides seriously, have we understood our Lord".(3)

In summing up Bosch's dislike of speaking of "hastening" the End by missionary preaching, it may be claimed that it attacks two ideas: self-sufficient missionary endeavour, and the feeling that the date of the End can be reckoned by an analysis of the success of missionary preaching. It may be acknowledged immediately that such ideas are foreign to the New Testament, but they are not necessarily connected with the belief that the End may be hastened by missionary preaching. Such a belief in no way contradicts belief in God's sovereign activity.

Continental scholars are rightly concerned to guard God's part in bringing in the Kingdom, but it must be pointed out that scholars, who agree instantly that Christian eschatological thought gives a perfect illustration of the truth of H.R.

(I) Op.cit., I96.
(2) Op.cit., I70.
(3) Op.cit., I99.

Mackintosh's words, "What is distinctive of Christianity... is the truth that in religion the initiative lies with God",(I) can still claim that missionary preaching plays a role in hastening the Kingdom. The sovereign God has seen fit to leave room in the operation of His purposes for human thought, work, prayer and preaching. This,no doubt,involves a self-limitation, but self-limitation is already involved in the gift of human freedom.

Moffatt's treatment of the significance of prayer has direct bearing on this discussion:

"Jesus believed profoundly in the power of prayer to affect even the will of God in the matter of the coming kingdom...The faithful are to wrestle with God for the speedy accomplishment of His purpose; the Fatherly goodness of God and His royal authority forbid prayer becoming a form of dictation or a wild complaint, but they invite the earnest efforts of the faithful to hasten His interposition".(2)

The man who yields himself to God finds to his astonishment that the sovereign God has promoted him to remarkable spiritual honour, and given him incredible promises of what his work and prayer can achieve. Ultimately this choice of man is inexplicable in categories of human worth: it can only be explained in categories of divine grace.

E.F.Scott's approach is thoroughly satisfactory. He finds Jesus' most radical opposition about the coming of the Kingdom directed, not against the Pharisees, but against the Zealots, who believed that they could bring in the Kingdom by human force. Jesus agreed with the Pharisees that God alone could bring in the Kingdom. "Fear not little flock", He said; "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Lk.I2.32.)

We have argued that Jesus opposed the strand of Pharisaic

(I) The Divine Initiative, London I936 (Third Impression), 43.
(2) The Theology of the Gospels, 58-9. He quotes Acts 3.I9-20, Matt.9.37-8, and 2 Pet.3.I2, in support of the Biblical character of this thought.
Cf.H.R.Mackintosh: "The consummation will not come by magic... it can be hastened by earnest prayer".(Immortality and the Future, 53.)

thought which wove a detailed pattern of the time and mode of God's deliverance: but in comparison with His opposition to the Zealots, His opposition to the Pharisees was modified. He sided with the Pharisaic view that deliverance came, not from the point of the sword, but from the hand of God.

But Scott is surely right in going on to say:

"Although He looked for a supernatural coming of the Kingdom, He required that men should do their part. While trusting in God alone to accomplish His purpose, they could wait upon Him with fervent desire and longing. They could wrestle with Him in the power of faith until they had prevailed on His will...Waiting on God they were also to work with Him for the hastening of the Kingdom".(I)

M.A.C.Warren writes similarly:

"Always there is the opportunity for cooperation with God or rebellion against Him. We can either advance or retard His designs...Hastening the coming of Christ is seen to be based, not on any idea precariously extracted from one text in the Bible (2 Pet.3.I2)... but upon the nature of the purpose of God, and its relations to the men and women whom He has created free - free either to forward that purpose or obstruct it".(2)

This seems to be true both of the Bible and of Christian experience. The Biblical evidence presents the sovereignty of God and the freedom of man, side by side. However difficult it may be to fit both aspects of truth into a logical whole, we are bound to present the whole picture. Surely the thought of hastening the End by missionary preaching can be fitted into the picture without incongruity, in a way that fully acknowledges the sovereign freedom of God, and the derived freedom of man.

"Is it too much to hope", asks J.S.Stewart, "that missionary obedience may not only make the crooked straight and the rough places plain but actually speed the Lord's return and hasten the final epiphany?"(3)

Mark I3, and many other New Testament passages favour a negative answer.

(I) The Kingdom and the Messiah, I44-I45.
(2) The Christian Mission, II7 & I20.
(3) Thine is the Kingdom, Edinburgh I956, 74.

Chapter 3.

The Mission inspired by the Eschatological Motive in Mark I3.

Mark I3 gives us vitally important glimpses of the thought world in which the statement of verse I0 would operate.

The Urgency of Missionary Preaching.

Missionary preaching is inescapably urgent in view of the imminence of the End. This appears in its most striking light in vv.28-30.

The parable of the fig tree refers clearly to the nearness of the End. It speaks not merely of chronological proximity; it brings also a message of certainty. The fresh foliage on the fig tree is an unerring harbinger of spring, with summer round the corner. The almond tree blossoms earlier, but a cold snap may ruin its blossom. So Jesus taught His disciples to look upon their sufferings and the sufferings of the nation as signs of the coming age, introducing the resurrection life into the wintry life of man. These things were the indication that God's glorious hour was ἐγγύς ἐπὶ θύραις (I)

(I) This interpretation of the parable is not followed by Dibelius. He sees a present rather than a future reference - to the crisis of Jesus' ministry, and to the Kingdom of God at work in Jesus' words and works. He writes: "When men were in the attitude willed by God, they would know how to interpret the 'time', even as one sees the rain that is coming, in the clouds, and the summer that is drawing near in the leaves of the fig tree. There is no doubt that the time has become ripe. The Man who stands before them and declares the Kingdom of God in word and deed...was able to open their eyes". Jesus is the "sign of the Kingdom of God" in the same sense as Jonah was a sign to the men of Nineveh. In both cases the "call to repentance was the s pecial signal which was given".(Jesus, Berlin I947, 64-5.)
It is, however difficult to avoid the conclusion that the language refers to a future consummation. Schwartzkopff finds the chief point of the parable in the "absolute certainty with which the disciples are to see the nearness of the summer from the sprouting of the tree, and from the tribulations the nearness of the final kingdom for which they long". (The Prophecies of Jesus Christ, Edinburgh I897, 269)
ὅτι ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἐπὶ θύραις reminds one strongly of Jas.5.8.

Verse 30 also points to the nearness of the End. The verse has taxed the ingenuity of interpreters and has constituted a serious difficulty for faith.

Scholars have seen various references in ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη:

a) The human race in general.(I)

b) The Jews.(2)

Some modern scholars support this interpretation, but it is doubtful if γενεὰ is used in this sense elsewhere in the New Testament.

c) The Church.(3)

d) Unbelievers ("this sort" - on the analogy of Geschlecht).(4)

e) Cullmann(5) and Barth(6) see a reference to Christ's Passion and Resurrection in ταῦτα πάντα.

f) Others have read a reference to the destruction of the Temple.(7)

Vincent Taylor looks upon the saying as secondary in form: "ταῦτα πάντα has replaced a reference to some definite event, probably the destruction of the Temple and the fall of Jerusalem...A genuine saying has been adapted in the interests of contemporary apocalyptic".(8)

g) Calvin interpreted ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη of the contemporaries of Jesus, and ταῦτα πάντα of the signs of the End,(vv.5-23) not of the End itself. The passage teaches that Jesus' hearers would actually witness the outworking of God's final purposes for mankind:

(I) Jerome.
(2) Jerome.
(3) Origen and Chrysostom.
(4) Michaelis in Verheissung, 32f.
(5) The Early Church, London I956, I52-4.
(6) Die Kirkliche Dogmatik, III/2, 60I-3.
(7) Bengel, Lagrange.
(8) The Gospel according to St.Mark, 52I.

"Before a single generation shall have been completed they will learn from experience the truth of what He has said... And yet it was not the design of Christ to promise to His followers that their calamities would be terminated within a short time (for then He would have contradicted Himself having previously warned them that the end was not yet), but in order to encourage them to perseverance, He expressly foretold that these things related to their own age".(I)

This interpretation has much to commend it. It fits the usual New Testament use of γενεὰ of the contemporaries of Jesus.(2)

So Calvin would see the teaching that God's triumphant purposes of judgement and mercy are not deferred to some remote period in the future: they are at work in the present. There is the promise that Jesus' hearers would actually witness the truth of His words. The reference to οὔπω τὸ τέλος is consonant with the thought that faith would not become sight with regard to the full range of Jesus' words about the final overthrow of sin and suffering. This generation will witness signs of the End, not necessarily the End itself.

The only serious difficulty involved in this interpretation is the restriction of ταῦτα πάντα to vv.5-23. Beasley-Murray doubts the possibility of such a procedure. He mentions three reasons: a) The addition of πάντα . Luke uses πάντα of the whole discourse.b) The occurence of signs within the generation indicates an expectation of the End within a generation. c) In the thought of Jesus the fall of Jerusalem and the events associated with it were part of the judgements of the End. Those who passed through the final distress would witness the final deliverance.(3)

(I) Vol.3 of Commentary on Harmony of the Evangelists, Edinburgh I846, I5If.
(2) See Mt.II.I6; I2.39,4I,42,45; 23.36; Mk.8.38; Lk.II.50f.; I7.25.
(3) A Commentary on Mark I3, IOI. Similarly T.W.Manson sees a reference to the "whole of the preceding complex of predictions, including the consummation".Mission and Message,625.

Cranfield follows Calvin's interpretation although he admits that at first sight it looks as if ταῦτα πάντα refers to vv.5-27 (i.e. including the picture of the Parousia). This, however, does not necessarily follow. He compares the use of ταῦτα in v.29. It is better to take it as a reference to the signs of the End (vv.5-23) although strictly it should include the coming of the Son of Man (v.26). But this would yield the unlikely sense, "When you see the Son of Man coming, know that He is at hand". The reference then in ταῦτα πάντα and in ταῦτα is to the signs of the End (vv.5-23) which are characteristic, not merely of the times of Jesus' contemporaries, but of the whole period of the Last Times which began with the Incarnation.(I)

Bosch makes some telling points which militate against sweeping conclusions about verse 30.

He expounds it in the light of Mark I3.32 - "dieses Wort das Echteste von allem Echten". Jesus' admission of ignorance about "that day and hour" shows that He rejected all apocalyptic surmisings about the time of the End. I3.32 looks like a "direct contradiction" of I3.30 and 9.I, but "this contradiction is perhaps intentional. The close association of I3.30 and I3.32 is not accidental. The individual sayings, considered by themselves only present a half truth. Only when seen together do they present a whole truth". He goes on to claim that Mark I3.30 and 9.I must be compared with Matthew I6.I8, 2I.43, and Mark I3.I0:

"The Church passes on these words in spite of the contradiction. If one could say further that it passes them on precisely because of the contradiction, then this contradiction loses itself through the Faith...The Church knows its essential life from the tension of this contradiction", which is part and parcel of the "essential tension of New Testament proclamation".

Mark 9.I, I3.30, and I3.32 all call the disciples to watchfulness:

"They do not know when their Lord will come.

(I) The Gospel according to St.Mark, Cambridge I959, 407-9.

They have for that very reason always to reckon with the nearness of that day, never with its distance...The disciples must keep watch every day as if it were the Last Day, and work every day as if that Last Day still lay in the far-flung future".(I)

This interpretation seems to lift the whole passage above the heat of controversy. The "intentional contradictiom" is not thought out by brilliant exponents of progressive missionary policy to keep missionaries on their toes; it is grounded in the sovereign plan of God, who desires His servants to pray, believing that everything depends on Him, and to work as if everything depended on them, and as if no other day were left for work. And yet the work must be characterized by calm and resourceful planning as if a long corridor of time stretched ahead. These apparently irreconcilable positions are harmoniously linked together in this "intentional contradiction". This is only possible for faith, more specifically for missionary faith.

The fact that the early missionary preachers could not count on an indefinite succession of years stretching in fromt of them must have lent profound urgency to the task.

The Expectation of Opposition to Missionary Preaching.

The chapter contains important safeguards against an extravagant view of the role of mission. God has given His Church a necessary role in furthering His Kingdom, but Christ does not paint a story of effortless conquest. A.Schlatter's remarks about Matthew I0.23 would be equally applicable here: "The view of the future...is quite free of effeminate longings for success and of illusions of the result of the apostolic work".(2)

vv.9-I3 speak of persecution which Christian preachers will suffer at the hands of their fellow Jews, to whom they would be apostates. Their Jewish opponents would strain every nerve to make them feel the weight of the Roman sword.

(I) Op.cit., I80.
(2) Der Evangelist Matthäus, Calwer Verlag Stuttgart I948, 342.

The disciples' kinsmen would add their own terrible chapters to the story of persecution. The motive might be loathing of Christianity. Matthew 24.IO perhaps suggests that renegade Christians might betray their brethren out of fear of the consequences of remaining true to the Faith, and out of hope that such a betrayal would curry favour with the persecutors. Archbishop Temple echoes Jesus' warning in this paragraph in the words:

"Not all that the world hates is good Christianity, but it does hate good Christianity and always will".(I)

The reference to the "abomination of desolation"(v.I4), further underlines the grim opposition which God's people must expect. It is impossible in a work of this scope to go into a detailed discussion of the complications of this obscure passage. Whether we see a historical reference to the Romans setting up the imperial statue in the Temple, or hold with many scholars, especially Continental, that the βδέλυγμα represents an eschatological picture of the Antichrist, there can be no doubt that the verse gives a general picture of the power of evil in merciless opposition to those (whether Jews or Christians) who hold the truth.(2)

Persistence required in Missionary Preaching.

If the chapter contains safeguards against exaggerated conceptions of what preaching can accomplish, there are still more important safeguards against false, fanatical and feverish anticipations of the End. Materials are supplied for a true

(I) Readings in St.John's Gospel, London I940, 27If.

(2) Cranfield's approach is perhaps as good as any. He sees a double reference to the historical and the eschatological. Past, present and future are in the passage. The judgement of A.D.70 is a rehearsal of the Last Judgement and the "successive incarnations of Antichrist are foreshadowings of the last supreme concentration of the rebelliousness of the devil before the End". Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol 6, No 3, 297-300.
J.Weiss sees in the βδέλυγμα ἐρημώσεως "reine apokalyptische Theorie" It is a mistake to look for a specific interpretation. "He only says that a horrible desecration of the Temple must have taken place before the End can come". Das älteste Evangelium, 79.

doctrine of the nearness of the End, over against a false doctrine. It is extremely important to set passages which speak of the delay of the End, side by side with the other passages which we have already considered which allude to the nearness of the End.

"The End is not yet", could be written across vv.5-23. Here we have Jesus' answer to the question of verse 4: τί τὸ σημεῖον ὅταν μέλλῃ ταῦτα συντελεῖσθαι πάντα. ταῦτα πάντα looks beyond the destruction of the Temple to the denouement, as is clear from the Matthaean parallel (24.3). The Jews were deeply interested in the End of all things. The disciples as good Jews shared that interest.

It is highly significant that Jesus immediately sounded the warning note: βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς πλανήσῃ. There was every danger that they would wander off along unprofitable mental paths. "The whole discourse cries out, Take care!" says Volkmar.(I) No doubt the disciples hoped that Jesus would give them one sign which would unerringly reveal when the End would break in. Instead He gave them a baffling multiplicity of signs. He indicated that many things must happen before the End.

I. We have already referred to the necessity of <u>missionary preaching</u>.

2. <u>The emergence of deceivers</u> (v.6)

ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου λέγοντες ὅτι Ἐγώ εἰμι is probably a reference to false claimants to Messiahship.(2) As a background to these words it is easy to see the false teachers who

(I) Jesus Nazarenus und die erste christliche Zeit, Zürich I882, 280.

(2) This fits in well with Matt.24.5, Jo.4 .26. Cf. Ex.3.I4, Deut.32.39, Isa.4I4, 43.I0, for the idea of claiming false authority.
Beasley-Murray has the interesting suggestion that there may be a reference in the verse to the "contemporary belief in the power of a name", especially the name of God or the Messiah. He uses the Seven Sons of Sceva (Acts I9.I4ff.) as an illustration of a magical use of the name of Jesus. (A Commentary on Mark I3, 32.)

were presenting false and fanciful ideas about God's coming age of glory - the nationalists who imagined that the possession of the Temple implied the support of God; the religious fanatics like Judas of Galilee who, according to Josephus, paved the way for the ruin of the nation. Many people who would have hesitated to claim to be the Messiah in a strict sense, nevertheless felt that the mantle of Messianic authority had enfolded them, and that they were forerunners of the Kingdom. False teachers and false claimants would continue to arise in the last times.

3. Sufferings (v.7).

Preaching and suffering are laid side by side as opportunities for witness. Bosch writes:

> "Mission and Passion belong together, not only in the case of Jesus...but also in the case of His disciples...Every increase in missionary activity calls forth an increase in distresses and every increase in distresses points in advance to the End".(I)

The δεῖ does not mean that "all these things" are the will of God: it does mean that the sufferings are not fortuitous. The will of God is at work in the midst of them, that will which includes judgement as well as salvation. Schlatter interprets ὠδίνων from the standpoint of a typical Jewish mother. The pains of travail are welcomed for the sake of the fulfilment involved in them. Similarly, the sufferings of the disciples point beyond themselves to a glorious hope.(2)

It is interesting to note that the antidote for victory over the fear of suffering takes a present and a future form. The supernatural aid of the Holy Spirit is promised in the present,

(I) Op.cit., I60.
(2) Der Evangelist Matthaus, 699.

giving the disciples the relevant word at the right time (v.II). There is a real divine presence: but there is also a real divine absence. The age of glory lies ahead (vv.24-27).

It is clear, therefore that Jesus answer to the disciples' question (v.4), was directed to faith, not to curiosity. He did not give them the material to work out a time calendar, a day and an hour for the Coming. That would have cut across His repeated injunction to them to "watch", lest they should be taken unawares. He desired His Church to be on tip-toe with expectancy, facing squarely the practical challenge of His Coming. Bosch has rightly laid great stress on this practical aspect of anticipations of the End. The New Testament acknowledges a "three-fold preparation" -

"nämlich zu guten Werken, zum Zeugnis des Evangeliums, und fur die Wiederkunft des Herrn...Es geht also auf jeden Fall um ein aktives Bereitsein für das Eschaton. Eschatologie ist nicht eine Lehre von den letzten Dingen, sodern...Lehre von einer aktiven Wachsamkeit!(I)

The Jesus of Mark I3 left no room for apocalyptic star-gazing while a needy world swirled past unheeded. Faith in His Coming will be inescapably attended by diligent good works and by passionate proclamation of the Gospel. Without these practical concomitants there is no real belief in His Coming.

If the passages about the nearness of the End are considered in the setting of the stress that many things must happen before the End, there is an adequate solution to the real problem of interpretation posed by these passages. The picture of Jesus presenting an imminent End has been held to force an embarassing choice upon interpreters: Jesus was wrong or the apostles were wrong.

The latter choice was preferred by Vincent Taylor. He speaks

(I) Op.cit., I43.

of"the glittering apocalyptic robe with which primitive Christianity had clothed Him".(I) He feels that the primitive Church did less than justice to Jesus. They fastened upon Him Jewish ideas about the Last Things which were really foreign to His way of thinking.

Schweitzer, on the other hand, did not shrink from the belief that Jesus was wrong. We have his remarkable picture of the wheel of history rolling on, bearing

> "the mangled body of the one immeasurably great Man, who was strong enough to think of Himself as the spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to His purpose".(2)

He had thought that as "the coming Son of Man" He could speed the wheel of the world on its final revolution, but He was mistaken.

If one were forced to fasten an exclusively historical interpretation on the passages in which Jesus speaks of the nearness of the Coming, one would be involved in a serious impasse. But the New Testament evidence and the data of the primitive missionary movement seem to suggest a solution on a more satisfying level - a theological rather than a historical level. The teaching of the Lord about the nearness of the End may not be bound to the idea that the End would come in a few years time. Rather it may point to the thought that all God's acts are one - the Incarnation, the Cross, the Resurrection, life in the Spirit, and the Parousia. From that standpoint the Parousia is "near" all the time. The decisive event has already happened and the consummation of that event is sure in the purposes of God.

We believe that it is faulty exegesis to concentrate exclusively on passages which speak of the nearness of the End, and to overlook or deny the authenticity of others which speak of a delayed End. It is more satisfactory to hold, with J.Weiss,

(I) The Gospel according to St.Mark, London I952, 644.
(2) The Quest of the Historical Jesus, London I90I, 368-369.

that there is a two-fold purpose in Mark I3: to quieten feverish anticipations of the Parousia, and to warn against a false sense of security. The first aspect is served by the call to watchfulness (vv.33, 37), by the statement that the day and the hour are not known (v.32), and chiefly by the call to world mission (v.I0). Such passages could not have occured on the lips of an apocalyptic prophet who felt that the hour had struck. On the other hand, the expectation that the Parousia would occur during the lifetime of the present generation countered spiritual lethargy.(I)

The question has to be faced honestly: is a theological interpretation of the nearness of the End a genuine interpretation of the outlook of the primitive Church, and of the mind of Jesus? Is there really a harmony on a deep level of the seeming contradiction of an End both imminent and delayed? Or are we in danger of reading back into the records the theological viewpoint of a later age? Many distinguished scholars have handled the Gospel material in a different way. It will be necessary to consider some of the leading approaches in the next chapters, and to explain why they have not been acceptable.

(I) While Weiss has important positive contributions to make to the study of Mark I3, his viewpoint in several ways differs from the main positions of this study. Like Pfleiderer he saw the influence of Paul behind Mk.I3.I0. It could not be viewed as a word of Jesus. He claimed also that it stands "in complete contradiction of Matt.I0.23...it cannot even spring from a Jewish Christian circle, where, according to Acts 3.I9 the conversion of Israel appears as the natural End-time". Weiss has an interesting discussion of the relationship between Matt.I0.23 and Mk.I3.I0: "Mark could not use it",(i.e. Matt.I0.23)."He struck it out and replaced it with verse I3.I0, which gives us the terminus ante quem non, in the sense of Roms.II.25. The hypothesis that Mark has here taken a piece from the sayings source appears to me to be necessary and quite incontestable".(Das alteste Evangelium, 72-74).

In subsequent study we will seek to establish that there is no contradiction between Matt.I0.23, Mk.I3.I0 and Acts 3.I9. The Jewish and Gentile missions can both be viewed as a terminus ante quem non for the Parousia.

Chapter 4
The Approach of "Consistent Eschatology"

A.Schweitzer, M.Werner and others who favour the approach of consistent eschatology would handle Mark I3 in a radically different fashion from that suggested in the previous chapter.

Werner makes the lofty claim for the method of consistent eschatology that it supplies an objective criterion for assessing the historicity of the Gospel record. It pushes past subjective considerations to the source-texts themselves. Werner castigates the Form Critics for uncritical scepticism, and accuses the school of C.H.Dodd of "constant and blatant contradiction of numerous important and unambiguous sayings of Jesus".(I) It is clearly implied that consistent eschatology offers release from the mazes of subjectivism and the snares of unwarranted scepticism. The sincerity of the implication need not be denied, but it cannot be accepted uncritically

Huxley once gave this account of the scientific ideal: "Sit down before fact as a little child". It is a worthy ideal, but it is not easy for mature men to face fact without bringing preconceived notions to their assessment of fact. No one eschatological approach, or all of them combined, can prevent the intrusion of subjective considerations.

Neither Schweitzer nor Werner has given us a full treatment of Mark I3.

In the "Quest" there are only two references to the chapter. The first refers to Colani's theory that in Mark I3, Matthew 24, and Luke 2I, we are in touch with a Jewish-Christian apocalypse of the first century, to which was added a short exhortation by Jesus when He spoke about the

(I) The Formation of Christian Dogma, London I957, I0-I5.

destruction of the Temple.(I)

The second reference appears in a footnote. It is claimed that the prediction of suffering for the disciples which appears in the Caesarea Philippi narrative "cannot be derived from Jesus".(2) It certainly cannot, if Schweitzer's account of the mission and eschatology of Jesus is correct.

From the beginning, says Schweitzer, He had taught that those who were destined to share His Kingdom would suffer persecution that must be patiently endured to the end. Out of these travails the Messianic Kingdom would be born. And yet, He had always reckoned on the possibility that God would spare His elect the sharp ordeal of the Great Tribulation. That is the point of the prayer that they should not enter into the Great Tribulation, but would be delivered from the Evil One.

When Jesus sent out the Twelve there was a crisis. He thought that their mission would "let loose the final tribulation and so compel the coming of the Kingdom".(3) Matthew IO.23 is the proof that He expected the Parousia before their task was completed: but He was wrong. He had aimed at "hurling the fire-brand which should kindle the fiery trials of the Last Time", but the flame had gone out; and so, another torch had to be hurled - His own sacrificial death. This was the secret revealed at Caesarea Philippi: He alone was to suffer. It is true that He acknowledged the possibility that Peter, James and John might share His sufferings, but He alone must die to send the wheel of history spinning forward to His most glorious hour. The thought of the Passion had always played a part in His

(I) The Quest of the Historical Jesus, London I9IO, 224.
(2) Op.cit., 387 n.I.
(3) Op.cit., 387.

Messianic consciousness. It was brought into sharp focus by His disappointment about the lack of decisive eschatological impact from the mission of the Twelve.

Schweitzer had to deal with the problem that the Jesus of the Gospels spoke of the necessity of suffering for His disciples in the period after Caesarea Philippi. He concluded that Mark had misplaced passages like 8.34f. There is no room in Schweitzer's scheme for predictions of martyrdom for the disciples after the death of Jesus, for there is a triumphant Kingdom immediately on the other side of the Resurrection.

Beasley-Murray speaks, surely with justification, of "this cool piece of modifying the data to fit the conclusion".(I)

The impression left on the mind is certainly not one of objectivity.

In Werner's book "The Formation of Christian Dogma" there is no discussion of Mark I3. He demonstrates carefully that Matthew I0 is a historically situated unity but he does not examine Mark I3. It must be noted that Matthew I0.23 is for Schweitzer a key verse in understanding Jesus' eschatology, while Mark I3 contains elements which would destroy or challenge the conclusions of consistent eschatology, if it is possible to consider them as authentic strands in the teaching of Jesus. Again, Beasley-Murray's comment seems to be most relevant:

"Where one's own belief and Mark I3 clash, so much the worse, evidently, for Mark I3."(2)

The exponents of consistent eschatology would challenge the present study on the following points:

I) The universalism of Jesus. 2) The picture of Jesus.

3) The "nearness" of the End.

(I) Jesus and the Future, 47.
(2) Op.cit., 48.

I) The Universalism of Jesus

It has already been pointed out (I) that Schweitzer held that Jesus was particularistic in His preaching but universalistic in thought.

2) The Picture of Jesus

We have depicted a Jesus who towered above the eschatological limitations and eccentricities of His contemporaries. Schweitzer, on the other hand portrays a Jesus who mirrored Jewish apocalyptic conceptions in their essential lineaments.

It is true that Schweitzer acknowledges the originality of both Jesus and John the Baptist. Other apocalyptic movements had been repercussions from historical events like the religious oppression of Antiochus, civil strife in Jerusalem, the rise of Roman power under Pompey, and the destruction of Jerusalem. The wave of "apocalyptic enthusiasm" associated with Jesus and John

"was called forth not by external events but solely by the appearance of two great personalities".(2)

Their powerful personalities gave an impulse to the wave, but it covered conventional ground and reached the old water-marks. Jesus and John were at one with their contemporaries in the character of their expectations about the coming Kingdom of God.

Werner paints a similar picture. Christianity was a "phenomenon of late Jewish apocalyptic".(3) He finds a close relationship between the teaching of Jesus and Paul, on one hand, and the Apocalypse of Enoch and other apocalypses, on the other. "The logic of the Parousia-expectation" necessarily

(I) Thesis, 7-8.
(2) Op.cit., 56. 368.
(3) Op.cit., 56.

involved fanatical expectations of the Parousia. False Messiahs already were appearing (Mk.I3.22). The eschatological succession ran directly from Jesus to Montanist excitement, to"fanatical Parousia-prophets", to confusion in the ranks of the faithful, to wasted material resources, and to imperilled relationships with the state.(I)

It is important to note that all this was, in Werner's view, the inherent "logic of the Parousia-expectation, not a mistaken doctrine of it.

Acceptance of such a picture of Jesus leads to the conclusion that Jesus was a "heroic but misguided fanatic".(2) Werner evidently feels that Strauss has adequately answered that contention by pointing out that Jewish hopes were fanatical, and that it is quite understandable how a "prudent man" like Jesus could accept them.(3) Such an explanation may satisfy those who think that it is enough to view Jesus as a "prudent man" moving within the limits of contemporary thought. It must be unacceptable to those who maintain that such an approach does violence to the evidence.

The following observations may be made with justification:

a) The Jesus of the Gospels does not give the impression of fanaticism.

There is certainly an impression of intense moral and spiritual earnestness. Men of the world will always be swift to trace in such an outlook signs of a fevered disposition (Mk.3.2I), but "the foolishness of God is wiser than men". God's wisdom in Christ showed itself in profound dislike of the showy, the spectacular and the sentimental. There is a steady concentration on practical, ethical standards as the

(I) Op.cit., 40-4I.
(2) J.E.Fison, in "The Christian Hope", London I954, 54.
(3) Op.cit., 20.

fruit of authentic faith. "Fanaticism" is the last word to be used of such a Jesus.

b) There are serious Christological implications in Schweitzer's view of Jesus, into which it is impossible to go in detail in a study of this nature. The Christological presuppositions are clearly Ebionite: Jesus was deeply mistaken, first in His anticipations of what would be accomplished by the mission of the disciples, then, by His own death. T.F.Torrance comments:

"What is at stake ultimately in Schweitzer's view is the doctrine of Christ, for a Jesus who is so utterly deluded as the figure of Schweitzer's reconstruction, who dies with a despairing cry when events take an unforeseen course, cannot be the Son of God as the Church believes Him to be".(I)

c) T.W.Manson finds the main flaw in Schweitzer's reconstruction, its failure to explain why

"the practice of Jesus is so much better than the apocalyptic hope to which He is assumed to be committed".

He goes on to say:

"His independent attitude to the other great branch of Jewish doctrine, the scribal exposition of the Law, at least suggests that He may have had a mind of His own on the subject of the Kingdom of God and the Messiah".(2)

3) <u>The "Nearness" of the End</u>

Passages like Mark 9.I, I3.30, I4.62, and Matthew I0.23 are given far-reaching importance by the advocates of consistent eschatology, as keys to understanding the thought of Jesus.

There can be no doubt that these passages are extremely important. We must, therefore, give them the closest attention.

Such passages indicate, according to Schweitzer, that

(I) Evangelical Quarterly, Vol.xxv, No.I, 52.
(2) "Realized Eschatology and the Messianic Secret", in "Studies in the Gospels", edited by Nineham, 2I0.

Jesus expected the preaching of the Kingdom to be a lever to precipitate an imminent End. When He sent out the Twelve He did not expect to see them back in this age. The non-fulfilment of the prediction of Matthew I0.23 meant the first postponement of the Parousia. When the disciples returned, Jesus sought to escape from the people in disappointment (Mk.6.30ff.) Subsequently He came to the conclusion that He must go to Jerusalem to force the issue by His own death.

Is Werner right in claiming that Schweitzer alone makes a verse like Matthew I0.23 intelligible? If so, the approach of this study is untenable in four respects:

A) The theological interpretation of "nearness" is impossible.
B) Realised eschatology disappears from the record.
C) The central significance of the Death of Jesus cannot be traced back to Jesus.
D) There is a denial of an interval between the Resurrection and the Parousia.

A) <u>The Theological Interpretation of "Nearness"</u>

To Schweitzer and Werner, the chronological interpretation is the most significant interpretation, in fact, the only possible interpretation. The theological approach becomes an illustration of the intrusion of the Christ-dogma to smooth over the disappointment caused by the delay of the Parousia, an inevitable and understandable step in the de-eschatologising process.

<u>Matthew I0.23</u>

Matthew I0.23 is the pivot of Schweitzer's scheme. It may be

noted at the outset that the wisdom of building a scheme on one or two texts of Scripture is precarious in the extreme. Cullmann is justified in stating that the meaning of Matthew I0.23, Mark 9.I, and I3.30, is not clear, and that too much significance has been given to them.(I) The study of the differing approaches of scholars to these passages is a salutary exercise in humility and a clear warning against dogmatism.

The authenticity of Matthew I0.23

The majority of British expositors are doubtful about the authenticity of the verse.(2) Continental exegetes usually accept it.

T.W.Manson finds two main difficulties in the verse. His first difficulty is the opposite of Schweitzer's difficulty about predictions of persecution for the disciples. Schweitzer holds that later predictions (after Caesarea Philippi) cannot be authentic. Manson is suspicious of early predictions. To him this pessimistic reference to persecution is out of harmony with other accounts of the sending forth of the Twelve which assume a friendly reception, even if the message is rejected. "But there is a difference between rejecting a message and persecuting those who bring it".(3)

Secondly, Manson feels that the picture of such a speedy Coming of the Son of Man does not fit into other Gospel passages. He reaches the conclusion: "v.23 is out of place in this context. It reflects the experience and expectations of the primitive Palestinian Church".

It can hardly be agreed that these are telling considerations. Pessimism is one thing; realism is another. Matthew I0.I4-I6

(I) Christ and Time, 88;

(2) e.g. G.S.Duncan in "Jesus, Son of Man", London I947; C.J.Cadoux ("The Historic Mission of Jesus", 95, I43) B.H.Streeter ("The Four Gospels", 255) points out that Schweitzer's argument falls to the ground if Matthew I0 is not "word for word an exact report of what was said at the time". The tracing of at least two sources (Mark and Q) behind Matthew I0, would be fatal to Schweitzer's position.

(3) Mission and Message of Jesus, 474.

gives the warning that the campaign would not be an easy one, and that the message would not be unchallenged. There is only a step between rejecting the message and persecuting the messenger. "Wolves" have a way of tearing sheep.

Perhaps Manson's main difficulty arises from the fact that he appears to interpret 23b in a way which makes it refer to a Coming even speedier than the Coming "within the lifetime of some of the contemporaries of Jesus".

This interpretation is doubtful. If this verse teaches, among other things, that the King's business requires haste, it is thoroughly in line with the whole sweep of Jesus' teaching.

The meaning of Matthew I0.23

The verse must be interpreted in the light of Matthew I0, and of other New Testament passages.

We are indebted to David Bosch for a most convincing interpretation. He holds that in Matthew I0, Jesus has made two references to the disciples' "Zeugendienst". A Jewish mission and a Gentile mission appear side by side. The disciples' appearance before "governors and kings" in the course of persecution will involve μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (v.I8). Bosch views v.I8 as a parallel to Mark I3.9c,I0, and holds that Matthew I0.I8, 24.I4, Mark I3.9f., and Luke 2I.I2f., have the same "Haupttendenz". At first sight Matthew I0.23 appears to be "in direct contradiction to the other verses"(I), but this is appearance rather than reality. In fact v.23b is analogous to Mark I3.I0.

We find the core of his interpretation of the verse in the words:

"...die Junger werden einen Dienst zu Israel zu verrichten haben, der bis zur Parusie des Menschensohnes dauern wird. Über die Zeitdauer bis zur Parusie ist damit noch nichts gesagt, kein Anlass besteht, die zweite Person (im Verbum τελέσητε) zu pressen, also darunter nur die Zwolf verstehen"(2)

(I) Op.cit., I56. (2) Op.cit., I57.

The following points are of especial interest:

a) The verse refers to the Parousia.

b) It implies a relationship between the Jewish mission and the Parousia.

c) It need not be interpreted merely in relation to Jesus' contemporaries, and so an interval of time between the statement and its fulfilment is possible.

d) It does not contradict a Gentile mission.

Some of these conclusions would be challenged, even by scholars opposed to Schweitzer's approach.

It has been claimed that the verse refers to a 'coming' of Jesus in the Fall of Jerusalem.(I) This is attractive as it saves Jesus from the appearance of error in His time-calendar: but it must be questioned if Jesus' first hearers could be expected to put such a construction on the saying. Beasley-Murray's conclusion is sound: "Although the interpretation of the parousia as fulfilled in A.D.70 explains some of the Biblical data, it is irreconcilable with its general import".(2)

The verse has also been expounded in the light of the link between the Resurrection and the Parousia. The Resurrection is seen as part of the Parousia in the purposes of God. There is no doubt that there is a unity in the divine acts in Christ crucified, risen and coming again, but one is left wondering if this is a likely interpretation of ἕως ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου . Would it have been reasonable to expect the first audience to interpret the words in this fashion?

T.W.Manson has an interesting exposition of Matthew's use of the verse. He points out that Matthew (in contrast to

(I) Zahn, Das Evangelium des Matthäus, Leipzig 1903, 663-664.
(2) Jesus and the Future, 171.

Mark 6.12f. and Luke 10.17-20) had nothing to say about the progress of this particular mission. He looked upon the missionary message of Jesus as significant for the Church for all time. This verse is not merely addressed to the primitive Church but to the Church in every time.(1) Manson does not accept the verse as an authentic word of Jesus, but there is at least a bridgehead here to Bosch's position. If this viewpoint was possible for Matthew, need we deny its possibility for Jesus?

D.M.McIntyre came to conclusions about Matthew 10.23 that are strikingly similar to those of Bosch:

"As the pregnant words are uttered, the horizon widens and the centuries unfold; it is not the Twelve, but the Church which they represent, which is plunged into a sea of troubles...This is to continue until the close of the dispensation...The 'cities of Israel' in this sense can only mean the far-sown dwellings of the Diaspora...The apostles in their missionary journeys...were sent primarily to the Jewish communities of the Dispersion. Does our Lord imply that, if His bidding had been fulfilled and Israel diligently sought after by the apostolic band, He would have come to meet them, as Immanuel came to Captain Credence, 'in the field'? Apparently such is His meaning".(2)

On such an interpretation, Matthew 10.23, far from contradicting the fundamental contention of this thesis, actually supports it. The End is conditioned by world-wide missionary preaching, "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek".

Beasley-Murray holds this same viewpoint:

"Johannes Weiss may have been wrong in thinking that Mt.10.23 once formed part of the eschatological discourse, but there is little doubt that it could take its place alongside Mk.13.10 with perfect ease, providing that 13.30 be taken seriously".(3)

(1) Mission and Message of Jesus, 474.
(2) Faith's Title Deeds, 204-205.
(3) Jesus and the Future, 199.

Mark 9.I

Mark 9.I is another text used by Schweitzer to demonstrate that to Jesus the Coming of the Kingdom of God was chronologically near.

Sweeping statements about this text are entirely out of place. It has taxed the resourcefulness of some of history's most careful scholars, and it cannot be claimed that there is general agreement about its precise meaning, as is borne out by a glance at the variety of interpretations which have been taken from it, or read into it.

There have been the following interpretations of ἕως ἂν ἴδωσιν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει :

a) The Parousia.(I)
b) The Transfiguration.(2)
c) The Resurrection and the Ascension.
d) Pentecost.
e) The proclamation of the Gospel.
f) The Destruction of Jerusalem.(3)
g) All these events together.
h) Dodd interprets ἴδωσιν of intellectual perception, and insists on a strictly past sense for ἐληλυθυῖαν .
i) It has been held that γεύσωνται θανάτου refers, not to literal death but to spiritual death (cf. Jo.8.5If.; II.26.)
j) Michaelis suggests that οἱ ἑστηκότες need not refer to Jesus' contemporaries. Perhaps the original sense of the saying was:
"Some are (or stand) in such a way that they will not taste death"(4) ὧδε becomes not "here" but "thus".

(I) W.Manson (Luke in Moffatt N.T.C., London I930, III); G.R.Beasley-Murray (Jesus and the Future, I83-I85).
(2) D.M.McIntyre (Faith's Title Deeds, 205-206); C.E.B.Cranfield (The Gospel according to St Mark, 286-289).
(3) N.Geldenhuys (Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, London I950, 277f.)

In view of the range of these interpretations, it is difficult to take Titius' comment very seriously: "The real dogmatic difficulty of Mk.9.I, etc., is not to be denied; there is no room to speak of an exegetical difficulty".(I)

Undoubtedly there is a real dogmatic difficulty if Mark 9.I and similar passages illustrate a mistake on Jesus' part about the time of the Parousia, but the character of the dogmatic difficulty hinges on the exegetical view that may be taken of the verse. The extreme exegetical difficulty cannot be denied. Unquestionably one may have dogmatic presuppositions in approaching the verse, out of a reluctance to admit the possibility of error in Jesus. On the other hand, the possibility of dogmatic presuppositions on the part of those who have no difficulty in granting error in Jesus, must also be allowed. Failure to see an exegetical difficulty in the verse implies that there is only one possible meaning - that favoured by the exegete.

The most probable interpretation of the verse would appear to be a) or b), (The Parousia or the Transfiguration).

A good case can be made for a reference to the Transfiguration. Matthew, Mark and Luke all bring the saying into close relationship with the Transfiguration. At the very least it must be said that they saw the Transfiguration as a partial fulfilment of Jesus' word. Even scholars who favour another interpretation are prepared to make this admission. In all the Synoptics the march of events is the same - Peter's confession; Jesus' intimation of the role of suffering for Himself; and the Transfiguration. This association cannot be looked upon as accidental. The Transfiguration indicated to the

(I) Quoted by Beasley-Murray (Jesus and the Future, 183).

bewildered disciples that Jesus was"glorified by this predicted destiny of suffering...Confession and Transfiguration are thus like the parallel limbs of a double rainbow against the dark sky of the Messiah's fortunes"(I)

Since there was this association in the minds of the disciples it is impossible to deny that it may have gone right back to Jesus, and that He thought of the Transfiguration as a foreshadowing of His final triumph.

Beasley-Murray says bluntly that this interpretation is impossible as it is implied that some would die before the event, which rulese out the Transfiguration.(2)

This need not follow. It is not said that the majority of the bystanders will die before the τινες see the event of which Jesus was speaking. It only says that they themselves will not live to see it.

The author believes that the verse yields the meaning: "Some of you shall live to see a striking manifestation of the Kingdom of God".

An allusion to the Transfiguration is supported by the following points:

a) The reference to "six days" (9.2) suggests that the evangelist saw at least a partial fulfilment in the Transfiguration. With ἴδωσιν (v1) compare μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν (v.2), ὤφθη αὐτοῖς (v.4), εἶδον (vv.8,9).

(I) W.Manson (op.cit., II3). Similarly V.Taylor (The Gospel According to St Mark, London I952, 385): "Mark introduces the saying at this point because he sees at least a partial fulfilment ~~of~~ in the Transfiguration".

(2) Jesus and the Future, I85.
Manson also points out, against the view that Mk.9.I is fulfilled in the Transfiguration, that after the Transfiguration Jesus continued to speak of His reign as future (Lk.2I.27,28,3I,33; 22.I6,I8,69.) But it is not necessary to hold that Jesus spoke of only one future manifestation of the power of the Kingdom.

b) τινες fits well into this interpretation. Only Peter, James and John, participated in this vision of glory.

c) It may be claimed that τὴν βασιλειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐληλυθυιαν ἐν δυναμει is a fair description of the Transfiguration in its proleptic significance. Barth comments impressively: "In His Transfiguration they saw Him proleptically as the Risen One, in it they recognized transiently the Kingdom come in power, which afterwards in His Resurrection they recognized definitively, but thereby they recognized already - in parte pro toto as ἀρραβών and ἀπαρχη - precisely that which in the Parousia as in its universal revelation will become recognizable and be recognized comprehensively and finally as His glory".(I)

d) 2 Peter I.I6-I8 contains a highly interesting reference to the apostolic message about the "power and Advent" (δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν) of Jesus. That message had a clear futuristic connotation, but Peter and the others had witnessed a significant anticipation of that coming glory in the Transfiguration. It is significant that the Transfiguration is used rather than the Resurrection. Clearly this reveals that the primitive Church viewed the Transfiguration as a highly important illustration of the "power and Advent" of Jesus. There is no such explicit interpretation of the Transfiguration in the Synoptics, but this passage from 2 Peter throws back a shaft of light on the presuppositions of the Synoptic handling of the Transfiguration story.

e) A passage from the Ethiopic text of the Apocalypse of Peter depicts Peter speaking of

"the mountain whereon he showed us the second coming in the kingdom that passeth not away".(2)

Again the proleptic significance of the Transfiguration is noteworthy.

(I) Die Kirkliche Dogmatik, iii/2, 600.
(2) The Apocryphal New Testament, tr. by M.R.James, (5th ed.) London I953, 520.

All this would suggest that Jesus' saying in Mark 9.I, far from being an embarassment to the early Church, was a stimulus to faith. The Transfiguration pointed forward to the final "power and Advent" of Jesus, whenever that might be.

Mark I4.62

Jesus' prediction before the High Priest that he and his companions would

"see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven",

has frequently been used to make up the quartet of texts, which, it is alleged, set a definite limit for the Parousia.

It is quite impossible to follow Streeter in denying the authenticity of this verse on the ground that it belongs to a hostile and inaccurate version of the trial circulated by the enemies of Jesus. It must be remembered that Joseph of Arimathea was present. He would have been swift to point out any perversion of the scene. If the primitive Church had doubted the authenticity of this saying, it is quite inconceivable that it would have transmitted it in its present form. It could have been an embarassing saying, because a literal interpretation would have indicated that the High Priest and the other members of the Sanhedrin would live to see the Parousia. On such an interpretation the prediction was unfulfilled.

Many distinguished scholars, down to modern times, have followed a similar interpretation.

Schweitzer looks upon it as one of the sayings which prove that Jesus imagined that the End was very near.(I)

Dodd, on the other hand, believes that Jesus foresaw an

(I) The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, 59-60.

interval (however short) after His Resurrection before His final triumph.(I)

Beasley-Murray places the text with the other sayings which apparently place the End within the contemporary generation.(2)

The ambiguity of the verse must be noted. There are two other interpretations which are perfectly possible.

a) Denney argues for the symbolical rather than the literal character of the verse:

"It is no remote future to which Jesus appeals; the fulfilment of His words begins with the moment at which they are spoken. His enemies think that they have expelled Him from the world, but from the very moment of their triumph His victory sets in. He filled Jerusalem from His death onward as He had never done in His life; it was impossible to escape His Presence or His Power; the Council had more to do with Him...in the early days of Acts than in the period of the gospel history".(3)

Denney finds support for this view in the ἀπ' ἄρτι of Matthew 26.64: "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man seated"; also in the ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν of Luke 22.69: "But from this time shall the Son of Man be seated".

b) It is not said or implied that Jesus' hearers will see the Parousia <u>before</u> their death. The thought in Jesus' mind may well have been that they would see His Coming in glory when they were raised up for the Last Judgement.(4)

There is nothing in the passage which would rule out the possibility of the above interpretations. There may be truth in them both expressing a view of eschatology which was in the mind of both Jesus and the primitive Church.

(I) The Parables of the Kingdom, 96-I04.
(2) Jesus and the Future, I84-I85.
(3) Jesus and the Gospel, London I908, 370. Similarly V.Taylor:"...the priests will see facts and circumstances which will show that Ps.cx.I and Dan.vii.I3 are fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus".
(4) So Cranfield (op.cit., 445).

The Coming was being fulfilled in the present, andso was pointing forward to the final Coming at the End of time.

Our study of Matthew I0.23, Mark 9.I, I3.30 and I4.62, would lead us further than Kümmel's view that the number of texts which set a precise temporal limit for the Parousia is "extraordinarily small". There is legitimate doubt if even these texts carry the force claimed by Kummel. In view of this we must be extremely chary about speaking of "the mistake" of Jesus.

"The Mistake" of Jesus

Even conservative scholars in Britain and on the Continent are divided in their approach to this question.

The position of Beasley-Murray is especially interesting.

"He freely admits that on this matter he hesitated long before capitulating before the facts".(I) The Christological foundation for his view that Jesus expected the Parousia within a generation is to be found in Baldensperger's statement that "religious perfection does not include omniscience".(2)

Beasley-Murray explains Jesus' expectation of a speedy Coming by the following considerations:

a) The prophetic viewpoint always sees a speedy fulfilment.

b) Jesus believed utterly in the Father's power.

c) He also trusted His followers to pray and to preach.

d) Jesus' consciousness of Messianic vocation and of His redemptive work would "necessarily intensify...the expectation of the nearness of the final kingdom".

e) Mark I3.32 brings all Jesus' thoughts about a speedy

(I) Op.cit., I83.
(2) Op.cit., I86.

Coming "under the decision of the Father's good pleasure".

f) The motive behind passages referring to a speedy End is Jesus' pastoral care.

g) God's victory was near because already the vision was clear in Jesus' own soul.(I)

Cullmann is no more disturbed by the "error in perspective" which Jesus shared with the primitive Church. He sees this error corrected here and there in the New Testament itself (e.g. 2 Peter 3.8). It is an error that is understandable psychologically, of the same character as convictions about the speedy end of a war after the decisive battle has been fought. The statement "The Kingdom has come near" has a chronological bearing, but its theological significance is of supreme importance: the redemptive Christ-event is at the centre of time.(2)

Cranfield, on the other hand, holds that it is a grave matter to conclude that Jesus was mistaken about such a weighty matter. He used the solemn formula "Verily" in Mark 9.I, and I3.30, thus deliberately claiming authoritative knowledge about the End. Cranfield opposes the conclusion that Jesus was mistaken, not because of any a priori objection, but because he feels it is not borne out by the evidence. For him, "Jesus' paradoxes are far too lively to be successfully caught and confined in so simple and rectilinear a strait-jacket".(3) The imminence of the End is to be understood theologically.

Cranfield touches here on two vitally important

(I) Op.cit., I86-I9I. W.Manson (op.cit.,III) also sees Jesus' expectation of a consummation within a generation, a "natural and inevitable"thing. "He expected the supernatural Kingdom of God to become a fact (cf.Mark 9.I), or, if death came before his work was finished, he expected to come again from God (cf.Matthew I6.28) in terms of the prophecy in Daniel.

(2)Christ and Time, 87. Cf.Kümmel (Promise and Fulfilment, I49): "It is perfectly clear that this prediction of Jesus was not realized, and it is therefore impossible to assert that Jesus was not mistaken about this".

(3)Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.7, 286.

characteristics of the eschatological teaching of Jesus.

I. It is authoritative.

Jesus' pronouncements are to be taken as the final truth of God. If a mistake could be decisively proved in relation to any pronouncement, it could have serious consequences. It could throw open the door to the possibility of other mistakes. When Jesus did not know, He did not hesitate to admit His ignorance (Mark I3.32). His authoritative pronouncements must be judged against that background.

2. It is paradoxical.

Sometimes the Coming appears temporally near, and at other times remote. There is a vagueness of outline about it which is exegetically difficult.

Another point is stressed by D.M.McIntyre: we confront the same "apparent dubiety" in Jesus, after the Resurrection. "After He has surmounted the limitations which surround our earthly life, He speaks in the same manner as before...It is not permissible to say that He was groping His way towards certainty: He speaks with authority".(I)

This strongly suggests that it is possible to hold that the vagueness of outline is intentional.

A detailed study of "the mistake" of Jesus belongs to Christology. But the Christological discussion cannot proceed on the assumption that the Gospel material demonstrates that Jesus' eschatological message was delivered against the background of an "error in perspective". The author believes that the most that can be claimed is that the issue is open.

Brunner has an eminently sane and satisfying approach to the complexities of the issue. He would accept the belief that Jesus expected an early End of history, but he would lay statements which give this impression against the background of

(I) Op.cit., 202-203.

"two equally trustworthy sta tements of Jesus...the effect of which is at least to relativize the validity and far-reaching importance of those concerning His early future coming".(I)

The two statements are Mark I3.32 and Matthew 24.I4. The connection of these paradoxical ideas, and the fact that Jesus expected an early End of history, are alike "inexplicable" to Brunner.

"All this is veiled in the mystery of the humanity of the Son of God, of the form of a slave assumed by the suffering Servant of God, who renounced His claim both to omniscience and to omnipotence.(2)

Brunner concludes that the thorough-going eschatologists are wrong in giving central importance to the chronological element in the idea of an imminent End. In his view

"the theory of the Christ-dogma as a substitute for the disappointed hope of the Parousia is utterly superfluous as an explanation of the former, and therefore purely arbitrary".(3)

The author is in complete agreement with this view. He believes that the theological interpretation of the nearness of the End is the best interpretation, provided that it is remembered that we are speaking of a practical and a missionary theology.

B) Realised Eschatology

Werner says categorically:

"For Jesus there had been no 'realised eschatology'...Primitive Apostolic Christianity demonstrably knew,and had learned, nothing of a Kingdom of

(I) Eternal Hope, I28. Similarly D.Bosch, commenting on Cullmann's "Perspektivenirrtum": "Such sayings" (i.e. Mk.9.I, I3.30) "did not make the Church fall into error", as they were read in the light of other passages, and against the background of the Resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Op.cit.,I47-I48)
(2) Op.cit., I30.
(3) Op.cit., I28.

God having already achieved contemporary realisation in the person and activity of the historical Jesus".(I)

This is a remarkable statement until one remembers the approach of consistent eschatology to the historical character of the Gospel record. It makes two points:

a) The record is fundamentally trustworthy.

Werner quotes Schweitzer's claim:

"Far from diminishing the historical trustworthiness of the original tradition, the Consistent-Eschatology supports it. It can on the main issue recognise and proclaim as historical all which in the two first Gospels concerns the career of Jesus".(2)

b) There are unreliable elements in the record. It is not surprising that we come across "incompleteness, distortion and legendary accretion".(3)

The tendency, evidently, is to treat as unreliable the elements which do not fit into the scheme of consistent eschatology. A good illustration is the treatment of passages where Jesus speaks of Himself as Son of Man <u>in the present</u>. These cannot be historical because Jesus was not Messiah praesens but Messiah designatus His earthly life was not charged with Messianic glory.

"Jesus was the prophetic man of God...chosen for <u>future</u> exaltation to the office of the Heavenly Messiah".(4)

Glory was read back by the Church into the earthly life of Jesus, again because of the problem posed by the delay of the Parousia.

This is all theoretically possible, but it is also theoretically possible that consistent eschatology is too narrowly conceived, with the result that its conclusions fit excellently into certain passages of Scripture, while doing less

(I) Op.cit., I4.
(2) Op.cit., I7.
(3) Op.cit., 22.
(4) Op.cit., I28-I29.
Cf.Schweitzer's reference to Jesus' expectation "at the coming of the Kingdom to be transformed into the Son-of-Man Messiah".(The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, 82.)

than justice to others.

It is impossible to accept Werner's excision of realised eschatology from the convictions of Jesus and of the primitive Church.

πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρός is written across the whole ministry of Jesus.

"The theory of realized eschatology is right", writes Brunner, "in so far as it truly grasps where the centre of gravity of the primitive Christian faith lies".(I)

To the Christian, the Old Testament becomes a forward-looking book, whose key is in the hands of the Coming One. The καιρός was foretold by the prophets. In Christ it was a present reality.(2) Jesus' ministry becomes decisive for mankind.(3) Trifling with it, and rejection of it, brings men perilously near the clutches of αἰωνίου ἁμαρτήματος .(4) Equally the Last Judgement is anticipated in men's present encounter with Christ.

Because this is true the mission of the Church involves a present encounter with the power of the Kingdom, a unique opportunity for salvation or judgement.

This is the case of the healing mission of the Church. We have the pregnant words in Luke's account of the charge to the Seventy:

"Heal the sick...and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (I0.9).

This is so because healing is in the Name of Jesus, corresponding to His own mighty works of healing which were proof positive that the Kingdom of God was invading the kingdom of men, in the Person of the Son of the Kingdom.(5)

(I) Op.cit., I30.
(2) Mt.I3.I6f.; Lk.I0.23f.
(3) Mt.23.35f.
(4) Mk.3.29; Mt.I2.32; Mt.II.20-24; Lk.I2.I0.
(5) Mt.I2.28; Lk.II.20.

The preaching mission of the Church also means present encounter with the Kingdom. This is clearly involved in the Great Commission (Mt.28.I9,20). The presence of Jesus is promised to the teaching and preaching Church. Mission links the present power of God with its future manifestation. Cullmann comments on "even unto the consummation of the age" (R.V. margin):

> "This is not a vague chronological statement like 'always' (as we usually interpret it)...but it is a clear reference to the eschatological character of the missionary enterprise, which must take place precisely in this form, before the end of the age, and itself gives its meaning to this age".(I)

It surely does not strain the text to claim that the presence of Christ is made dependent on obedience to preach the Gospel throughout the world. This high view of the importance of preaching finds at least a partial parallel in the account of Jesus' answer to John's doubts about His Messiahship. As the climax to the account of Jesus' works come the words: "The poor have the Gospel preached to them" (Mt.II.5). Evidently Jesus viewed that as the most glittering jewel in the Messianic crown. The great Sower loved to scatter the seed where it was needed most.

Even the passages which we have just considered, which speak of the imminence of the Kingdom, can be used to illustrate the inevitable polarity between 'now' and 'then', in the mission of the Church. Althaus has claimed that such passages as Mark 9.I, Matthew I0.23, and Mark I3.30, were meant to prepare the present generation for the Last Event, not to give "a theoretic picture of the coming course of the world".(2)

Kümmel sees Mark 9.I as an illustration of the future judgement involved in the present reaction to Jesus. There is a link between the Last Event and the preaching of the presence of the Kingdom, with Jesus central in that message.

(I) Background to the New Testament and its Eschatology, 4I7.
(2) Die Letzten Dinge, 27I.

He claims that

"the most striking element in his (Jesus') eschatological message is the existence of pronouncements concerning the present beside those about the future".(1)

The Kingdom has come into being, but its consummation is in the future.

Son of Man passages

We now must consider the attack of consistent eschatology on passages which speak of Jesus as Messiah praesens rather than Messiah designatus. It is claimed that the realised eschatology that is attached to the Son of Man conception cannot possibly be traced back to Jesus.

Here we need to remember Otto's warning that prejudice can easily affect our thinking about the Son of Man:

"This prejudice, and not real literary or historical proofs, is the reason why we reject the view and regard it as the picture of the Church of a later date".(2)

There are many interesting passages in which Jesus speaks of Himself as Son of Man in the present. Mark 2.10 and 2.28 are noteworthy. C.F.D.Moule speaks of Mark 2.10 as a "daring paradox of realised eschatology".(3)

We cannot deal here with the question if these passages are illustrations of the Church inserting "Son of Man" where Jesus had originally used "I".(4) The crucial point is that these passages were fragments from primitive preaching, which clearly viewed Jesus as Messiah praesens, and not merely Messiah designatus. The earthly ministry of the Son of Man was viewed as part of His work.

It is not difficult to believe that what was possible for the early Church was also possible for Jesus.

(1) Promise and Fulfilment, 151.
(2) Kingdom of God and Son of Man, 176. Stauffer (New Testament Theology, London, 1955, 108) says: "'Son of Man' is just about the most pretentious piece of self-description that any man in the ancient East could possibly have used."
(3) Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas, Bulletin iii 1952, 45.
(4) As claimed by Otto(op.cit., 234) Other sayings in which Jesus alludes to Himself as Son of Man are Lk.9.58; 7.34; 12.10; Mt.8.20; 11.19; 12.32.

Bowman sees three ideas in "Son of Man":

a) Love (The Suffering Servant);

b) Power (The Messiah);

c) Exaltation (The apocalyptist conception of the Son of Man.)

He holds that these ideas are sterile, apart from one another. They become redemptive when taken together. The uniqueness of Jesus lies in the fact that it was His hand that brought them together.(I)

W.Manson has an especially interesting discussion of Son of Man in its bearing on our study.

In his view the Son of Man passages are of vital importance in helping us to understand the Christian revelation. They are

> "clustered lights situated to left and to right, so to speak, of the chancel steps leading to the innermost shrine".(2)

They tell us that there are

> "two great engagements of Christian thought within the mind of the New Testament Church. These are the Parousia-hope and the Church's sense of mission to the world".(3)

On this interpretation, the Church's present mission links the present and the future. God's action in the present missionary activity of the Church is the guarantee, the sign of His final victory. We are in touch both with realised and unrealised eschatology.(4)

(I) The Intention of Jesus, Philadelphia I943, I53.
(2) Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.5, No.2, II4. Cf. Stauffer's claim (op.cit., I08) that "we have to give historical and theological primacy" to Christ's claim to be the Son of Man, as it brings us to the heart of His own view of His significance for history.
(3) Op.cit., II6.
(4) Along a similar line Otto (op.cit., I6I) writes: "The kingdom of God throws its shadow forward into the present; it is not yet here in power, but is already here in secret. Likewise the Son of Man is not yet here in his power, but is already here before his power...as the one who some day will be the Son of Man in his power.

Manson sees compassion as an important motive in the mission of the Son of Man, and of His disciples. "Would it be strange", he asks, "if among the causes which led him to place his whole personal work and fortunes under the final sign of the Son of Man (Mt.24.30) the element of his deep compassion for men played a part...?"(I)

He holds that the human element was always present in Jesus' Messianic vision.(2) Love was the overmastering dynamic of His life. The missionary Church caught the infection of His passionate love.

Manson's approach to the other great engagement of primitive Christian thought is also stimulating. He makes much of the point that the Parousia-hope in the New Testament concerns a Parousia in history. "The focal point from which the graph of this transcendent destiny of the Son of Man is described lies on the plane of this world's history.(3) Here the New Testament Son of Man is different from the Son of Man in Daniel and Enoch. The one who is "like a son of man" (Dan.7.I3), goes to the Ancient of Days that he may receive everlasting dominion, but he does not return. The Son of Man in the Similitudes of Enoch waits in heaven until the elect come to him at the end of the days. In neither source does the Son of Man empty himself, to identify himself in totality with human need. Again, the Son of Man in Enoch dispenses rewards to the good; he does not make the evil good, and he certainly does not die for their sins.

To Manson the thought of the Son of Man returning

(I) Jesus the Messiah, London I943, II8.
(2) Manson (op.cit., II8) points out that humanity is a common feature to the Davidic Messiah, the Isaianic Servant, and the apocalyptic Son of Man. He quotes Isaiah 32.I-2; 53.3, and Daniel 7.I3.
(3) Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.5, No.2, II6.

to earth has important bearing on the mission of the Church. Against such a background, history cannot be despised and it cannot be surrendered to the dominion of evil. The Son of Man has taken a grip of history by Cross and Empty Tomb, and He will come again in history.

Stauffer, expounding a very similar view, says: "In calling himself the Son of Man Jesus had already taken the decisive step in claiming cosmic history as his own".(I)

The author believes that Manson's interpretation of Son of Man is more convincing and more satisfing than that of consistent eschatology, for the following reasons:

a) It does not entail the major exegetical surgery which is involved in the removal of all realised eschatology from the body of Jesus' authentic sayings.

b) Manson's Man of Compassion strikes the mind as a genuine representation of the Jesus who looked with compassion on the multitudes, which cannot be said of Schweitzer's apocalyptic Schwärmer.

c) Manson's interpretation illustrates the polarity of 'now' and 'then', which, in the view of the author, runs through New Testament eschatology.

d) It is also true to the polarity of the 'one' and the 'many'.

Barrett warns against the over-simplification of two views of the Son of Man:

I) T.W.Manson's view that Jesus and His disciples (when they were true to Him) were the Son of Man.

2) Schweitzer's view that Jesus bore the Messianic affliction alone.

Barrett is satisfied with neither view: "...instead of saying

(I) Op.cit., III.

'All were the Son of man, but all fell away except Jesus', and 'At first Jesus believed that all must suffer; later He believed that He must suffer alone', we must say, 'The Son of man is the One and the Many; the One will suffer for the Many and the Many will suffer in the One'".(I)

To W.Manson, Jesus is "the One and the Many". His death is unique, but it has a unique power to draw the Many within the scope of its sacrificial entail.

"If the love of Christ is to be made real and to have an impact on society", writes Manson, "it must be by becoming incarnate in His representatives. They are 'crucified with Christ..."(2)

C) The Death of Jesus

The Son of Man passages put us in touch with the further question, which, of course, is bound up intimately with the whole question of realised eschatology: the place of the death of Jesus in His own outlook, and in the missionary preaching of the Church.

Consistent eschatology, with its futuristic eschatology, denies the primitive character of the traditional view of the death of Jesus as a sacrifice for sin. The death of Jesus becomes a moment in the eschatological drama which failed to achieve the high hopes of the central Figure. Jesus' sacrifice is to be understood, not so much in terms of Old Testament sacrifices, or in the light of the great figure of the Suffering Servant, as against the background of eschatological dreams. The delay of the Parousia forced a reinterpretation of the death of Jesus. When the conviction collapsed that the age of Jesus and the apostles was the final epoch, the eschatological significance of the death of Jesus collapsed too. Christianity was at the cross-roads.

(I) Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.6, No.3,235n.
(2)Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.5, No.2, I22.

Hellenisation and early Catholicism lay ahead.

According to this interpretation, Cullmann is wrong (and this study is wrong) in finding the centre of gravity for the primitive Church in the Person and Work of Christ Crucified and Risen. For the propitiatory significance of the death of Jesus in the centre of the divine scheme was not the authentic viewpoint of the primitive Church; it was a milestone in the inexorable de-eschatologising process, to which the Church came after a way of frustration and disappointment.

There are interesting agreements between Schweitzer's view of the death of Jesus, and that of conservative thought.

a) Schweitzer traces back Jesus' anticipation of personal suffering and death to an early stage in His ministry, although he maintains that the earlier form of that anticipation differed from the latter.(I)

b) Jesus saw His death mirrored in Scripture, especially in Isaiah 53.(2)

c) His death was a death for sin. It was the sacrifice of the New Covenant.(3)

d) There was an objective character about His death.(4)

But running alongside these apparent agreements there are fundamental disagreements.

a) Schweitzer limits the Atonement to the Elect. The "ransom" offered by Jesus was designed to free the Elect from the pre-Messianic tribulation.(5)

b) Schweitzer's Jesus expected His Death, Resurrection, Coming on the clouds, and the Coming of the Kingdom to follow one another in rapid succession. Mark I4.27-28 and I4.62 are quoted in support of this expectation. (6)

c) Schweitzer gives the same meaning to forgiveness of sins

(I) The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, 58.
(2) Op.cit., 59.
(3) Op.cit., 60.
(4) Op.cit., 62.
(5) Op.cit., 58-59.
(6) Op.cit., 59-60.

and the Coming of the Kingdom. "Until the sins of the Elect are atoned for, God cannot bring in the Kingdom. A merciful God carries through a double substitution - the death of Jesus for the death of the Elect, and the death of Jesus instead of the Tribulation. Thus all possible barriers to the Coming of the Kingdom are removed.(I)

d) Jesus did not instruct His disciples about the atoning significance of His death. It was unnecessary to do so as His death would avail "without their needing to know or believe in it"; and so, all we find in Scripture are "obscure hints". Accordingly, the disciples were not aware that Jesus' death was to take the place of the Messianic Tribulation. The unity which Jesus saw between His atoning death and the Coming of the Kingdom, did not characterize their thinking. They believed in forgiveness of sins because of the death of Jesus, and yet still expected the Tribulation. These two ideas had originally been linked together in the mind of Jesus through His belief in the nearness of the Kingdom. Time severed the link and moved the Church on to ground which necessarily differed from Jesus' outlook.

Schweitzer claims that his interpretation is the "historically true version of Jesus' thought", and sees it as preferable to the

"host of theological or untheological inventions which have been foisted upon Him".(2)

Werner virtually lays aside Paul's claim in I Corinthians I5.3 that his preaching of the propitiatory significance of the death of Christ echoed primitive Christian conviction. Werner's Paul

"went far beyond the primitive Apostolic idea of the propitiatory Death". He was "unique among the Apostles", in believing that Christ's death "initiated the End of the World in such a way that this eschatological event was already

(I) Op.cit., 62.
(2) Op.cit., 62.

truly effective in the lives of the faithful".(I) "The world is crucified unto me" (Gal.6.I4), means that the world had already begun to perish. Jewish Christians from the beginning had not countenanced Paul's doctrine of the Cross. Gentile Christians were forced to abandon it because of the delay in the Parousia; and so the new doctrinal task was to obliterate the eschatological basis of Paul's soteriology. This was no easy task. The post-Apostolic Church knew much uncertainty about the death of Christ, but finally it was found easier to deal with the Cross as a sacrifice for sin than as an eschatological lever, or as the first-fruits of a wonderful eschatological harvest.

It is, therefore, not surprising that Werner looks upon the New Testament view that the battle against evil came to a decisive issue through Christ's Cross and Resurrection, as the fruit of embarassment caused by the non-appearance of the Parousia.

But the legitimacy of this approach must be seriously challenged. How are we to explain the fact that for the early Church the Cross became normative for their view of God's revelation and of the Messianic salvation? "What was at first blinding darkness became the very foundation of their seeing"(Manson).(2)

Was this a case of agonising re-appraisal when they were forced to admit that they had been wrong in their anticipation of the coming Kingdom? Or can we say that their Lord had opened their eyes, reminding them of His predictions of His Passion?

An important group of Son of Man sayings, in which Jesus predicted suffering and death, must be considered. It has frequently been pointed out that in none of these sayings

(I) Op.cit., 73.
(2) Jesus the Messiah, I2I.

is "I" substituted for "Son of Man".

"The tradition is as hard as diamonds," says R. Otto, "and identical in form in all the records".(I)

The best explanation of this is that Jesus had expounded to His disciples the paradoxical and mysterious truth that the Cross was the vehicle of God's glorious purposes of salvation.

Mark 10.45

Mark 10.45 is of crucial importance. There have been radically different interpretations of it.

Kummel holds that its meaning is not plain; that there is "no clear allusion to Isaiah 53", either here or in any of Jesus' sayings. Consequently he is dubious of the belief that Jesus felt that He was destined to carry through the role of the Suffering Servant:

"That Jesus felt his death to be the redemptive event which would bring about the Kingdom of God is therefore unproven".(2)

The difficulty of the verse hinges on the precise interpretation of λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν.

Schweitzer, as we have seen, held that the ransom was designed to free the Elect from the Great Tribulation. This conflicts radically with the traditional approach which, working with some such theory as Anselm's, has always believed that the ransom dealt with man's supreme need: deliveranee from the guilt and the power of sin.

It may be said that part of the difficulty of the verse arises directly from the fact that we are faced with the mystery of the divine love, which always must hold mysterious depths for the mind of man. Denney says finely:

(I) Op.cit., 235.
(2) Promise and Fulfilment, 73f.

"As the words fall on our minds we seem to hear the plunge of the lead into fathomless waters - we shall not for that imagine that we have lost our way. By these things men live, and wholly therein is the life of our spirit. We cast ourselves on them, because they outgo us; in their very immensity, we are assured that God is in them".(I)

Kümmel's view that there is no "clear allusion" in the verse to Isaiah 53 is highly questionable. W.Manson finds three echoes of the chapter:

"He 'serves', he 'gives his life' as an offering, his offering is 'for many'."(2)

There are many indications in the Gospels that Jesus' thought of His vocation was profoundly influenced by the Suffering Servant.(3)

Others who are prepared to see the figure of the Suffering Servant behind this word of Jesus, would maintain that there is no specific reference to His death, but rather a reference to the vicarious sacrifice of His life, crowned, of course, by the supreme sacrifice of the Cross.(4)

It may be claimed rightly that such a view does not do justice to the text. W.Manson holds that the aorist tenses (διακονῆσαι & δοῦναι)

"indicate that the allusion is not to a lifelong sacrifice but to one definitive act of self-surrender".(5)

Further there is no serious attempt to expound λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν . An exposition on the lines of

(I) The Death of Christ, 32-33.
(2) Jesus the Messiah, I3I & I33. Cf.Is.53.6; 53.I0. The trespass offering (ם ש ן) is made for the sin of Israel; and so the Servant of the Lord can achieve what neither Moses nor David was reckoned worthy to achieve (Ex.32.3If., 2 Sam.24.I7).
(3) See Lk.22.37; Mk.I4.2I; Matt.26.24; Lk.22.22; Lk.4.I8 (cf.Is.6I.I); Matt.II.5 (cf. Is.6I). E.F.Scott suggests that the very word "Gospel" is borrowed from Isaiah (40.9, 52.7).(Kingdom and Messiah, Edinburgh I9II, 2I9-220).
(4) E.g. T.W.Manson (Mission and Message of Jesus, I35).
(5) Op.cit., I3I.

Denney's seems to be required:

"A ransom is not wanted at all except where life has been forfeited, and the meaning of the sentence unambiguously is that the forfeited lives of many are liberated by the surrender of Christ's life, and that to surrender His life to do them this incalculable service was the very soul of His calling".(I)

Bultmann holds that the text is a "dogmatische Umgestaltung", and that the primitive form behind it is Luke 22.27.(2) There are no critical grounds for this statement, and many modern scholars would support Bosch's conclusion:

"That Jesus could have assigned atoning virtue to His death, ought to be recognized almost generally today".(3)

There are good grounds for believing that Jesus looked upon His death, not as a stepping-stone to glory, but as the key-stone in the mighty house of faith which God had sent Him into the world to build.

D) Interval between Resurrection and Parousia

An imminent End, as interpreted by consistent eschatology clearly rules out the possibility of an interval between the Resurrection and the Parousia, with the missionary task as the salient characteristic of the Zeit zwischen den Zeiten. This becomes no more than a rationalisation of a later date to meet the inexorable fact of the delayed End.

(I) Op.cit., 32.
(2) There is no proof that Lk.22.27 is a variant form of Mk.IO.45. Even if it is, why should it be preferred?
(3) Op.cit., I76. G.S.Duncan, e.g.: "We need not hesitate to draw...the conclusion that...Jesus attached sacrificial significance to His death...Jesus claims to give His life, not in defence of principles, but on behalf of men". (Jesus Son of Man, London I947, I57-I58.

Kummel refers to many passages in the Gospels which do not fit into such a view.

a) His handling of Mark 9.I (one of the pillar passages of Schweitzer's exposition) is especially interesting. He finds in it the proof, not only that Jesus' view of the future was restricted, but that He did not expect the Coming of the Kingdom "within a very short period". The "absence of an unrestricted promise to all of Jesus' contemporaries" is notable.(I)

b) Similarly, Jesus' reference to the queen of the south and the men of Nineveh rising up ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης (Matt.I2.4If., and Lk.II.3If.) is seen by Kümmel as the proof that Jesus expected many of His contemporaries to die before they would "rise up" for judgement.(2)

c) Kümmel uses the eucharistic saying in Mark I4.25 as another proof of the relative distance of the End. Thus he comes to a conclusion which is diametrically opposed to that feached by Schweitzer, who says of the Matthaean parallel (26.29), that it can only mean that the disciples "will shortly be gathered with Him at the Messianic feast".(3)

We must conclude that all that can be said with certainty about this eucharistic saying is that Jesus speaks in it of a separation and a reunion. Nothing is said about the length of the interval between. It cannot be assumed that it is very short or very long.

Beasley-Murray's conclusion is admirable:

"...it is difficult

(I) Op.cit., 28-29.
(2) The ambiguity of the Greek is mirrored in the translations. For Matt.I2.4I, the New English Bible has "...when this generation is on trial, the men of Nineveh will appear against it": but the alternative is noted: "...will rise together with it". Weymouth has "together with the present generation.
(3) See for the opposing expositions: Kummel (op.cit., 3I-32); Schweitzer (The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, 242). Kümmel also uses Mk.2.I8f. to support his view of an interval between Jesus' death and the Parousia.

to deny that our Lord's expectation of a period of historical development after his death and resurrection is as well attested as his conviction of a relatively near consummation of the kingdom; the two conceptions are complementary and cannot be divorced without injury to the wholeness of our Lord's teaching".(I)

Conclusion

The exposition of the imminence of the Parousia presented by Schweitzer and Werner is unsatisfactory in three respects:

I) Its one-sidedness; 2) Its picture of the primitive Church; 3) Its forgetfulness of the power of the Resurrection.

I) One-sidedness

A recollection of the tendency of the theological thought of Schweitzer's day to interpret Jesus' life and thought in non-eschatological terms, may cause us to speak of "magnificent one-sidedness", but the one-sidedness remains. It cannot be said that consistent eschatology deals adequately with all the New Testament material.

2) The Picture of the Primitive Church

Consistent eschatology gives us a picture of a Church profoundly heart-sick because of hope deferred. Werner refers to an extraordinary picture of the Apostles in the Gospel of Mary, in the doldrums of doubt, after the Ascension: "Lamenting and weeping, they declared themselves unable to fulfil the commission to evangelise the world".(2)

(I) Jesus and the Future,I92. Glasson perhaps overstates: "All the evidence brought forward...concerning the ethical teaching of Jesus, the Church and the Gentiles, encourages the view that He looked forward to a long period in which the Kingdom of God would spread through the world until at last the old prophecies would come to pass, and the knowledge of the Lord would cover the earth".(The Second Advent, I48-I49). It is interesting to lay Glasson's statement alongside Schweitzer's statements about the near-expectancy of the Kingdom.

(2(Op.cit., 45.

Their doubt, according to Werner's assessment, was the fruit of the delayed Parousia.

But it is impossible to bring this picture of the apostles into any recognizable relation to the New Testament picture of the missionary Church. Given the postulates of consistent eschatology, doubt would have been inevitable. The very fact that we do not read of a despondent and disappointed Church, puzzled by the non-appearance of the Parousia, makes it impossible to accept these postulates.

Barrett maintains that two clear dangers faced the primitive Church arising out of the delay in the Parousia.

a) Christianity might degenerate into a Chiliasm that was doomed to disappointment as time demonstrated that the Parousia was not as near chronologically as had been imagined.

b) Eschatology would evaporate into Gnosticism.

The Church, says Barrett, needed to maintain eschatological tension without having to maintain that the Parousia was chronologically near. He believes that Hebrews, the Fourth Gospel and Revelation, performed a notable service in this connection.(I)

The present writer believes that the missionary task of the Church exerted the most significant influence of all. Surely this is the most satisfactory explanation of the fact that the Church did not become disappointed and disillusioned as the Parousia was postponed again and again.

Branscomb points out that the readers of Mark's Gospel must have felt that all the signs of Mark I3 had been fulfilled. Josephus tells of the rise of marvel workers. (cf. Acts 5.36f.) There was a famine during the reign of Claudius.(cf. Acts II.28). An earthquake occurred in Phrygia in A.D. 6I, and at Pompeii in A.D. 63. There had been wars in Britain and America, and fear

(I) Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.6, No.3, 236.

of a Parthian invasion was in the air. Paul speaks of persecution, and he had appeared before governors and kings.(I) It must have been easy to imagine that these signs indicated that the Judge was standing at the very door. When Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70 many must have felt that the times were calling out for the final Judge and Saviour - and still He tarried. How could belief in an imminent Parousia be retained in such circumstances?

The missionary task of the Church supplied the answer - an answer that was practical rather than theoretical: the one sign that was not fulfilled was the preaching of the Gospel to all nations. The task was so engrossing and satisfying that exegetical and theological difficulties were transcended. No relaxation was possible. Mission had moved into the interval between the two Comings of Christ. The Morning Star of the Parousia, says W.Manson,

"stands directly over the path of the Christian mission to the world, but it refuses to be caught up with, until the mission is completed".(2)

The world mission became the key sign, guaranteeing that the Christian Church would not be led astray by extravagant regard for other signs. The Church's reigning Lord had taken a grip of history by His redeeming Cross and His mighty Resurrection. The 'how' and 'when' of the Coming could be safely left in that same Hand.

3) Forgetfulness of the Power of the Resurrection

Barth is surely right in arguing that the great mistake of consistent eschatology is that it fails to remember the power of the Resurrection and the work of the Holy Spirit. It speaks as if the early Church had darkness behind it, rather than brilliant light.

(I) Mark (Moffatt N.T.C.) 235.
(2) Eschatology (Scottish Journal of Theology, Occasional Papers, No.2, 16.)

"The Lordship of Jesus is at no time merely past or merely future, but at all times is event in such a way that one must expect the coming always and expect it soon, and at the same time both can and may wait for it always with patience".(I)

The author believes that this study of consistent eschatology has produced nothing which would militate against the conclusion that realised eschatology played an important part in the thinking of Jesus and of the missionary Church.

(I) Barth (Die Kirkliche Dogmatik, 3/2, 613.)

Chapter 5

The Approach of Realised Eschatology

We must now consider another approach which would destroy the possibility of the view that the End is conditioned by missionary preaching - the approach of realised eschatology, associated with the name of C.H. Dodd.

Dodd would agree with Schweitzer that the futuristic eschatology of the New Testament was a mistake, but while Schweitzer laid the mistake at the door of Jesus, Dodd traced it back to the early Church.

We might summarize Dodd's position in the following way:

a) All future elements in eschatology are present in the Incarnation.

This, claims Dodd, is the general view of the New Testament writers:

"The eschaton has entered history;...the Age to come has come. The Gospel of primitive Christianity is a Gospel of realised eschatology".(I)

b) There will be no future Judgement.

History itself is the judgement of mankind. Statements about a Parousia and a Last Judgement are purely symbolical:

"Creation and Last Judgement are symbolic statements of the truth that all history is teleological working out one universal divine purpose".(2)

c) The Cross is not the centre of history; it is the End.

d) The essential convictions of prophecy and apocalypse are all fulfilled in the Church.

Dodd gives full weight to the Old Testament background to the theology of the New Testament, but he does not hesitate to view the apocalyptic stress as an aberration.

e) The hopes of the ages are fulfilled in the Holy Spirit.

f) "End" is a fiction, expressing the reality of theology within history

(I) The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments, London I936, 85.
(2) History and the Gospel, London I938, I68.

"In Christianity the teleological 'end' is other than the temporal end of the process".

This means that there is already purpose in history supplied by the Incarnation without any real need of a future goal in history.(I)

g) Future tenses in relation to the Second Coming are no more than"an accomodation of language".

"There is no coming of the Son of Man 'after' His coming in Galilee and Jerusalem, whether soon or late, for there is no before and after in the eternal order".(2)

In all fairness to Dodd it must be acknowledged that there are passages - especially in his later writings - where he does use future tenses of the Parousia. Some interpreters of Dodd have not remembered this.

In his Broadcast Talks, e.g., Dodd spoke of the

"paradox of a coming of Christ which is past, present and future all in one... The kingdom is still to come, and yet it is present always; and that is why we have confidence in praying for its coming".

In the same address Dodd spoke movingly of the "tense expectancy" behind the prayer, Maranatha, at the common meal.

"Expectation passed into realisation. And realisation in turn kindled fresh expectancy. For the more deeply they appreciated what they had already received, the more clearly they knew that there is on earth nothing complete - there is always more to hope for". So "the permanent rhythm of the Christian faith was established".(3)

In the next address Dodd speaks frankly of

"some mysterious sayings about the Son of Man which I have passed over too lightly".

Of these sayings and of Christ's words before the High Priest (Mk.I4.62), Dodd says:

"...surely the total impression is that the forecasts of a coming of Christ in history (fulfilled in His Resurrection) are balanced by forecasts of a coming beyond history: definitely I should say, beyond history, and not as a further event in history, not even the last event".(4)

(I) History and the Gospel, I65.
(2) The Parables of the Kingdom, London I935, I08.
(3) The Coming of Christ, Cambridge, I95I, 9-II.
(4) Op.cit., I7.

But it is clear that Dodd is working with a different conception of the "permanent rhythm" between expectation and realisation from the conception in this thesis.

One gains the impression that to Dodd the rhythm could only be maintained because the futuristic eschatology of the early Church gave way to realised eschatology. Without this development there would have been no answer to recurring disappointments about an early return of the Lord, and the Faith would have suffered shipwreck.

"Through the disappointment of the hopes they had formed, they woke to something they had always known, but until then had not fully appreciated: the thing had happened; Christ had come. All these years they had been living on that fact, while they supposed their faith hung upon the prospect of His second coming. Now it came home to them: God's victory was won; Christ had won it; and they already shared in it. So they made the necessary readjustments in their thought without for a moment losing grip".(I)

A passage like this should warn us against reading too much into the passages where Dodd permits himself the use of future tenses in relation to the Parousia. We have the impression that there is no far-reaching modification of earlier positions.

Dodd and the New Testament Material

Dodd's position stands or falls with an honest examination of the New Testament material. His handling of it shows the influence of his belief that unhealthy Jewish tendencies permeated the apocalyptic material which the New Testament writers inherited. This means that we must reckon continually with the mistakes of the Church.

Thus Dodd says of the "Little Apocalypse of Mark I3:

(I) Op.cit., 8.

"Though it contains embedded in it sayings belonging to the primitive tradition of the teaching of Jesus, it is inconsistent with the purport of His teaching as a whole".(I)

It was composed to account for the delay of the Parousia. It is possible that originally Resurrection, Ascension and Parousia were "aspects of one idea". In Mark I4.62 ideas of exaltation ("on the right hand of the Power"), and of Parousia ("coming with the clouds of heaven"), are closely associated. The pa ssage of time forced the Church to distinguish between the three events.(2)

Dodd is deeply suspicious of parables and logia which seem to presuppose an interval between two crucial eschatological moments. He sees here an adaptation to strengthen the illusory hope of an early Second Coming. If they are genuine, they are only accomodations of language.

Dodd's approach to Mark 9.I is strikingly different from that of Schweitzer. He translates:

"There are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they have seen that the Kingdom of God has come with power".

He emphasizes the strictly past sense of ἐληλυθυῖαν , describing an action that is complete before their perception of it.

(I) The Apostolic Preaching, 38.
(2) The Parables, 96-I04.
Beasley-Murray (Jesus and the Future, I00-I0I) has an interesting reference to a private communica tion from Dodd. "I do certainly agree with recent critics", writes Dodd, "who reject the idea that Mk.I3 is a Jewish apocalypse taken over with certain Christian additions. For the most part I do not think that it is an apocalypse at all. It is a Mahnrede in apocalyptic terms...That a reference to the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds was contained in the earliest traditions of the sayings of Jesus seems to me certain from Mk. I4.62...it is an extravagance of criticism to attempt to eliminate the whole of the apocalyptic and eschatological colouring from the primitive tradition of the sayings".

This agrees in two important respects with what the present author has written about Mark I3: a) The chapter must be taken seriously in its account of Jesus' teaching about the future. b) The pastoral and practical bearing of the chapter is a matter of foremost importance.

One hesitates, however, to use a private communication to modify or overturn what Dodd has written elsewhere.

"The meaning appears to be, " comments Dodd, "that some of those who have heard Jesus speak would before their death awake to the fact that the Kingdom of God had come".(I)

This is a doubtful interpretation which is not borne out by modern translations. Cranfield comments: "Mk.ix.I seems to be a very doubtful support for the view that Jesus taught only a realized eschatology".(2)

Dodd's study of Pauline eschatology comes to the conclusion that the influence of the Second Advent receded ever further into the background of Paul's thinking. 2 Thessalonians I.7-I0 is inconsistent with the maturer Paul.

Dodd's treatment of I Peter, I John, and particularly of Revelation proceeds along similar lines.

It will be argued repeatedly in the future course of this study that unrealised elements are a crucial part of the Gospel, and that any rigid scheme of realised eschatology works with an unwarrantably restricted yard-stick. There would be no Gospel without realised eschatology, but the eschatology of glory is a necessary deduction from the eschatology of grace.

Dodd and John's Gospel

This is perhaps the best stage at which to study the eschatology of John's Gospel.

If there is one book in the New Testament which can be looked upon as a stronghold of realised eschatology, it is John's Gospel. Eternal Life, Judgement and Resurrection are treated as present realities. Knowledge of God through Christ is the gateway to eternal life here and now (I7.3). The Johannine Christ says, "Now is the judgement of this world" (I2.3I). The person who will not believe when confronted by such redeeming love is "judged already" (3.I8).

(I) The Parables, 53-54.
(2) The Gospel according to St Mark, 286.

The Christ standing in the midst is the Resurrection and the Life (II.25).

If Dodd's case cannot be proved in connection with John's Gospel it is unlikely that it will be proved anywhere else.

John, in Dodd's view, reinterprets eschatology in two ways:

a) Futuristic eschatology is deliberately subordinated to realised eschatology.(I)

b) Eschatology is sublimated into mysticism.

"In (John's) Gospel even more fully than in Paul, eschatology is sublimated into a distinctive kind of mysticism. Its underlying philosophy, like that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is of a Platonic cast... The ultimate reality, instead of being, as in Jewish apocalyptic, figured as the last term in the historical series, is conceived as an eternal order of being, of which the phenomenal order of history is the shadow or symbol. This eternal order is the Kingdom of God, into which Christians have been born again, by water and the Spirit (3.3-8)...This is the Johannine equivalent for...the Pauline declaration that if any man is in Christ there is a new creation".(2)

This interpretation, claims Dodd, brings us nearer the teaching of Jesus than the "naive thinking of the primitive Church".(3)

Futuristic Eschatology in John's Gospel

The author believes that futuristic eschatology in John plays a more important role than has been usually acknowledged.

(I) The Apostolic Preaching, 66.
(2) Op.cit., 66-67.
(3) The Johannine Epistles (Moffatt N.T.C.) London I946, liv. The language of the later Dodd about John's Gospel is more cautious.(See e.g. "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" Cambridge I953, 7.) There are few futuristic expectations in the Gospel, but they must not be treated as "merely vestigial remains of the eschatology of the primitive Church. They are a part of the evangelist's own faith."
Dodd also warns against the frequent formula that John has "turned eschatology into 'mysticism'". This is misleading unless 'mysticism' rests upon "a fulfilment of history, within history".
Even here, however, we have the clear impression that futuristic eschatology was not an important part of John's faith.

For a century a radical contrast was drawn between Mark I3 and John I3-I7. Mark I3 was treated as belonging to the "childish things" which the mature man, steeped in John I3-I7, would not hesitate to put away. Schenkel, indeed, could claim that the Fourth Evangelist alone understood the Temple address, and that the others, in the transmission of the eschatological discourse, perverted the "lucid, divine conceptions of the future which Jesus had". Chiliasm was the result - "a remnant of literalist faith and delusion in the religion of the Spirit and of Truth".(I)

The contrast can, however, be unwarrantably exaggerated.

Beasley-Murray has an interesting passage dealing with parallels between Mark I3 and John I3-I7.(2)

I) Parallels concerning tribulation.

Following W.F.Howard, he mentions John I5.I8ff., I6.Iff., I6.32f., and notes especially διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου (I5.2I), which is to be compared with Mark I3.I3 and the ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ of Mark I3.9.

2) Parallels concerning the Spirit.

Howard holds that the sayings of John I3-I7 have eschatological significance, pointing forward to an inheritance still to be realised. They are in the right setting for the discourse in which they are found also has an eschatological character.(3)

In both sources there is the promise that the Spirit will aid the disciples after the departure of Jesus.(Cf.Mk.I3.II and Jo.I5.26-27; I6.5-II.)

(I) Das Charakterbild Jesu, Wiesbaden I864, I88.
(2) Op.cit., 235-238.
(3) Christianity According to St.John, London I943, I06-I28.

The Spirit's witness to sin, righteousness and judgement (Jo.I6.8-II), finds an interesting parallel in Paul's preaching of "righteousness, self-control and judgement to come" (Acts 24.25). While there is no verbal parallel in Mark I3.II, it is clearly the kind of preaching that is envisaged in the chapter.

3) Parallels concerning the Parousia.

John I4.3

John I4.3 is of especial interest:

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also!

It must be acknowledged immediately that the interpretation of the passages in John about the 'Coming' of Jesus is notoriously difficult.

There have been many different interpretations of the 'Coming' of John I4.3.

a) He came again to the disciples in the Resurrection appearances.

"Jesus came" is used on several occasions of the Resurrection.(I)

Beasley-Murray sees an allusion to the Resurrection 'Coming' in I6.I6ff., I6.20-23 and in I4.I8.(2) Some would add I4.3 to the list.

b) He came again at Pentecost in the promised Spirit.

It has been claimed that the promise, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (I4.I8), has particular meaning of the Comforter.

C.J.Wright uses the words "I will come again" to illustrate the inadequacy of human words to describe the mysteries of

(I) 20.I9; 20.24,26; 2I.I3.
(2) Op.cit., 237.

fellowship with God:

"What He says is that the Divine Spirit which constitutes His own essential life will be their guide and stay".(I)

c) He came again in the destruction of Jerusalem to judge the Jewish State which had rejected Him.

d) He comes at death.

It has been argued that if we are to hold that Jesus' words in I4.3 were actually fulfilled in the case of those to whom they were first addressed, the Coming in death is the only possible interpretation. There was no final eschatological Coming before their death. If,then, He did not come in death the saying remains unfulfilled. None of the other theories already mentioned involved a reception to Christ.

Canon Liddon in his Advent sermons made striking use of the thought of Christ's Coming in death. He maintained that the measure of the thought and preparation we bestow on death will be the measure of our preparation for the final Coming. He held, therefore, that the Second Coming passages could be interpreted of death, but not in an exhaustive fashion.

The author is inclined to agree with Beasley-Murray that

"nowhere else are we told in the New Testament that Jesus comes for his own at death".(2)

Some scholars would deny this, seeing a Coming of Jesus in such passages as Acts 7.59, 2 Corinthians 5.8, and Philippians I.23.(3) But, strictly speaking, these passages refer to a going to Jesus and to a vision of Jesus, rather than to Jesus coming for His disciples.

e) He comes at the Eucharist, as the Bread of God from heaven (6.33,5I).

(I) The Mission and Message of Jesus, 88I.
(2) Op.cit., 237.
(3) See Sir E.Hoskyns (The Fourth Gospel, London I940, 454). To Hoskyns, however, the Coming in death does not exhaust the significance of the verse.

f) There are various comprehensive interpretations.

Dodd interprets the Coming of I4.3 in a four-fold fashion: I) Christ comes through His mighty works in His disciples (I4.I2).

2) He comes through the Paraclete (I4.I5-I7).

3) He comes through His life in the Christian (I4.I9).

4) He comes in the interchange of ἀγάπη with Him (I4.2I).

That the language was "intended to suggest thoughts of Christ's final 'epiphany'" is shown by Jude's question: "Lord, whatever has happened, that thou wilt manifest thyself to us and not to the world?"(I4.22)

This, claims Dodd, was the question that would occur instinctively to John's Asian readers who were familiar with the words, "Behold He cometh with the clouds, and <u>every</u> eye will see Him".

Dodd concludes that "the true parusia is to be found in the interchange of divine ἀγάπη, made possible through Christ's death and resurrection"(I4.23).(I)

I4.3, therefore, represents the "closest approach to the traditional language of the Church's eschatology",(2) but something quite different is meant.

Westcott adopts an even more comprehensive interpretation: Christ comes in the great crises of history. "Christ is, in fact, from the moment of His resurrection ever coming to the world and to the Church and to men as the Risen Lord".(3)

But Westcott goes further than Dodd. The Coming not only covers the Coming in the Resurrection, through the Spirit, and at death: it also includes Christ's Coming as final Judge.

Clearly there is truth in all the above interpretations, so far as they go, but they do not go far enough. (Westcott's is the most satisfactory.) A wider canvas is required which leaves room for the eschatology of glory. This is conceded by

(I) The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, 395.
(2) Op.cit., 404.
(3) The Gospel of St.John, London I898, 20I.

G.H.C.Macgregor although he sees it as

"one of these peculiar 'concessions'...to the more materialistic Synoptic and Pauline view of an eschatological 'Parousia' of Christ in person..."(I)

The verse is best understood against the background of such passages as John 2I.22,23, I John 2.28, Mark I3.26,27, and I Thessalonians 4.I6,I7.

It is necessary to remember that John I3-I7 views the disciples, not merely as a group of individuals in a certain historical relationship to Jesus, but as a microcosm of the world Church. The thoughts of the Johannine Christ range commandingly over ages to come. He prays, not merely for the disciples in his company, but for all who will believe through their witness (I7.20).

There is no discordance in holding that in John I4.3, a promise is given to the witnessing Church that its witness will be consummated by a glorious Coming which will lift the Church into its final place in the victory of God. This is no "peculiar concession" to a receding past whose influence could never return, but a pillar conviction without which the Faith could not be the Faith.

But John I4.3 is not a lonely island of futuristic eschatology in the Fourth Gospel. If it were, we might have reason to suspect the wisdom of our interpretation of it.

The Quickening Power of Christ(5.I5-29)

5.I5-29 is most valuable in the development of our argument. We have here a much more certain reference to futuristic eschatology. This is brought out admirably by E.G.Selwyn. He writes of the passage:

"'Realized eschatology', or the doctrine that the end of all things has already arrived with the advent of

(I) John (Moffatt N.T.C.) London I928, 305.
Salmond lists "the best of the Fathers and Reformers" and Meyer, Hofmann, Luthardt, Holtzmann, Hilgenfeld and Ewald in support of a reference to an objective Second Coming. (Christian Doctrine of Immortality, Edinburgh I897, 308n.)

the Messiah, does not mean that there is nothing further to occur; on the contrary, the end is a highly complex series of inter-related events, which have their centre and chief significance in Jesus but have still to be unfolded in time".(I)

The authority of the word of Christ shows itself in three ways:

a) A division between believers and unbelievers is caused by the quickening power of the word in believers (verses 21-24).

b) The "dead" would live as a result of hearing the word (v.25)

"Dead" may refer to Christ's raisings of the dead (Mt.II.2ff.) or there may be a reference to a Descensus ad Inferos, or there may be a reference to both (which is preferred by Selwyn).

c) The word of Christ would be the signal for the General Resurrection.(v.29)

Wright has a different approach. He speaks of the "vivid and dramatic language in v.29", which has sometimes been looked upon as a

"literal statement of historic fact. The author is thinking throughout, however, not in terms of time, but in terms of eternity. Like Jesus, he sees all things sub specie aeternitatis. Judgement, like eternal life, is not future but present".(2)

Here we are reminded strongly of Dodd's claim that John expresses a philosophy of a "Platonic cast". We cannot avoid the impression that this is exposition, not of what the passage actually says, but of the passage seen in the light of certain philosophical presuppositions. The author was certainly thinking of eternity. We have every right to say that he was also thinking of time for the very reason that his convictions about eternity were so firm. This excision of the future seems arbitrary. Resurrection and Judgement may be both

(I) The First Epistle of St.Peter, London 1958, 347.
(2) Op.cit., 762.

present and future.(I)

The Story of Lazarus

The story of Lazarus should serve as a further warning against arbitrary divisions of eschatology into realised and unrealised, and against viewing futuristic eschatology as a crude and accidental phenomenon.

It is true that Jesus turned Martha's future tense, "I know that he shall rise again in the Resurrection at the Last Day"(II.24), into a present tense, "I am the Resurrection and the Life"(II.25): but immediately after the present tense we have another future, "...he that believeth, though he were dead, yet shall he live".

There is not a vestige of doubt that the author was supremely interested in the symbolical force of the story indicating that God's Messiah had "life in Himself" (5.26,27). No doubt he looked upon the story as a parable of Christian conversion: but this does not even suggest that he was only interested in the Resurrection as a present reality. Evidence, as distinct from theory, seems to support a Resurrection that is both present and future.

John 2I.22,23.

Christ's words to Peter about the Beloved Disciple, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me", have been an embarassment to those whose attitude to the eschatological material in John is similar to that of C.H. Dodd. Dodd says of the passage: "...the naive conception of Christ's second Advent...in unlike anything else in the Fourth

(I) Dodd, in commenting on 5.28-29, admits that "the evangelist agrees with popular Christianity that the believer will enter into eternal life at the general Resurrection", but holds that the present possession of eternal life was his prime interest. (op.cit.. I48.)

Gospel".(I)

Macgregor sees the hand of the Redactor:

> "The stress laid upon the Parousia or 'coming back' of Christ as a definite personal event distinguishes the Redactor from the Evangelist... In the Johannine sense at least Christ had come back (in the Spirit) before the Beloved Disciple's death".(2)

It has already been argued that the Coming in the Spirit does not exhaust the significance of John's references to a Coming. If this argument is valid it is unnecessary to distinguish between the Redactor and the Evangelist.

Wright views the passage as "the free creation of the Evangelist", to deal with the problem posed by the death of John the Apostle. This appeared to mean that Jesus' words in Mark 9.I had been proved false. The last of the eye-witnesses had died and the Parousia had not occurred.

The passage points out, according to Wright, that Jesus was not concerned about times and seasons (cf.Mk.I3.32 and Mt.24.36). He underlined the need of personal following. "The Evangelist", concludes Wright, "neither at this point gives support to those who believe in an apocalyptic 'day', nor to those who believe that in every great crisis in human affairs there is 'a coming of the Lord'. Without doubt the second would have been more in accord with his mind".(3)

This seems rather extraordinary. Wright has already stated that

> "one of the main convictions which have inspired this Commentary is that the Johannine author seeks to give dramatic expression to the meaning which the apocalyptic ideas have for the consciousness of Jesus".(4)

Yet, on Wright's interpretation, the author refuses to commit himself at the very conclusion of the Gospel. The idea that the passage is the "free creation" of the Evangelist, no doubt saves Jesus from the alleged taint of an apocalyptic

(I) Op.cit., 43I.
(2) Op.cit., 376-377.
(3) Op.cit., 954.
(4) Op.cit., 76I.

outlook, but we are left with a peculiar picture of the Evangelist. He supports neither futuristic eschatology nor realised eschatology.

This picture does not do justice to the text which is less ambiguous than Wright would make it. There is surely a clear reference to futuristic eschatology in "till I come".

It is noteworthy that in this reference to the Parousia it is impossible to trace any embarassment about the delay of the Parousia. The author is intent on removing a misapprehension by pointing out what Jesus actually said: He did not specifically promise that John would live until the Parousia (v.23). It is clear that John was not concerned about the date of the Parousia; he was contented to leave the Church with the promise of the Coming and to underline the practical challenge to faithful discipleship.

Again we are reminded that in the eschatological material of the Gospels we have correctives against any stress on clock-time. We are dealing rather with "lovers' time", as Fison puts it, (I) which is vastly more concerned with the presence of the beloved than with rigid temporal considerations. This is only another way of saying that the eschatology of the New Testament is deeply Christological.

"The hour cometh and now is"

The paradoxical phrase "the hour cometh and now is", occurs twice in the Gospel (4.23, 5.25). This is a pardox which is in the warp and the woof of eschatology.

In 4.23, the hour "now is", because worship is taking place in the company of Jesus' disciples: but it is also still in the future because the "hour" of the Cross had not yet struck.

(I) The Christian Hope.

Calvary will mean an order which will antiquate worship in Jerusalem or on Mount Gerizim (4.2I).

In 5.25, the hour "now is" because already the power of Jesus is at work, challenging physical and spiritual death. It is also a future hour because the hour of victory over death is still in the future. The General Resurrection is still more distant (5.28,29).

This survey of the futuristic eschatology of John's Gospel proves that futuristic eschatology is not laid aside in the Gospel. It is injected into the present.

Conclusions about Dodd's Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel

I. The Platonic cast of thought in the sense implied by Dodd is doubtful.

Dodd does not go as far as Bultmann in his view of the Fourth Gospel as a radical reinterpretation of the primitive Gospel in terms which show the influence of Hellenistic philosophy, of Gnosticism and even of Mandaism.(I)

Dodd never loses sight of the Jewish cradle of the primitive Faith, but he does hold that the writer was interested in expounding the Gospel in terms that would be intelligible to the Hellenistic world of his day.

Streeter maintained that Christianity became a world religion because the Fourth Gospel interpreted the Faith in a way which was

"intellectually acceptable to the Greek and yet true to the Jewish thought of God as personal and as one".(2)

One can agree immediately about the writer's interest in the communication of the Faith without having to hold that he renounced the linear view of time apparent in Jewish apocalyptic, in favour of a philosophical concept of eternal

(I) Das Evangelium des Johannes (I923; IIth ed. I950), by R.Bultmann.
(2) An Introduction to the New Testament, by F.B.Clogg, 272-273.

being.

There have been many strong statements about the Greek environment of the Fourth Gospel, which would not enlist much support today.

Even as late as I950 R.M.Grant could write:

"The environment in which he (i.e. the author) lives is no longer that of Judaism, but of a kind of gnosticism not unlike that of Ignatius and the Odes of Solomon...He lives between two worlds, the one that of Palestinian Judaism out of which Christianity arose, the other that of Diaspora Judaism through which it reached the Gentile world...And in his effort to express the essence of the one in terms of the other he is compelled to re-interpret the gospel from beginning to end".(I)

Most modern scholars would probably agree with Dodd in his denial of direct Gnostic influence on the Fourth Gospel.(2)

John's use of the conception of the Logos does not suggest that Greek philosophical interests were foremost in his mind. The Jewish background in the Creation-story is much more likely (Gn.I.3,6,9,II etc.) We are in the realm of communication between rational beings. If John had been moving primarily in the world of Hellenistic philosophy he would surely have made use of the word "wisdom". Perhaps he did not do so because he wished to disassociate himself from Greek speculations about knowledge and wisdom as intermediaries between the distant Being of Greek philosophy and the world. Fison is surely right when he says:

"The doctrine of the Logos is essentially subordinate to the doctrine of the Christ especially in his eschatological significance as the Judge".(3)

This is in accordance with John's own statement of his aim: "These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life through his name"(20.3I).

(I) Quoted by W.F.Albright in "The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology", I6I.
(2) The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, 97-II4.
(3) The Christian Hope, I54.

He would labour under no illusions about the fact that the communication of this belief to the Greek world necessarily involved ideas that were "foolishness" to the cultured Greek mind - that the Christ was a crucified Christ in whose death the divine glory shone forth pre-eminently; that contact with the same Christ meant present judgement which would be endorsed by the decision of the Last Day. In short, there is no reason to imagine that the Jewish linear conception of time was seen by John as a serious stumbling-block in the way of Greek acceptance of the Gospel, and that this prompted him to enlist Plato as a yoke-fellow in the presentation of the Gospel through a philosophical concept of eternal being.

Albright suggests that the most important service of the Dead Sea Scrolls will be the demonstration that John, the Synoptists, Paul, etc.,

"draw from a common reservoir of terminology and ideas which were well known to the Essenes and presumably familiar also to other Jewish sects of the period". This means that "the books of the Essenes from the first century B.C. provide the closest approach to the Gospels (particularly St John) and the Pauline Epistles... - far closer than post-Christian gospels such as the Hermetic writings, Philo, Rabbinic Judaism, Gnosticism, or Mandeanism".(I)

The Jewish cast of John's thought is becoming more widely acknowledged.

2. No radical contrast in eschatology can be drawn between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics.

The author agrees with Barrett's denial that

"John has abandoned the common New Testament eschatology".

He has his own rich contribution to make but it is fitted into

"the inescapable framework of eschatology which has always dominated Christian thought from the days of Jesus and the preaching of the apostles".(2

(I) The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, I69.
(2) The Gospel according to St John, London I955, 57-58.

The fundamental harmony behind the eschatology of all the Gospels appears strikingly in Jesus' words:

"And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world but to save the world...the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (Jn.I2.47,48).

This is exactly the teaching which runs through all the Synoptic parables: judgement (the "strange" work of Jesus) knocks at the door here and now in the ministry of Jesus, but its full action is delayed until the Last Day.

3. What are we to make of Dodd's claim that in John there is a deliberate subordination of futuristic to realised eschatology?

We may agree immediately if it means that realised eschatology was more important to John. It may well be the case that John sought to correct a "one-sided futurism prevalent in the Church of his day" (Fison(I)). But if Dodd's view means that a death blow has been dealt to the abiding significance of futuristic eschatology in its out-working in time, and that there is no need to be particularly concerned about eschatology because it has been "sublimated", we cannot agree that this is an adequate presentation of the Johannine material.

General Conclusion

It would, however, be out of place to refer to the theology of Dodd without acknowledging his outstanding services to the understanding of New Testament eschatology. If it has been the distinctive service of Schweitzer to force scholarship to face the essential eschatological setting of Jesus' teaching, and of the futuristic character of that setting, it has been the service of Dodd to point out that in realised eschatology we are in

(I) Op.cit., I55.

touch with the very core of the Christian Faith. How thoroughly Biblical this stress is, appears in the extent to which a thinker like Calvin travels along the same road as Dodd. Torrance brings this out most strikingly in his exposition of Calvin's eschatology:

"In a profound sense the Kingdom of God is wholly realised in Christ, and nothing remains to be done except its final manifestation in glory and the accidental work of judgement".(I)

To Calvin the Church already participates in the new humanity of the Resurrection. He can actually think of the Church as, in a sense, the Kingdom of Christ smiting, like the stone in Daniel, the image of the kingdoms of the world, until the final extension of the Kingdom. In short the Church shares in the perfected work of Christ.

It is not too much to say that every theologian who turns to the Bible for the chief inspiration of his thought is bound to accept Dodd's stress on the crucial importance of God's establishment of the Kingdom in the Incarnation. We have already accepted Cullmann's argument that the Incarnation meant a shifting of the centre of time from the future to God's historic action in Christ, and that a specifically Christian apocalyptic viewpoint, as distinct from a Jewish one, will locate the temporal centre in Christ crucified and risen, rather than in Christ returning.(2)

N.Q.Hamilton sounds a similar note at the conclusion of his very thorough examination of C.H.Dodd's realised eschatology:

"Realised eschatology places the centre of Heilsgeschichte squarely in the proper place at the ministry, the cross, and the resurrection of Christ".(3)

But while Dodd has located the heart-beat of New Testament eschatology, one is bound to maintain that there are inadequate

(I) Eschatology (Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No.2), 58. See 54-62.
(2) See pages 39-40 of thesis.
(3) The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul (Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No.6), 70.

features about his position.

I. Dodd offers no clear teleological word for human history.

It is not enough to speak of all history as teleological, "working out one universal divine purpose"; it is not enough to speak of a "final coming that lies beyond history".(I) We are left with a fatal uncertainty. Dodd can grant that the opposition between the will of God and

> "the false values and aims of men...is a characteristic feature of history; always has been, and probably always will be".(2)

One feels that this does not do justice, either to the New Testament teaching about the victory of Christ, or to the moral and spiritual requirements of humanity. We know, with Dodd, that God invaded history in Christ to give meaning to history: but just as clearly we know that love has fulfilled a role of suffering love in history - love blasphemed, spat upon, despised and crucified - from the days of the Galilean ministry to the modern period. C.S.Lewis's picture of the wrongdoer is unfortunately only too accurate in many cases:

> "...he does all this, not (as we like to imagine) tormented by remorse or even misgiving, but eating like a schoolboy and sleeping like a healthy infant - a jolly, ruddy-cheeked man, without a care in the world, unshakably confident to the very end that he alone has found the answer to the riddle of life, that God and man are fools he has got the better of, that his way of life is utterly successful, satisfactory, unassailable".(3)

It is inconceivable to the moral sense that the last word should lie with rebels, either in history or beyond it. It demands the final triumph of God and the final defeat of evil <u>in history.</u> Dodd's position is incomplete here.

2. Dodd does not take the mystery of iniquity seriously enough.

(I) The Coming of Christ, 36.
(2) Op.cit., 28.
(3) The Problem of Pain, London I940, I09.

Dodd's claim that the early Christians readjusted their minds to the wonderful fact that God's victory had been already won by Christ leaves one with the impression that there is still something to be said. The crucial divine invasion has taken place, the battle has been won, but bitter counter-attacks by evil are still going on and will continue until the day of final victory. The author believes that Niebuhr's picture of human history interprets the realities of human history more adequately than Dodd's picture of a victory already won. To Niebuhr, human history is "not so much a chronicle of the progressive victory of the good over evil, of cosmos over chaos, as the story of an ever-increasing cosmos, creating ever-increasing possibilities of chaos".(I)

History needed one divine invasion to give meaning to the human scene. It will need a second if the corruption and incompleteness of history are to be overcome.

3. We cannot accept the view that the future tenses which are used of the Parousia in the New Testament are only an accomodation of language, or the view that futuristic eschatology is only a residuum from a Jewish past - a mistake whose correction can only enrich the Faith. We have just as much right to say from the New Testament evidence that these future tenses are a necessary part of the Faith delivered once and for all, and that the Second Coming is a part of the Gospel.

We have noted that Calvin and Dodd are travelling companions in their exalted view of the finished work of Christ: but Calvin went further along the road in his view of the two conditions of the Kingdom of Christ, corresponding to the two Advents of Christ, one in humiliation, the other in glory. The mistake of the disciples, argues Calvin, in his exposition of Mark I3 and of the early chapters of Acts, was that they

(I) An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, London I936, I08.

confounded these two conditions of the Kingdom. The Kingdom was perfectly realised through the Resurrection and Ascension. The disciples confused that with the glorious Coming at the End of the world. They failed to understand that the road to that final goal was the road of suffering witness. No short-cuts were possible.

Torrance points out that this dual aspect of the Kingdom played a part of great importance in Calvin's theology.(I)

It is the author's conviction that New Testament eschatology cannot be adequately interpreted without some such approach. He believes that Calvin would have criticized Dodd for concentrating on one condition of the Kingdom (i.e. in humiliation), to the exclusion or overshadowing of the other condition (i.e. in glory); andthat his criticism of Schweitzer would have exposed the opposite error.

This study of the eschatological material in the Gospels points to the conclusion that "the eschatological motive for world mission" cannot be considered without giving full weight to the realised and the unrealised elements in eschatology.

We now must consider the eschatological material outside the Gospels which throws light on eschatology and mission.

(I) Op.cit., 56.

PART II

Chapter I

Eschatology and Mission in Paul

Unquestionably Paul was the greatest missionary in history. His missionary achievements prompted A.Deissmann's claim: "It was as a missionary that Paul had the most definite influence upon subsequent history".(I)

It is open to discussion if his contribution as a missionary outstripped his contribution as a thinker and as a writer, but his unparalleled missionary passion cannot be doubted. He felt himself in the grip of an irresistible "necessity"(I Cor.9.I6). An urgent debt of love had to be discharged "to the Greeks and to the barbarians, to the wise and the unwise"(Rom.I.I4). He was Christ's "prisoner", to make many other prisoners among the Gentiles (Eph.3.I).

Wider horizons continually lured him on. He had the consuming ambition of the pioneer to present the Gospel in new places. In Romans I5.I9-23 he claims that he had already πεπληρωκέναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον as far as Illyricum. The Gospel had already been proclaimed on the eastern side of the Mediterranean. The next step was to carry the message to the west. A journey to Spain was in his mind (I5.24).

Jülicher writes critically about Paul's claim that the Gospel had been preached fully on the eastern side. He looks upon it as a

"tremendous exaggeration, in view of the exertions of Christianity, century after century, to establish itself there". He explains the claim in terms of Paul's peculiar eschatology and of his distinctive temperament.

"In his excited hope of the approaching end of the world" he "could not hurry fast enough from one country to another...He was not a man for working out small details".(2)

(I) Paul, London I926, 224.
(2) Quoted by Munck in "Paul and the Salvation of Mankind", 53.

Paul's claim could be easily misunderstood. The claim that evangelism had been "finished entirely" from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and the reluctance to build "on another man's foundation" (v.20), might lead to the conclusion that "modesty is probably not exactly his strong point" (W.Lüthi (I)).

Munck has answered Jülicher's criticism decisively. He points out that we find Paul's claim surprising because we judge it by the standards of the modern missionary movement, which does not look upon missionary work as properly established until people have been brought forward to full Church membership by baptism.(2)

Munck finds a parallel to Romans I5.I9 in the reference to the Jewish mission in Romans I0.I4-2I. The apostles sent unto the Jews had finished the task of evangelism. "Their voice has sounded all over the earth, and their words to the bounds of the inhabited world"(I0.I8). That did not mean that every Jew without exception had heard the Gospel: it signified that "their task in respect of the whole of Israel had been completed".(3)

Again, Munck roundly denies Paul's lack of interest in detail.

He was "hindered" from paying the desired visit to Rome by his titanic efforts to break new ground for the Gospel (Rom.I5.22) The evidence indicates that he did not carry through his task superficially and haphazardly. He had to face difficulty and opposition in Galatia and Ephesus, and he did not run away from it. In the reference to his two years' work in Corinth and his three years in Ephesus "we see a man who takes great trouble to achieve his aim, and who displays admirable carefulness in his work".

His care for individuals (so like that of his Master),

(I) The Letter to the Romans, Edinburgh I96I, 207.
(2) Op.cit., 52.
(3) Op.cit., 53.

points in the same direction.(I)

Munck is surely right in all these points. There is no difficulty in Romans I5.I9 if Paul is thinking in national and universal terms.

We need not, however, follow Munck in his dislike of any attempt to portray Paul as a missionary strategist, intent on preaching the Gospel in large centres from which it could reach out to other places. We can, on the contrary, claim that the passage gives us some highly interesting glimpses of Paul's missionary policy.

a) He is conscious of a special task of world mission.

b) His policy is that of a pioneer.

He had to press on. There was abundant"room" for others "in those regions" (i.e. in the East); there was none for him.

c) His policy is a planned policy.

He hopes to visit Rome on his way to Spain. "We see", comments Brünner, "...that for Paul strategic planning and guidance by the Holy Spirit were not at all in opposition"(2)

d) His policy is Christocentric.

Only "in Christ Jesus" had he reason to be proud of his work for God. (I5.I7) He is only a servant of Jesus Christ caught up in the current of the stream of salvation. He is only the missionary to the Gentiles through the grace of God (I5.I6).(3)

(I) Op.cit., 54.
(2) The Letter to the Romans, London I959, I24.
(3) The fact of Paul's missionary policy appears in the crucial centres where Paul had preached the Word. See the references to preaching in Syria and Cilicia (Acts I5.4I); in Galatia and Phrygia (Acts I8.23); in Ephesus (Acts I9. 8,I0, 20.3I). The 2-3 years residence in Ephesus would spear-head work in Asia. Of the Thessalonian mission Paul could claim that it not only meant the ringing out of the Word of God in Macedonia and Achaia, but "everywhere" (I Thess. I.7,8; 4.I0); and of the words σὺν τοῖς ἁγίοις πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ Sanday and Headlam say that they show "that the long residence at Corinth had again produced a wide extension of the Gospel". (A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Edinburgh I895, 409.)

Phil.4.I5 seems to suggest that he was aware of the significance of the Gospel's first entrance to Europe.

The study of the forces behind Paul's consuming missionary passion is obviously of peculiar importance. What role did eschatology play in his sense of world mission?

According to Munck it played a crucial role. Paul had a high sense of his own greatness in the divine plan. He was greater than Moses, the greatest man in the history of Israel. In his unique call he was on the same level as Peter. The difference between Peter and him was that Peter's call was to Israel, while his call was to the Gentiles.(I)

This sense of missionary greatness had an eschatological explanation. Eschatology, in fact, determined the whole of Paul's life and witness which was controlled by a definite historical and redemptive pattern: he was called to prepare the way for the "fullness of the Gentiles", which would be followed by the coming of the Antichrist, which, in turn, would usher in the Coming of Christ.

Munck understands even the collection for the poor as an eschatological sign. Paul hoped that the large Gentile deputation would remind the Jerusalem Church of Old Testament prophecies about the Gentiles flowing to Jerusalem, and so would have a profound influence upon the conversion of Israel.

Munck also refers to Paul's insistence that his trials were eschatological (Acts 23.6, 24.21, 26.6). There is a resemblance between his trials and those of Christ. He also resembles Moses in that he desires to

> "atone vicariously for the nation in respect of a situation in which it has sinned without the possibility of forgiveness".(2)

That, according to Munck, was the thought in his mind as he faced the last ordeal in Rome. By his preaching and his suffering he could further the salvation of God for Jew and Gentile.

(I) Op.cit., 61-64.
(2) Op.cit., 306ff.

Whatever we may say about questions of detail, there is no doubt that Munck has made a most important contribution to the study of eschatology in Paul's thought. That will appear in the consideration of Paul the Missionary Preacher, Paul the Writer, and Paul the Christian Man.

Paul the Missionary Preacher

The evidence in Acts makes it clear that Paul sounded great eschatological notes in his preaching: Judgement, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Parousia.(I) Part of the opposition to his preaching is explained by its eschatological character.

His proclamation of the Resurrection of the Body was anathema to the cultured Greek mind, as is clearly indicated by the contemptuous response it received in Athens (Acts I7.32). Cullmann comments on this verse:

> "On his missionary journeys Paul surely met people who were unable to believe in his preaching of the resurrection for the very reason that they believed in the immortality of the soul...For the Greeks who believed in the immortality of the soul it may have been harder to accept the Christian preaching of the resurrection than it was for others".(2)

For the Greek, death was a friend, liberating the soul from the prison-house of the body. The material was bad. Therefore its destruction was to be welcomed.(3)

Paul's preaching radically contradicted such an attitude. In this respect it was typical of Christian thought for which

(I) See e.g. I7.30,3I; 24.I5; 24.25; 26.6-8.
(2) Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead, 59.
(3) Cullmann (op.cit., 25-26) has a highly significant contrast between the death of Jesus and the death of Socrates: "Nothing shows better the radical difference between the Greek doctrine of immortality of the soul and the Christian doctrine of the resurrection...Jesus underwent death in all its horror, not only in His body, but also in His soul". Socrates, on the other hand, welcomed release from the prison-house of the body.

death meant the destruction of divinely created life. Everything which God made was "very good" (Gen.I.3I).

Therefore Cullmann has every right to claim:

"The whole thought of the New Testament remains for us a book sealed with seven seals if we do not read behind every sentence there this other sentence: Death has already been overcome (death be it noted, not the body); there is already a new creation (a new creation, be it noted, not an immortality which the soul has always possessed); the resurrection age is already inaugurated".(I)

The consummation, of course, still lies ahead, when by the divine creative act the mortal body will be transformed into the spiritual body. But God has already acted decisively in the Resurrection of Christ, the "firstfruits" of the harvest of the dead (I Cor.I5.20).

The book of Acts also presents Paul's clash with the Jews about the Resurrection of the Body. In Acts 23.6 Paul maintains before the Sanhedrin that the point at issue in his trial was this very doctrine.

Foakes-Jackson does not hesitate to claim that Paul was blameworthy

"for trying to save himself by dividing the contending parties in the Sanhedrin", i.e. the Pharisees and the Sadducees. He thinks that Paul's claim before Felix that no charge could be brought against him except that he had divided the Sanhedrin on the issue of the Resurrection, carries the confession that he had been wrong to toss this "intellectual handgrenade"(W.Barclay(2)) into the discussion (Acts 24.2I).(3)

The following comments may be made about Foakes-Jackson's criticism of Paul:

a) It may be acknowledged immediately that Paul was called in question about much more than the Resurrection of the Body.

b) It is not possible to argue that Paul's behaviour never

(I) Op.cit., 4I.
(2) Ambassador for Christ, Edinburgh I95I, I2I.
(3) The Acts of the Apostles, London I93I, 207 & 2I7.

sank beneath an ideal level. But, on the other hand, he ought not to be enclosed in a moral strait-jacket which would deny him normal, and by no means reprehensible reactions.

In all probability he had given up all hope of a fair hearing. If he deliberately aimed at ending this mockery of justice it is hardly surprising. Under similar circumstances his Master answered nothing because He had no audience capable of hearing; Paul may have felt the same.

c) The theory that he was "trying to save himself" hardly holds water. In actual fact he was nearly torn to pieces and was only saved by the intervention of the Roman commander. By this stage in his career he was only too sadly familiar with the explosive results from many of his speeches. The incident can only have served to underline in the minds of the authorities that Paul was a security risk.

d) Again, it is doubtful if Acts 24.2I carries the force accepted by Foakes-Jackson. The verse may mean that no criminal charge could be brought against him, only a theological one.(I)

e) Perhaps most important of all: there is a sense in which it was profoundly true that the point at issue between Paul and his Jewish opponents was the Resurrection.

It has been pointed out with complete truth that the Pharisees could not be numbered among those who thought it "incredible" that God should raise the dead (Acts 26.8): but they did think it incredible that God had raised Jesus; and here they clashed with Paul. At the centre of everything he had to say about Resurrection was the Resurrection of Jesus. He could not be satisfied with generalisations about Resurrection, in view of the crucial fact that there was one Empty Tomb and One Risen Body.

(I) So F.F.Bruce (The New Bible Commentary, London I953, 932).

For Paul the Resurrection order was: "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (I Cor.15.23). Nothing must be allowed to obscure this fundamental difference between Paul and his opponents. From the moment of his contact with the Risen Lord on the Damascus Road he was bound to disagree with the Jews in his preaching of the Resurrection.

Another passage in Acts demands special attention. The picture in Acts 24.25 of Felix trembling under the impact of "righteousness, self-control and judgement to come", throws a most significant shaft of light on the power of Paul's proclamation of the Last Things. The reaction indicates that Klausner does less than justice to Paul's message when he describes it as an "abstract discussion".(I) If Felix trembled under such circumstances, many others must have listened to Paul with similar results. His message pierced home to the conscience.

This passage and 2 Corinthians 5.10,11 suggest that ὁ φόβος τοῦ Κυρίου played an important part in Paul's evangelism. The saving of men from the present and future judgement of God was an element in his evangelism. It is interesting to note that his statement of his pride in the Gospel (Rom.1.16) is followed immediately by a reference to the wrath of God (1.18ff.) ὀργή is cognate with δικαιοσύνη .(2)

Many commentators have been extremely cautious in their handling of such conceptions as "the terror of the Lord" or "the wrath of God".

Plummer, e.g. says of 2 Corinthians 5.10,11:

"'The terror of the Lord' is misleading; it is not the terror which the Lord inspires, but the fear which we feel, of Christ as our Judge, that is meant".(3)

There seems to be a subtle change of emphasis here from an objective divine force to a subjective human feeling.

(1) Quoted by F.F.Bruce in "The Book of Acts" (The New London Commentary, London 1954), 473.
(2) In Rom.1.18, ὀργή has a present reference. Usually it refers to the future (Rom.2.5; 5.9; Matt.3.7; I Thess.1.10; 5.9.

An even better example of caution is Dodd's depersonalizing of the wrath of God. To him the idea of God's "anger" in Romans I.I8 is a "thoroughly archaic idea". Paul never uses the verb "to be angry" with God as a subject. He retains, however, the concept of the wrath of God which is not present in the teaching of Jesus.

What did the wrath of God mean to Paul? In Dodd's own words:

"...not a certain feeling or attitude of God towards us, but some process or effect in the realm of objective facts... We cannot think with full consistency of God in terms of the highest human ideals of personality and yet attribute to Him the irrational passion of anger".(I)

We may wonder if such approaches genuinely reflect the thought of Paul on this issue.

In relation to Plummer's preference for the subjective "fear which we feel" instead of the fear inspired by Christ, we have to remember that this φόβος τοῦ Κυρίου was an essential part of Paul's whole experience of Christ. There is nothing to make one feel that he would have hesitated to say that it was inspired by Christ, and that there was an objective reality corresponding to the subjective. "The love of Christ" is clearly the love inspired by Christ crucified. It is difficult to see adequate grounds for maintaining that the "terror of the Lord" is not the "terror" inspired by the Lord.

Dodd does not deny the objective reality of the wrath of God but he depersonalizes it. One may doubt the grounds for such a procedure.

The necessity of caution in speaking about the wrath of God must, of course, be granted immediately. J.S.Stewart's warning is necessary:

"Between the wrath of God and most of what this world calls wrath, no parallel exists".(2)

(I) The Epistle of Paul to the Romans (Moffatt N.T.C., London I932), 20-24.

(2) A Man in Christ, London I935, 2I9.

But in certain respects Dodd's presentation of the conception is artificial. When we think of God's wrath we are not thinking of the "artificial passion of anger", which must be excluded from the Christian picture of God; we are thinking of the "totality of the divine reaction to sin".(I)

Further, while it is true that Jesus never specifically used the term," the wrath of God," the reality of divine judgement to which the term points, appears in many passages. Denney can say with justification that

"the sternest and most inexorable language which the New Testament contains on this awful subject is to be found on our Lord's own lips".(2)

Again, the wisdom of putting sinners into the power of an inexorable objective process rather than into the hands of the personal God of judgement, must be strongly questioned. To think of the wrath of God as a moral machine, rather than as the personal activity of a personal God, throws up an unconvincing and a frightening picture. A man who is entangled in a machine is powerless to break its iron grip which is mercilessly drawing him in further and further. His only hope is in outside intervention. Is God personally present in the law which breaks the man who breaks it? The moral and spiritual advantages of dealing with a moral machine rather than with a personal God, who is present both in the wages of goodness and of sin, are dubious in the extreme. We do not hesitate to say that He gives us the wages of goodness. Why should we be reluctant to hold that He gives us the wages of sin?

There seem to be no good grounds for rejecting the thought of the wrath of God as a personal reaction of a holy God, or for denying the objective character of the "terror of the Lord" as

(I) J.S.Stewart (op.cit., 219).
(2) Studies in Theology, London 1895, 255.

"the smouldering fire of divine judgement, the irresistible will of holy love against all that is unholy and unloving" (Torrance).(I)

This seems to be the most faithful construction of Pauline thought about judgement.

Denney sums up this aspect of Paul's preaching in memorable words:

"He exercises his office as one who must render an account...We need something to suppress self-seeking, to keep conscience vigorous, to preserve the message of reconciliation itself from degenerating into good-natured indifference, to prohibit immoral compromises and superficial healing of the soul's hurts. Let us familiarise our minds, by meditation, with the fear due to Christ the judge, and a new element of power will enter into our service, making it at once more urgent and more wholesome than it could otherwise be".(2)

Belief in judgement undoubtedly added a new dimension of power to Paul's preaching.

Paul the Writer

The Pauline letters, as our earliest New Testament documents, are a source of first-class importance for evidence about the primitive Gospel. Dodd holds that Paul received the fundamentals of the Gospel no later than about seven years after the death of Jesus. Therefore

"Paul's preaching represents a special stream of Christian tradition which was derived from the main stream at a point very near its source".(3)

The reliability of the letters has been questioned along two lines.

I. Their reliability as a mirror of Paul's missionary preaching.

"Paul's letters", says Cadbury, "are obviously based on

(I) The Apocalypse Today, II7.
(2) The Second Epistle to the Corinthians (The Expositor's Bible New Edition,) I86-I87.
(3) The Apostolic Preaching, 27.

what humanly speaking must be called the accident of practical demands. They may not even represent at all adequately his missionary preaching, since their purpose was rather pastoral".(I)

But if these letters do not represent adequately his missionary preaching we are left in the predicament that we have nothing else which gives us a more adequate impression.

The distinction between missionary theology and pastoral theology may be questioned. Paul had not two theologies but one, which was adequate for missionary pressures and practical problems. We may say that his pastoral theology is a reliable mirror of the kind of theology he presented on the mission field. His letters constantly indicate the natural outreach of his theology to practical problems. The theological section again and again is followed by a practical section.

Paul's reaction to the "accident of practical demands" in Thessalonica is notable. Second Adventism hysteria, although not unknown in modern times, is not a typical problem; and so it might be imagined that Paul has little to say to our day in this connection. But his theology of hope with its practical emphasis sounds notes that are of vital importance for Christianity in every age.

There seem to be no good grounds for yearning for some hypothetical source which would represent Paul's missionary theology more adequately. It may be maintained that his writings give us a very adequate impression of his missionary message.

2. The reliability of the Pauline epistles as a mirror of the primitive Gospel has also been questioned.

Dodd's comment about this point is surely most balanced:

(I) The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, 317.

"No doubt his own idiosyncrasy counted for much in his presentation of the Gospel, but anyone who should maintain that the primitive Christian Gospel was fundamentally different from that which we have found in Paul must bear the burden of proof".(I)

Paul did not view himself as an originator. Such a view of himself would have amazed him. He would have been swift to confess his debt to what he had received from others - teaching a bout the words and works of Jesus, illuminated by the Old Testament Scriptures.(2)

Acts I7.3 speaks of Paul presenting a message at Thessalonica which must have been the theme of evangelists everywhere:

"Christ must needs have suffered and risen from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, is Christ".

But Paul also makes it clear that this tradition received from others, was received from the Lord in the deepest sense.(3) The exalted Lord was mightily at work in the transmission process, condescending to give to Paul the personal revelation which authenticated him as an apostle, giving him the right to proclaim Christ.(4)

Pauline Eschatology

Before turning to a study of the Pauline passages which are especially relevant for the bearing of eschatology on mission, let us examine two preliminary considerations.

I. "Paul had no eschatology"

(I) Op.cit., 27.
(2) I Cor.I5.3-7.
(3) I Cor.II.23.
(4) I Cor.I5.8-I0.

Some scholars would challenge the feasibility of speaking of Paul's eschatological thought.

"It may be said without exaggeration", maintains H.A.A.Kennedy, "that St.Paul had no eschatology".(I)

That is true in the sense intended by Kennedy: there is no systematic theology. Paul

"prefers to turn aside from all statements of detail, and to rest in a blessed certainty around which he leaves a margin of mystery".(2)

But exaggeration could easily enter into the statement that Paul had no eschatology, even as it could enter into the statement that Paul was not a theologian.(3)

Munck rightly stresses that Paul was a missionary theologian, not a theologian in the modern sense.

"He is no Albert Schweitzer, continuing his theological work during his missionary activity. No, all Paul's work as a thinker arises from missionary activity, and its object is missionary work...Paul's theology...is primarily an accompaniment of his activity".(4)

Munck holds, therefore, that

"it is the <u>apostle</u> Paul with whom research has to do".(5)

This is an important stress but it could be driven too far. We cannot afford to neglect Paul the theologian as Munck has tended to do. It can be claimed that he had clear eschatological convictions which were not substantially altered with the passing of time.

"St.Paul", says Kennedy, "has laid the foundations

(I) St.Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, London I904, 2I.
(2) Op.cit., 30. Similarly Dibelius and Kümmel (Paul, 40): "His thinking is opportunist, not systematic".
(3) See Deissmann, e.g: "Paul at his best belongs not to Theology but to Religion...I am afraid that the people of Iconium, Thessalonica and Corinth would all of them have shared the fate of Eutychus of Troas, if they had been compelled to listen to the paragraphs of modern 'Paulinism' dealing with 'Christology', 'Hamartiology', and 'Eschatology'."(Op.cit.,6). This may be very true of "Paulinism", which may sometimes have been a clouded mirror of Paul's theology: but surely it is more accurate to say that Paul belongs to both theology and religion.
(4) Op.cit., 67. (5) Op.cit., 66.

for the eschatology of the Christian Church".(I)

Many scholars would deny the possibility of tracing consistent eschatological convictions in Paul.

2. Development in Paul's eschatology

The writings of Sabatier, Teichmann, and many others maintain that there was gradual development in Paul's eschatology.

If a gradual development in other minds is a common phenomenon, there is no need to quarrel in principle with the possibility of development in Paul's alert and questing mind. "Paul's thinking on the Last Things changed, developed, deepened", says A.M.Hunter "He grew in eschatological insight as in grace".(2)

Hunter, following R.H.Charles mentions four rough stages: a) I and 2 Thessalonians; b) I Corinthians; c) 2 Corinthians and Romans; d) Colossians and Ephesians. He does not mention Philippians because of the difficulty of dating.(3)

But the statement of development must take account of all the relevant passages.

It has frequently been claimed that at the first stage of his eschatological pilgrimage Paul thought of himself as alive at the Second Advent.(4) A serious illness changed his viewpoint.(5) In the Captivity Epistles the anticipation of the Advent is less definite. Christians are already "translated into the Kingdom" of God's Son (Col.I.I3); they are already blessed with "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms" (Eph.I.3); they are already raised up and enthroned with Christ in these "heavenly realms" (Eph.2.6).

Dodd has argued strongly for the validity of the above view.(6)

(I) Op.cit., 3.
(2) Paul and His Predecessors, London I940, I23.
(3) Op.cit., I23-I24.
(4) See e.g. I Thess.4.I5; I Cor.I5.5I; 7.29; Rom.I3.IIff.
(5) 2 Cor.I.8,9.
(6) New Testament Studies, Manchester I953. ('The Mind of Paul: I' I933, and 'The Mind of Paul:II', I934.)

He finds an important turning point in Paul's eschatological attitude in 2 Corinthians. He holds that chapters I-9 were written after chapters I0-I3. In I0-I3 we see Jewish apocalyptic and sub-Christian ideas which Paul carried over into his Christian experience. Between I0-I3 and I-9 he became involved in a crisis which amounted to a second conversion. He grew beyond his Jewish apocalyptic background and the desire for personal vindication (which was strongly in evidence in I0-I3.)

Dodd finds evidence for this theory in what he calls the "absolute dualism" involved in the contrast in I0-I3 between "the things of the Lord" and "the things of the world", between "this age" and "the age to come", between the "elect" and the rest of the world.

Strong objections can be raised against this approach to 2 Corinthians.

a) The same type of dualism which Dodd traces in I0-I3 can be found in I-9.

Dodd himself looks upon the passage forbidding the unequal yoke with unbelievers (6.I4-7.I) as an "erratic block" from a previous letter which has been lost. It is out of place in its present context.

But this is not the only passage which would have to be looked upon as an "erratic block". The description of Satan as the "god of this world" (4.4) has been called by Professor Ladd: "the most unqualified expression of temporal dualism to be found in the N.T...Some scholars have maintained that this dualistic formulation is sharper than anything to be found in Judaism".(I)

b) It may be maintained that there is no "absolute dualism" anywhere in the New Testament, and certainly not in 2 Corinthians.

(I) Evangelical Quarterly, Vol.30, No.2, 8Iff.

The light of the age to come may be known now. In spite of the "god of this world", "God hath shined in our hearts"(4.6). Darkness remains but it cannot master the light. The blinding by the "god of this world" becomes a manifestation of the God of judgement. The "thorn in the flesh" which Paul calls "a messenger of Satan" becomes the occasion of a deeper spiritual experience (I2.7-9).

In such a passage realised eschatology and unrealised eschatology are both clearly present. Paul experienced the triumph of grace in the present age: but the Kingdom of God cannot be fully realised here and now. Satan is still the "god of this world", showing his terrible power in the realm of sin and sickness: but divine Providence is in final control of the situation.

Glasson also traces a clear development in Paul's eschatological thought although he is aware that the development can be exaggerated. He finds significance in the fact that the word "Parousia" appears six times in relation to the Second Advent in the Thessalonian letters, and only once in all the other letters (I Cor.I5.23).(I) Gradually Paul rose above the "imperfect message with which he began".(2) He came to realise that God's plan was to build up a world fellowship in Christ. We see the climax of his thought in this connection in Ephesians where there is no precise reference to the Second Advent, but only an allusion to a future consummation (4.30). At this stage the Parousia was not in the centre of his thought.

Glasson recognizes two reasons for this change of emphasis: Paul's contemplation of God's mighty acts in the missionary movement, and his meditation upon the meaning of the Cross as the true revelation of the power and wisdom of God.(3)

(I) One may question the force of this point. The issue is not a word but an idea - of a mighty, imminent invasion by God in Christ. It cannot be denied that the idea is present in many of his letters.
(2) The Second Advent, 208.
(3) Op.cit., 206-209.

The Biblical evidence does not support the theory that we can trace an evolution in Paul's writings from an imperfect to a more balanced eschatological message which meant the overshadowing, if not the superseding of unrealised elements by realised ones.

Even in the later epistles paradoxical ideas appear side by side. Sometimes the Advent is looked upon as near; on other occasions, an interval seems to be expected. "The Lord is at hand", says Paul in Philippians 4.5. The citizens of heaven look up expectantly for their Saviour (Phil.3.20). He prays for Christians that they may be "transparent and no harm to anyone in view of the day of Christ"(Phil.I.IO - Moffatt).

Beside such passages must be laid others in which he appears to contemplate the possibility of his own death before the Advent (Phil.I.23; 2.I7).

Again, the Christ of the Colossian letter is the "hope of glory"(I.27). When He shall appear the Colossians shall share His glory"(3.4).

In view of these paradoxical elements, even in Paul's later letters, it is necessary to avoid dogmatic conclusions from such passages as I Thessalonians 4.I5, I Corinthians I5.5I, 7.29, and Romans I3.IIff., which have been used as decisive proof that Paul expected to be alive at the Second Advent.

I Corinthians I5.5I and 7.29 do not necessarily have the force claimed for them.

G.Vos has this interesting comment on I Corinthians 7.29:

"'The time is short' cannot have the rather banal sense, that it is no longer worthwhile to marry. The shortness or 'contractedness' of the time serves simply as a reminder of the belief that the parousia may not be far distant, and that from the parousia all sorts of worldly distresses are inseparable. The relevancy of the advice, so far from resting on a purely chronological opinion as to the nearness of the event, derives its main force from the state of mind in which the Christian

ought to contemplate the end and make ready for it".(I)

We must remember that the man who wrote "the time is short" also spoke of his plans to visit Rome, and his hopes to go to Spain (Rom.I5.24,28).

It must also be noted that even as he associates himself with those who will live to see the Coming of the Lord (I Thess.4.I5) he associates himself in I Corinthians 6.I4 with those who will be raised from the dead at the Parousia.

Guy questions the probability of radical development in the I0-I2 years covered by the Pauline letters:

"To speak of Paul as 'immature' when he wrote the Thessalonians and 'mature' when he wrote from captivity in Rome ten years later is to ignore the fact that he had already been a Christian for fifteen or more years when he issued his first extant letter - a period filled with hard thinking and possibly extensive missionary activity".(2)

Dodd himself is aware of this difficulty but pleads that at least the possibility of a change in Paul should not be ruled out.

The theory of radical development in Paul's eschatology ignores two other important factors:

a) Paul's opponents would have been swift to pounce on anything which indicated any considerable change of standpoint. They would have asked: "If he has been wrong about the Last Things, about how many other things is he wrong?"

b) There can be no doubt that Paul looked upon the body of his teaching (including his eschatological teaching) as communicated supernaturally by God. With such an attitude, he could hardly change his ground with the equanimity of a modern theologian. We may speak of a "later" or "earlier" Barth. It would be more serious to speak of a "later" or

(I) The Pauline Eschatology, Michigan I953, 86-87.
(2) The New Testament Doctrine of the Last Things, London I948, I27.

"earlier" Paul. He makes it very clear in his writings when he is merely expressing an opinion, for which he claims no particular authority, and when he is speaking by revelation.(I)

The prominence given to eschatology in some letters should not be exaggerated. It may be explained by the fact that eschatology had become a burning issue. If Paul had not dwelt upon it in detail he would not have been addressing himself to the problem in hand. In other letters it was unnecessary to refer to it in the same detail.

The conclusion is perfectly possible that Paul never ceased to believe in the imminence of the Parousia, provided we remember W.Neill's reminder: "Imminence is not immediacy".(2) Paul's thought must not be rigidly tied to the chronological aspect of the Parousia. Paul's references to the imminence of the Coming are deeply prophetic. They enshrine the conviction that nothing can stop Christ's triumph.

It may well be admitted that there are passages which give the impression that the victory would not be long delayed. This is not in the least surprising when one thinks of Paul's missionary triumphs in places like Thessalonica and Corinth. But the really significant point is that never once did Paul lament the delay of the Parousia. He was too busy fighting the battles of the Lord. Tremendous tasks beckoned him at this intersection of this age and the age to come (I Cor.10.11)

Eschatology and Mission in I and 2 Thessalonians

The study of the eschatological motive for world mission in I and 2 Thessalonians is of great importance. Neill speaks of these letters and Acts as the "earliest stratum of missionary preaching".(3)

(I) How carefully in I Cor.7.6,10,12,25, he distinguishes between his own opinion and the Lord's commandment!
(2) St.Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians (Torch), London 1957, 93.
(3) Op.cit., 92.

The handling of the problems raised by the delay of the Parousia throws a most revealing light upon Paul's outlook.

In I Thessalonians he answers two questions which had become of burning importance for the Thessalonian Church.

a) Would Christians who had died forfeit their share in Christ's triumph? (4.I3-I8) The answer is a firm negative.

b) How could Christians know when to expect their Lord?

Expectation of the Parousia had become so urgent that some Christians had stopped working lest they should be taken unawares(4.II).

Paul's answer was that it was impossible to know the time of the Coming. It would be sudden and unexpected, "like a thief" (5.2),(cf. Lk.I2.39; Matt.24.43). The most important thing was to be ready.

Neil says significantly:

"For Paul, unlike the Thessalonians and ourselves, there seems to have been no difficulty in reconciling the prospect of the Parousia in his lifetime with complete unconcern as to the time of its arrival".(I)

Hysteria continued after the writing of I Thessalonians. The impression was abroad that Paul had told them that the End was upon them. Paul replied that there must be signs before the Last Event (2 Thess.2.I-I2). Again we note the practical character of his outlook. He recommended hunger as the best cure to bring the hysterical to a proper way of thinking. Let the drones starve! (3.6-I5.) Acts I7.5 suggests that perhaps some of the Thessalonians, who had been drawn from the irresponsible elements in the community, were not averse to seizing excuses to avoid work. Paul handled them extremely firmly, telling them that real belief in the Parousia involved patience and steadfastness, not star-gazing.

(I) Op.cit., I08.

Inconsistency between I and 2 Thessalonians

Some scholars would not accept the above approach. They claim that there is a radical inconsistency between the thought of the two letters. Schweitzer is suspicious of the genuineness of 2 Thessalonians. He views the teaching that many things must happen before the End, and the necessity to explain the delay in the Parousia as belonging to a period after the death of Paul.(I)

Dodd does not question the Pauline origin of 2 Thessalonians, but he thinks that the qualifications about the nearness of the Parousia are an afterthought.(2)

Beasley-Murray, on the other hand, claims that

"Paul's view of signs heralding the End is surely a settled item of his teaching".(3)

He finds confirmation of this in I Corinthians 7.26ff., where Paul clearly expects, not merely an imminent End, but a preliminiminary time of tribulation.(4)

It must also be remembered that in I Thessalonians 5.Iff. previous instruction by Paul about "times and seasons" prior to the Coming of the Lord is implied.

There seem to be no good reasons to reject A.M.Hunter's moderate opinion:

"The eschatological differences between I and 2 Thessalonians do not seem to me irreconcilable".(5)

(I) The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, 42.
(2) Apostolic Preaching, 38-39.
(3) Jesus and the Future, 233.
(4) Beasley-Murray (op.cit., 233 f.) sees the following parallels with Mk.I3.I4-20: With the 'impending'(ἐνεστῶσαν) tribulations, and the 'shortened' time (συνεσταλμένος), cf. Mk.I3.20; with ὀλίψιν cf. Mk.I3.I7. The application of a specifically Jewish prophecy to Gentile believers is made possible by such universal passages as Mk.I3.7,8, 24-27.
(5) Paul and his Predecessors, I24. Similarly W.Neill (op.cit., 22): "It is no longer true that scholars find it hard to reconcile the eschatological teaching of the second letter with that of the first".

Influences behind eschatology of I and 2 Thessalonians

The question of Paul's dependence on other sources is a more complex one.

The traditional view is that the most significant dependence is on the teaching of Jesus. Zahn maintained that the view of the outcome of history in 2 Thessalonians 2 goes back to the teaching of Jesus in Mark I3.(I)

Others have categorically denied that passages like 2 Thess.I.7-I0 and 2.3-I0 have their roots in the teaching of Jesus. They see a connection with a Jewish or Jewish-Christian apocalypse.(2) Glasson's comment is typical:

"We cannot conceive Him talking of Himself coming with flaming fire rendering vengeance upon them that know not God".(3)

Glasson argues strongly that the dominant influence in Paul's eschatological thought was the Old Testament. This, he holds, is especially clear in a passage like 2 Thess.I.7-8. The Parousia-hope is similarly traced back to the Old Testament. "We are to go straight from these early passages...as representing early Church teaching to the Old Testament. The connecting link was the conviction that Jesus was Lord".(4)

On such a thesis the Parousia becomes no more than the interpretation of contemporary events (e.g. Caligula's setting up of the image in the Temple in A.D. 40) in the light of Old Testament prophecy.

J.A.T.Robinson follows a very similar line in a chapter on I and 2 Thessalonians. He argues that the eschatological material may originally have possessed a

"different and non-apocalyptic reference, and have had its original application not to the Parousia but to a crisis in the historical order".(5)

(I) Das Evangelium des Matthäus, 65I n.I.
(2) E.g. C.H.Dodd (Apostolic Preaching, 38-39).
(3) The Second Advent, I68. Similarly H.A.Guy (op.cit.,I09). While there is no exact parallel in the teaching of Jesus there are many references to radical judgement.
(4) Op.cit., I68 and I7I.
(5) Jesus and His Coming, London I957, II2.

He draws a firm line between 'eschatological' and 'apocalyptic', and is extremely suspicious of the primitive character of the apocalyptic elements.(I)

"The more apocalyptic the passage", he writes, "the remoter is its connection with anything in the Gospel tradition which may claim to be primitive or provide evidence for the teaching of Jesus".(?)

The conclusion reached is that the Thessalonian letters cannot be used to indicate that the Parousia-hope of the early Church originated (or did not originate) in the teaching of Jesus. They only prove that by this time the Church had made such an association. Robinson thinks that hints can be found in the Gospels that there was a more primitive stage before this association.

There are grave difficulties in the way of accepting such conclusions.

a) It is odd that the early Church, which stood so close to Jesus, was so wrong in fathering its own Parousia-hope upon Jesus.

b) It seems impossible, without firm evidence in Scripture, to deny the primitive character of the Parousia-faith. Here "hints", with their inevitable obscurity, are insufficient. Most scholars would agree with A.M.Hunter:

"The fact that there is not a single New Testament writer who does not speak of a speedy Parousia is clear proof how primitive the conviction was. 'Our Lord, come' was the watch-word not merely of the Church of God in Corinth but of the whole ecclesia from Jerusalem to Ephesus.(I Cor.I6.22; Rev.22.20; Heb.I0.37, 9.28; 2 Pet.3.4.)"(2)

The traditional tracing of the Parousia-faith right back to Jesus still seems to be possible. Neil says vigorously: "It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the initial impetus to the Church's belief in the return of Christ was given by our Lord Himself. The Parousia strain is too deeply rooted in the gospels to be explained away, and the transition

(I) By 'apocalyptic' Robinson means the 'unveling' of coming supernatural events.
(2) Paul and His Predecessors, I33.

from the Old Testament Day of the Lord to the New Testament Day of Christ must be by way of the Day of the Son of Man".(I)

Correspondences between Thessalonians and Mark I3

The missionary message embodied in I and 2 Thessalonians has marked correspondences with Mark I3. The following notes which we have already found in Mark I3 must have been sounded clearly in Paul's preaching:

I) Urgency

It could not be otherwise since he believed that the End was imminent. The future, which might break in at any moment, included both salvation and judgement (I Thess.5.9; I.I0; 2 Thess.2.I2.)

2) Realism

Paul's experience and his theology alike would not let him believe in easy triumphs for the Gospel. He had seen the deadly opposition provoked by the preaching of the Word in Thessalonica (Acts I7.5), and in many other places. In dire opposition to the "mystery of godliness" there was the "mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess.2.7). His use of the figure of the Antichrist shows that he believed that "the success of Christianity does not allow the devil to sleep".(2)

3) Persistence

He had no interest in imparting theoretical eschatological knowledge. He offered practical comfort (I Thess.4.I8), and practical challenge. His belief in the Parousia involved patient waiting and steadfastness (I Thess.I.I0). He had no sympathy with an apocalypticism which menaced resourceful missionary effort.

Again we are reminded, as we were in the study of Mark I3

(I) The Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, (Moffatt N.T.C.) London I950, xl.
(2) Brunner (Eternal Hope, 79).

that there is a false doctrine of the nearness of the End as well as a true. The false enervates; the true energizes.

Beasley-Murray has an interesting list of textual parallels between the Thessalonian epistles and Mark I3.(I) He concludes that we do not merely have a reflection in the epistles of the spirit of the eschatological discourse: there are also contacts of diction.

2 Thessalonians 2.6

2 Thessalonians 2.6 is of especial interest for our study. The exegetical difficulties of the verse are renowned. There are three possible meanings of κατέχειν :

a) "Hold fast". cf.I Thess.5.2I. κατέχειν here has the force of κρατεῖν .

b) "Hold back". cf. Philemon I3. κατέχειν in this case has the force of κωλύειν.

c) "Hold sway", in cases where the verb is intransitive.

Most commentators prefer to interpret κατέχειν in the sense of "hold back" in 2 Thessalonians 2.6.

There is a bewildering variety of expositions of ὁ κατέχων and τὸ κατέχον . They include:

I) The Roman power

(I) I Thess.4.I5-I7 = Mk.I3.26-27.
,, 5.I-5 = Mk.I3.32-33.
,, 5.6-8 = Mk.I3.35-36.
,, 5.4-I0 = Mk.I3.22.
2 Thess.I.3-5 = Mk.I3.9-I3.
,, I.6-I0 = Mk.I3.26-27.
,, I.II-I2 = Lk. 2I.36.
,, 2.I-2 = Mk.I3.26-27.
,, 2.3 = Mk.I3.5.
,, 2.4-6 = Mk.I3.I4.
,, 2.8-I2 = Mk.I3.22.
,, 2.I3 = Mk.I3.27.
,, 2.I5 = Mk.I3.23.
(Jesus and the Future, 232-233)

It has been maintained that the Emperor was ὁ κατέχων ; the Empire τὸ κατέχον James Denney's words are typical of this approach:

"The apostasy was to take place among the Jews; ...Rome and the Emperor were the grand restraint upon the violence of that stubborn race".(I)

A.Plummer follows the same explanation. After mentioning Augustine's difficulties with the verse he says with great confidence:

"This explanation fits the two expressions (ὁ κατέχων and τὸ κατέχον) and their context so well that it is almost a waste of time to look for any other".(2)

This interpretation is given a wider application in the theory which thinks of the restraining power as the principle of law and order which found a signal illustration in the Roman Empire, but which continues in other states and other legal systems which carry the influence of Roman Law.(3)

Harnack follows this approach:

"History has shown us that although each Roman ruler was destined to fall, and the Roman Empire itself to be overrun by barbaric conquerors, yet Roman Law has survived all shocks. It has joined with the Gospel in producing large departments of Christian legislation designed for the restraining of evil".(4)

This avoids the difficulty that the Antichrist did not, in fact, appear, to usher in the Last Things after the Roman power was withdrawn.

Denney meets this difficulty with the remark "these are the human elements in prophecy".(5)

A.S.Peake sees the Roman power in the passage in a more complex form. One Emperor is ὁ κατέχων ; another, the man of sin. He feels that it is"plausible" to look upon Caligula as a manifestation of the mystery of lawlessness which was held in check by the reigning Emperor Claudius. When Claudius was

(I) I and 2 Thessalonians (The Expositor's Bible, London I892) 325. Similarly, H.A.A.Kennedy (St.Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, 2I9); and A.M.Hunter (Paul and His Predecessors, I24).
(2) A Commentary on Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians, 60.
(3) So L.Morris (The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, London I956, I29).
(4) The Expansion of Christianity I.258. (5) Op.cit., 324 & 327.

"taken out of the way" he would be succeeded by the man of sin who would continue Caligula's lawless tendencies. The guarded language of the passage would thus be explained by Paul's view of the next Roman Emperor as the man of sin.(I)

2) Missionary effort

Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theoderet and Calvin all held that τὸ κατέχον was missionary effort.

Calvin writes:

"I seem to hear Paul discoursing as to the universal call of the Gentiles...that Christ must enlighten the whole world by his Gospel, in order that the impiety of men might be the more fully attested and demonstrated. This therefore was the delay, until the career of the Gospel should be completed".(2)

Theodore, Theoderet and Calvin parted company, however, in their interpretation of ὁ κατέχων . Theodore and Theoderet held that God was ὁ κατέχων . Calvin found a reference to Antichrist.

"I have no doubt that he refers to Antichrist; and the participle 'withholding' must be explained in the future tense...the reign of Antichrist will be temporary".(3)

Munck follows Cullmann in holding that Paul is ὁ κατέχων .

"It cannot be God who is meant, but only an instrument that God uses. It is in fact to disappear. ὁ κατέχων must be he whose task it is to carry out what is in τὸ κατέχον . It must be Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, who is described as ὁ κατέχων ".(4)

3) A supernatural spirit or person

Dibelius finds a reference to the unknown spirit who keeps

(I) Peake's Commentary, 879.
(2) Commentaries on the Philippians, Colossians,and Thessalonians (Calvin Translation Society), Edinburgh
(3) Op.cit., 334
(4) Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, 38.

the ἄνομος in detention until the time God has appointed for his appearance. Here κατέχειν is interpreted in the sense of κρατεῖν. The unknown character of the spirit is reflected in the ease with which Paul shifts from neuter to masculine.(I)

For Schaefer ὁ κατέχων is Satan. τὸ κατέχον is the mystery of lawlessness, and αὐτόν (v.6) is Christ. Here κατέχειν is used with the force "hold sway".

W.Neil finds the angel of the abyss (Revelation 20) the most satisfactory solution of ὁ κατέχων.(2)

It is not surprising that many distinguished commentators have concluded that the exegetical difficulties of the passage are insuperable. They have echoed Augustine's words: "I frankly confess that I do not know what he means".(3)

It must be granted that certainty about the correct interpretation is impossible, but the attempt to balance rival probabilities against one another must continue. Whatever interpretation is accepted, difficulties remain.

The author believes that the passage is interpreted most adequately in the light of the role of the Roman Empire or of the missionary movement.

It is no accident that many great New Testament scholars have found a reference to Roman power. There are strong points in favour of this theory.

Munck has made much of Rome's protection of Paul. Rome was unimpressed by the technicalities of the Jewish case against Paul. As his life wore on Rome's role of protector became more and more necessary. From the human standpoint again and again Roman arms were the only barrier between Paul and a violent

(I) Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus, I909, 58ff., and in his commentary (I9II).
(2) Op.cit., I69-I70.
(3) De.Civ.Dei xx.xix.2. Similarly G.Vos,(The Pauline Eschatology, I33 note); also Frame (I.C.C. Commentary, 262): "We do not know what Paul had in mind".

death.(I) Roman power repeatedly was God's "minister" to Paul "for good" (Rom.I3.I-6). Rome had restrained the violence of evil and fanatical men in Paul's own life. Therefore the conjecture that Rome might be the "restrainer" in the future, preventing the advent of the Antichrist is not an impossible one.

Further, this conjecture may explain admirably the obscurity of the passage. It might be considered dangerous to speak clearly of the removal of the Roman power within a measurable time. Or perhaps Paul felt that an explicit reference to the removal of Rome was unseemly against the background of Rome's services to his safety.

It has to be noted, however, that there is no political reference in the context. Nor can we quote parallels to the thought of Rome as a restrainer, either in Jewish or Christian apocalyptic thought. Munck agrees with Cullmann that "it is out of the question that a Christian of the first century can have taken such a positive attitude towards imperial Rome, which was held in Christian apocalyptic thought to be the incarnation of Antichrist".(2)

There is force in these objections, but can we say "decisive" force? Paul must not be judged by the yard-stick of Jewish thought. He had broken out of its limitations in many respects. There is no need to argue that he must have been influenced by its attitude to Rome. Nor was he a slavish imitator of Christians in every respect.

There are two strong points to support the conjecture that τὸ κατέχον refers to missionary preaching.

a) It has persisted a long time.

b) Many parallels can be traced in the New Testament.

There are distinguished New Testament scholars who appear to

(I) Acts I8.I2-I7; 23.I0,I2-35, etc.
(2) Op.cit., 37.

be travelling nearer to an acceptance of this interpretation. W.Neil is an interesting example. When his commentary on the Thessalonian Epistles was published in 1950 in the Moffatt series, in his eyes the solution that the restraining power was Paul himself was an "eccentric solution".(1) In his Torch Bible commentary, published in 1957, he deals more gently with the suggestion. A "cogent case" can be built up for

"equating the restraining power with the Christian mission and the 'restrainer' with Paul himself".(2)

He recognizes, however, "considerable" arguments on the other side.(3)

Perhaps the most formidable argument is that it is difficult, on the assumption that ὁ κατέχων was Paul, to explain the obscurity of the language. Further it is odd to imagine Paul referring to himself as ὁ κατέχων .

We must remember that while the language must remain mysterious to us, it was not in the least mysterious to the Thessalonians. They knew the force of his reference from previous intercourse with him (2 Thess.2.5).

The mystery remains: but noone can deny the possibility that τὸ κατέχον was missionary preaching. David Paton follows a line of thought stretching across the ages from Theodore of Mopsuestia, through Calvin to Cullmann, when he writes:

"Some obstacle is holding up the beginning of the End. The most likely obstacle is indicated in Matt.24.14...With this may well be related St.Paul's desire to get to Spain which was the end of his world; and we should also take into account the teaching in Roms.9-11...The End...waits until the Gospel has been preached to all nations: conversely Christian witness is dynamically related to the consummation of God's purpose in history".(4)

This is a natural transition to the consideration of Romans 9-11.

(1) Op.cit., 166.
(2) & (3) Op.cit., 139.
(4) Christian Missions and the Judgement of God, 29-30.

Romans 9-II

Paul's philosophy of history in Romans 9-II is of vital importance for our study. Undoubtedly it throws a great deal of light upon his missionary thought and practice. The passage, according to Cullmann is "a very apt commentary on Mark I3.IO".(I) Dodd speaks of the "impression that we are listening to Paul preaching". We can recognize a "beginning and a close appropriate to a sermon, and the preaching tone is maintained all through".(2)

We see Paul grappling with practical problems which would be thrown up by his missionary work among Gentiles and Jews. The riddle of Israel would be painfully thrust upon him at every turn: the members of the chosen people were not choosing God's chosen Deliverer.

This practical missionary approach is more satisfactory than any attempt to look upon the chapters as a systematic and theoretical treatise - a procedure strongly criticized by Munck.(3)

The general trend of Paul's missionary thought is clear: chapter IO teaches that God is carrying forward His plan of salvation. In that plan there is room for missionary preaching. Without the preacher "how shall they hear?"(IO.I4-I5)

The Jews have had the opportunity of hearing the message (IO.I8). But the "disobedient and gainsaying people" refused to listen. They were too engrossed with their own righteousness to accept the message about the righteousness of God.

The Gentiles, too, must hear the Gospel in order that "the fullness of the Gentiles" may "come in" (II.25). Gentile salvation will have repercussions on Jewish salvation. Paul

(I) The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, 4I7.
(2) The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, I49.
(3) Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, 44n.

works in order that Israel may be provoked to emulation by the faith and love of the Christian Church. The salvation of Israel becomes the indirect result of the Gentile mission - "And so all Israel shall be saved" (II.26).

Nowhere does Paul's intense missionary ardour appear in a more striking light. He had a passionate universal missionary concern, but he never lost his first love for Israel. Like Moses of old he would gladly have put himself outside the pale of God's blessing if his personal renunciation could only have involved the blessing of Israel.(9.I-3). "He would pawn his own happiness for them".(Brunner (I)).

Personal and theological premisses were, therefore, behind his mission, and it is quite impossible to ignore the inextricable links which he saw between his mission to the Gentiles and his mission to the Jews.

"The fullness of the Gentiles"

Does"the fullness of the Gentiles" involve the idea of a certain fixed number that is to be reached? Schweitzer thought that it did. In his view Paul

"has the compelling motive of a number which must be filled up".

That number consists of

"those who, by believing in Jesus, make actual their election to the Messianic Kingdom. If he feels himself under compulsion to carry the knowledge of Christ into the whole world, his purpose is to give to all the Elect from among the Gentiles the possibility of attaining to the condition of being-in-Christ ...It is from these theological motives that he desires to penetrate even to Spain".(2)

Without universal preaching the End cannot come. It is not only the Gentiles who will benefit from this preaching. It will have a miraculous effect upon

(I) The Letter to the Romans, London I959, 89.
(2) The Mysticism of Paul, I82-I83.

Israel whose hardening is only temporary. His own missionary preaching can aid the miracle.

"It is therefore to save Israel that Paul exercises his calling as the Apostle to the Gentiles". (I)

There can be no doubt that Schweitzer's general line is true to Pauline thought: but his limitation of the "fullness of the Gentiles" to a rigid, fixed number is another matter.

Munck's exposition is more likely. He sets aside the possibility that Paul taught a "mechanical kind of predestination", and finds instead the "full extension of the Gospel to all nations" in a representative form.(2)

Munck admits that we do not know the exact details of Paul's eschatological thought but he draws this broad picture: When the "fullness of the Gentiles" is achieved,

"the End can come (Matt.24.I4); the Antichrist can reveal himself in the Temple in Jerusalem (2 Thess.2.4); and Christ will come for judgement and deliverance. This 'fullness' brings near the deliverance of the Jews. Since Paul, according to 2 Thessalonians 2.6-7 thinks also that the conversion of the Gentiles hinders the coming of the Antichrist, the deduction follows naturally that the conversion of the Jews takes place in the period of the Antichrist or at the end of this period".

On this interpretation the sequence is: the "fullness of the Gentiles", the appearance of the Antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, and the Coming of Christ. This leads Munck to the question:

"Could the conversion of Israel be thought of as the happening which hinders Christ's Coming even as the 'fullness of the Gentiles' conditions the appearance of the Antichrist?"(3)

This stress on the eschatological significance for Israel of the faithful discharge of the Gentile mission seems thoroughly sound.

(I) Op.cit., I84.
(2) Op.cit., 48. Munck interprets πλήρωμα in the light of the use of πληρόω in Rom.I5.I9, Col.I.25, and 2 Tim.4.I7.
(3) Christus und Israel, I00-I0I.

"All Israel shall be saved"(II.26)

Calvin interpreted "Israel" of the spiritual household of faith, taking in Jew and Gentile. This is highly unlikely when it is remembered that Paul throughout the chapter is speaking of the Jewish nation.

Some scholars have wondered if the statement of II.26 represents Paul's mind travelling in the direction of dogmatic universalism. Did he share Tennyson's wish that "of the living whole no soul may fail beyond the grave"? If "all Israel shall be saved" in a literal, numerical sense, it is only another step to the statement "all men shall be saved".

Other expositors have gone beyond mere surmising. They have stated definitely that Paul was speaking of the total conversion of Israel.

"This notion, so definitely expressed, of the totality of the people is in no way to be limited" claims H.A.W.Meyer; "the whole of those are intended, who, at the time that the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in, will compose Israel. All Israelites who up to that time shall be still unconverted, will then be converted to salvation".(I)

Many scholars have, however, been swift to maintain that the verse cannot be quoted in support of the "Larger Hope". They hold that Paul is using broad national categories and is not thinking primarily of individuals.(2)

Munck's exposition is typical of this approach. He interprets II.26 against the background of II.5-7. In the present

"there is a remnant according to the election of grace...and the rest were blinded".

But a more glorious day lies ahead for Israel.

"'All

(I) Commentary on the New Testament, Romans Vol.2, Edinburgh I884, 233-234.
Similarly Schweitzer (The Mysticism of Paul), I86: "Probably he assumes that the whole of Israel is destined to become believin

(2) So A.M.Hunter, The Epistle to the Romans (Torch), I04; V.Taylor The Epistle to the Romans, London I955, 77; G.Vos, The Pauline Eschatology, 89; Sanday and Headlam, Romans (I.C.C.), Edinburgh I895, 335; J.Denney, Expositor's Greek Testament on Romans, London I900, 683.

Israel' describes the 'rest' together with the 'remnant'". Paul is using broad categories - "Gentiles", "Israel", the "rest", the "remnant". These categories are

> "saved or rejected in their totality, but the salvation of the individual is not guaranteed in God's predestination...The destiny of the individual becomes determined by Christ at the judgement of the world".(I)

This seems to be an adequate interpretation of Paul's teaching. Salvation is universal in the sense that it is for all, but there is no guarantee that all will appropriate their spiritual inheritance. It cannot be forgotten that in many other passages Paul spoke of the danger of "perishing".(2)

Brunner has a magnificent passage in which he compares the letter to the Romans to a

> "single sentence whose beginning is not cancelled out by the end but where beginning and end belong inseparably and irretrievably together...The eleventh chapter is not true without the ninth, just as the message of the divine mercy is not true without that of judgement".

In the stern words about the potter and the clay in the ninth chapter we find God "threatening our frivolity with judgement". In the "magnificently comforting words" of the eleventh chapter we find God "inviting with the cry of the All-Merciful in face of our despair".(3)

There can be no doubt that Paul's thought of the future included a radiant hope for Israel. This was rooted securely in God's mysterious and miraculous working.

> "In that hope", writes Dibelius, "Paul the thinker found rest, and there remained for him only amazement and adoration as he considered the ways of God".(4)

The repeated references in his writings to human faith and unbelief indicate clearly enough that these were matters of great importance to him. To a limited extent human wilfulness

(I) Christus und Israel, I02.
(2) E.g. 2 Cor.2.I5f., 4.3, Phil.3.I9, 2 Thess.I.9.
(3) Op.cit., 98-99.
(4) Paul, I20. See Rom.II.33-36.

could thwart the divine purpose, but the extent was strictly limited. Man's extremity could become God's opportunity. Even in the midst of moral and spiritual disasters like the rebellion and wilfulness of Israel, God was mightily active, and the future was bright with hope. Paul had no theoretical solution to offer for the tension between the predestination of grace and human freewill. He is contented to state both sides of the picture and to leave us with its spiritual challenge.

Dodd finds Paul's position "artificial".

> "From our standpoint, with a far longer historical retrospect than Paul could have dreamt of, the special importance here assigned to the Jews and their conversion in the forecast of the destiny of mankind appears artificial...We can well understand that his emotional interest in his own people, rather than strict logic, has determined his forecast. We should be disposed to say rather that in all the great religions there is a 'promise' of man's high destiny, and that the faithfulness of God guarantees its ultimate fulfilment".(I)

Glasson deals more sympathetically with the thought of Romans 9-II. He does not imply (as does Dodd) that we have travelled beyond Paul, but that the later Paul travelled beyond the earlier. In Romans 9-II, Paul is beyond the stage represented by I and 2 Thessalonians, but he has not reached the final stage represented by Ephesians: God's final purpose is to sum up all things in Christ through the instrumentality of a Church in which all barriers between Jews and Gentiles are broken down. All distinctions disappear. There is no suggestion that God has still a distinctive role for Israel and a national salvation in store for His chosen people.(2)

These expositions involve large issues. Dodd's presents the question: how far is Paul's thought about Israel authoritative for the Church? Glasson involves us in the same kind of study

(I) The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, I82-I83.
(2) The Second Advent, 207-208.

in development as we have already undertaken in relation to Paul's eschatology.

It is interesting to note how many modern missionary theologians would not agree with Dodd and Glasson in their handling of Romans 9-II. This comes out very clearly in "The Church and the Jewish People", which was published in I954 by the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews. Development beyond Paul and development in Paul, are both absent. The mental atmosphere is much more in line with Brunner's appraisal of the IIth chapter of Romans as "perhaps the most daring that Paul ever wrote".(I)

To return to Dodd's statement: the author believes that it cannot be accepted for these reasons:

a) The assumption is dubious that the passing of time has discredited Paul's view making it less tenable than when he stated it, and that "our standpoint" is wiser than Paul's.

b) The brushing aside of the "scandal of particularity", so typical of our Faith, in favour of a statement which stresses the revelation of God in all the great religions, is very much more serious. Many modern theologians would echo the words of W.Herberg about the idealist rejection of the Biblical doctrine of election:

> "This is the stand of self-sufficient human reason, impatient of history and personality. Biblical faith, on the other hand, permeated with the inexpugnable particularity of existence, takes its stand on the affirmation: 'Salvation is of the Jews'"(2)

From the realm of observable fact we see that God has assigned special importance to the Jews in the past. How can it be denied that He may have special plans for them in the future too?

c) The dismissal of Paul's teaching about the future of

(I) Op.cit., 93.
(2) The Church and the Jewish People, London I954, I93.

Israel carries serious implications.

If Paul had been told that he was being carried along on the tide of "his emotional interest in his own people", he would have been very much surprised. He would not have denied that emotional interest, but he would have denied it as the driving force in his doctrine of the future of Israel. Here he would surely have claimed special revelation. This was no pious hope, no deduction from observable fact, no final step in a closely articulated rational argument; "it was a divine secret, which he had received by a personal revelation".(I)

Certainly Paul would have maintained that the leap of faith into the dark implied in belief in the divine secret, was from a solid historical spring-board. If God could convert a fanatical Jew like himself He could convert any Jew. If God was already bringing a trickle of Jews into the Christian Church, He could make the trickle into a flood. If God has chosen Israel and made definite promises to historical individuals, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, He must surely consummate His purposes with Israel at the End of time. "For God never goes back upon his gifts and call" (II.29).

Paul would have claimed a rational, historical basis for his leap into the dark, or towards the dawn (as he might have preferred to put it): but surely he would have claimed that the ultimate basis was supra-rational, a "mystery" into the heart of which man's reason could never have penetrated without the gracious revelation of God.

K.H.Rengstorf also treats Paul's hope for Israel, not as a subject for the antiquarian, but as a part of revelation to vitalize the expectancy of the Church: "...God makes plain to the Church, in the way of the Jewish people as in nothing else, that as the Church of Jesus Christ, Who is to come again and complete His work, it must not be merely a waiting Church, but an expectant Church: a Church which in the winning of the Jews

(I) Dibelius in "Paul", I20.

to faith in Him expects Him to accomplish the last and the hardest task".(I)

d) It must be remembered that Paul was not the originator of this hope for Israel although he was the architect of its fullest development. It was already in the record of the words of Jesus (Mk.I3.I0; Matt.I0.23).

In relation to Glasson's more moderate view of development in Paul's thinking about Israel it may be said:

a) There is no real evidence of an "earlier" and a "later" Paul. Rengstorf writes:

"...the early Christian universalism, even in the person of its most outspoken representative, the Apostle Paul, has never lost sight of one thing: the call to Faith through the Gospel is 'to the Jew first'...the Church, so long as it is a Church composed only of Gentiles, feels itself to be incomplete...the Church rightly understands itself as the one universal Church of the divine salvation only when it prays for the Jewish people with deep sorrow and with earnest longing".(2)

b) There seems to be over-simplification in Glasson's account of the breaking down of the barriers between Jews and Gentiles. This does not mean the obliteration of all distinctions, even as male and female unity in Christ does not entail the obliteration of sex distinctions. Brunner's reminder that there is always a "double Israel" is necessary here:

"an Israel in the sense of nature and secular history and an Israel in the sense of divine history".(3)

God is free to call out a people by election from the ranks of Jews and Gentiles alike (9.24). Those who walk in the steps of the faith of father Abrahaham are the true Israel of God (Rom.4.II-I2). This does not entail the view that God has no special plans for the natural Israel in the future.

(I) Article on "The Jewish Problem and the Church's Understanding of its own Mission", in "The Church and the Jewish People",44.
(2) Op.cit., 30-3I. Similarly, W.Lüthi (The Letter to the Romans, Edinburgh I96I, I52): "Every time we meet in worship...there is an empty chair among us, the chair of the absent brother from Israel".
(3) Op.cit., 84.

c) A clear-cut distinction between Romans and Ephesians is untenable.

In the early part of Romans Paul makes it clear that "there is no difference" between Jew and Gentile (3.22-24): the whole world is guilty before God. This sounds a note that is echoed clearly in Ephesians.

When Paul goes on to speak about a special future for Israel in Romans 9-II, this might appear superficially to mean that he is going back on what he has already said. In actual fact this is not so, as A.Nygren has demonstrated. On the contrary,

> "That for which Paul has contended throughout the epistle receives its crowning and seal in his final word about Israel's rejection and her salvation".

Even as there is no difference in disobedience to God, so there will be no difference in the mercy which God will extend to both Jew and Gentile (II.3 2). No man, Jew or Gentile, can approach God with any pretensions. Everything hinges on His sovereign, inscrutable will.(I) For the very reason His will is inscrutable, Paul would not have expected a precise rationale of the why and wherefore of the "special importance" of the Jew. He teaches clearly that Jew and Gentile are one in Christ, but nowhere does he suggest that the history of the Jew is simply swallowed up in the history of the Gentile.

The author believes that the approach of T.F.Torrance is more satisfactory than that of C.H.Dodd:

> "The Jew stands out in history as God's finger pointing to the future...the Jew does tell us that God will act, and act in history among the nations. When you see the signs of the times, said Jesus, pointing to the Jew, then get ready...your redemption draws nigh...the Jew stands out before men as the miracle of God in history".(2)

(I) Commentary on Romans, Philadelphia I949, 408.
(2) Evangelical Quarterly, Vol.xxii, No.3, I72.

Paul the Christian

It is obvious that Paul's eschatology profoundly affected his own spiritual life, even as it influenced his missionary activity and his writings. There was a reckoning at the end of the road; there were rewards; there was judgement.(I) The hope of the incorruptible crown at the end of the race inspired his running lest he should be ἀδόκιμος .

The exclamation of I Corinthians I5.I9: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable", is a further illustration of the vital importance of the life to come. To Paul, Christianity was a thrilling, satisfying adventure in the present, but the whole of the Christian life for him had eschatological presuppositions. Faith was meaningless unless on an eternal canvas. That is worked out most strikingly in I Corinthians I5.I4-I7. Without the Resurrection of Christ, and all the deductions which hinge on that triumphant fact, Christianity has no bread to offer for the soul of mankind.

Conclusion

The conclusion from this study of Paul's life and doctrine must be that his evangelism was profoundly affected by his eschatology. The Parousia was part of the Gospel, and was a consistent element in his missionary propaganda.

The exaggeration of the eschatological motive in Paul

The role of eschatology in Paul's missionary work could be

(I) I Cor.9.24-27.

exaggerated.

I) His sense of a distinctive role could be exaggerated.

If Paul had attached such peculiar eschatological significance to his own apostolic missionary service, as Munck has claimed, we might expect clearer allusions to it in his writings.

W.D.Davies points out that Paul never speaks of himself as ὁ ἀπόστολος except in the words ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι ὁ ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων (I Cor.I5.9). Mosbech holds that it was the Judaizing controversy which forced Paul to emphasize his own apostolic status. Before this he refers to himself as "Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ".(I)

Further, in the story of the Gentile mission recounted in Acts there is honourable mention of other names: Barnabas, Timothy, Silvanus, Philip, Stephen etc. Silvanus and Timothy are included in the greeting to the Thessalonians because they had rendered such notable service to them. Silvanus (Silas) had been Paul's companion on the second missionary journey which included the founding of the Thessalonian Church (Acts I7.4, I0). Timothy was also present during the Thessalonian campaign (Acts I6.I-3). Silvanus and Timothy were left to follow up the work when Paul went on to Corinth. The use of the plural throughout is not a literary form, but a clear recognition that evangelism at Thessalonica was a joint undertaking. It is of course true that no other missioner had the commanding stature of Paul, but it is nowhere even faintly suggested that the eschatological significance of Paul's work was in a class by itself.

Paul showed the most burning and the most impressive sense of mission, but it cannot be claimed that Munck has established his thesis that Paul was conscious of peculiar eschatological

(I) New Testament Studies, Vol.2, I955-56, 72n.(Review of Munck's "Paul a nd the Salvation of Mankind", by W.D.Davies)

significance.

W.D.Davies says with great force:

"Prof. Munck does for the Apostle what Schweitzer did for his Lord: he interprets Paul in the light of an eschatological dogma".(I)

This tends to miss out other aspects of his missionary faith. The book of Acts speaks of a man who was led by the Holy Spirit in his missionary movements, not merely pushed forward by an irresistible eschatological consciousness.(2)

Munck is completely right in maintaining that Paul's mission was carried through in an eschatological framework. Paul shows every indication of seeking to "forestall the coming end", as Dibelius puts it, (3) but it seems more in accord with the general impression left by the New Testament to think of him as a fellow-worker with others committed to the same great task.

2) The role of eschatology in Paul's outlook could be exaggerated by an over-emphasis on the note of judgement.

Paul was no John the Baptist crying, "Flee from the wrath to come". H.A.A.Kennedy says:

"One may even question whether in his missionary preaching he laid strong emphasis on the doom of the impenitent in comparison with that on the bliss of the redeemed".(4)

His eschatology was at no point discontinuous from the Cross; and so the overmastering motive in his preaching was the love of Christ. He was "constrained" by the love of Christ whose content he found in the death for all (2 Cor.5.I4,I5)(5) In the grip of this love he sought to persuade men, not to frighten them (2 Cor.5.II).

It is of crucial importance to remember the Christocentric character of his eschatology. It is Jesus Who is the coming

(I) Op.cit., 7I.
(2) So Dibelius, "Paul", I77.
(3) Op.cit., II3.
(4) Op.cit., 3I3.
(5) Denney comments: "'Constraineth' is one of the most expressive words in the New Testament; the love of Christ has hold of the Apostle on both sides...and urges him on a course which he cannot avoid". (The Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Expositor's Bible) 2II-2I3).

Judge.(I) His teachin g about the Parousia presents the essential conviction that once a man is in Christ it is for ever (I Thess.4.I7).

This Christocentric emphasis is the link between realised and futuristic eschatology in his outlook. Salvation is a present as well as a future possession.(2) All the prophecies and promises of God have been fulfilled in Christ (2 Cor.I.20). The Holy Spirit is a present experience, the ἀρραβών of a still richer experience in the future. Justification and adoption are present realities, not merely realities in God's glorious age to come.(3) He who has done so much in Christ is certain to do more.

The Christocentric character of his eschatology also explains the fact that hope is in the forefront of his picture. Death in Adam has to yield to life in Christ (I Cor.I5.22). Dibelius says finely:

"The world and its peoples do not lie before Paul as a field in ruins, but rather as a cornfield...However critically the apostle thinks of the powers of human nature, he sets his hopes with equal expectancy on the powers of the spirit - it is only a matter of preparing a way for them through the winning of the many for Christ...His 'morbid concern over sin' goes down to first principles; but in his practical judgements his missionary hopes come to the front".(4)

This is an authentic picture of Paul, the missionary par excellence. His only role was to prepare the way for the Lord in the desert places of human life. Christ could turn these arid places into a cornfield. Paul's own way could fail. The way of the Coming Lord never could - in human history or beyond it.

(I) I Cor.I.8; 3.II,I3; 4.4f.; 5.5.
(2) Col.I.I3; 2.Cor.5.I7; 3.I8.
(3) Rom.8.I4,I5,I7,35-39; 5.5.
(4) Op.cit., II3.

Chapter 2

Eschatology and Mission in Acts

The book of Acts is another source of first-class importance for our study, both in its account of the origin of the world mission, and of the place of eschatology in the most primitive Christian preaching.

The speeches of Acts

In the speeches of Peter and others we have valuable examples of the earliest preaching. It is probable that we are in touch with sources which are earlier than the date of the writing of Acts, and no later than Paul's writings, and which give us a very fair impression of the early Kerygma of the Jerusalem Church.(I)

Assessments of the historical value of the speeches vary considerably. H.J.Cadbury writes:

"The speeches have to be handled somewhat cautiously and selectively. It is unfortunate that the suspicion can never be banished that the speeches of Peter, even those with apparent Aramaic colouring are not more than a skilful writer's conception of what seemed to one Christian of a later date appropriate for an earlier one".(2)

Many scholars hold that the author has used the historian's privilege of indulging in free composition in the speeches.(3) The Thucydidean pattern is frequently adduced.

(I) See C.H.Dodd, "The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments", 37 Foakes-Jackson mentions the possibility that an account of Peter's speech at Pentecost was preserved in Aramaic at Jerusalem, although he prefers the possibility that it is a free composition by Luke.(Moffatt N.T.C. on Acts, I4.)
(2) The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, 3I6.
(3) So Dodd (op.cit., 30 & 37). Dodd, however, says that he used his "historian's privilege with considerable restraint".

M.Dibelius traces a strong didactic motive in the speeches of Paul and Peter in Acts 2, 3, IO and I3. The aim is to show how

"Christian preachers should speak in similar circumstances".(I)

Bo Reicke has an interesting discussion of the whole issue in connection with the "first Christian sermon" - Peter's sermon at Pentecost.(2)

He has no hesitation about the historical character of Peter coming forward for the defence of his brethren, but he has difficulty with the thought of Peter delivering such an address without prior preparation immediately after the startling events of Pentecost. Therefore the speech may be the work of Luke or someone behind him: but it would be "false to dismiss the speech as quite unhistorical". It must be viewed as a serious attempt to report something that was characteristic of Peter and the early Church. It is even possible that Luke had made a special study of Peter's preaching. He may even have heard Peter preaching. We cannot be sure about that, but in John Mark he had known a member of the early Church who knew Peter intimately.

Bo Reicke concludes that it is

"very probable that Acts gives a general reproduction of the preaching of Peter with noteworthy objectivity".

Peter's speeches in Acts may, then, be viewed as historical in the sense that they were typical of Peter's preaching.

This throws an interesting light on the historicity of the speeches. It is both impossible and unnecessary to establish exact verbal correspondence between what Peter actually said,

(I) Studies in the Acts of the Apostles, London I956, 2I3.
(2) Glaube und Leben der Urgemeinde, Zürich I957, 38-4I.

and what is reproduced in Acts. This can neither be affirmed nor denied with complete finality in relation to any specific utterance. The mind of Peter is obviously more important than the precise form of words which he used. There seems to be no good reason to deny that the speeches connected with him give a faithful account of his viewpoint.

One wonders how much substance there is in Bo Reicke's opinion that the Pentecost speech could not have been delivered without previous preparation.

Some preachers are uniquely gifted with extempore utterance. Peter may have been in their number.

It may be asked, more significantly, what notes appear to be strange in an extempore discourse? An analysis of the speech reveals the presence of the four stresses which characterized the early apostolic Kerygma:

a) The decisive hour of fulfilment has struck.

b) It has struck through the Ministry, Death and Resurrection of Jesus.

c) That hour was foretold in the Old Testament.

d) The present crucial hour is the hour for repentance.

It may be doubted if there is anything so complex in such a message that it would be out of place in an extempore utterance.

Again, Peter would surely have claimed that he was speaking through divine inspiration and that God wasgiving him the words. The author may be making this very claim in the use of ἀπεφθέγξατο in 2.I4 - the same verb which is used in 2.4 to describe the speaking with other tongues. Christ Himself had promised special inspiration for the hour of trial (Mk.I3.II). Peter may have felt that His Master's promise was abundantly fulfilled in the sermon at Pentecost.

One may hold with some confidence that Luke, in his handling of the speeches of Peter and others, did not lose sight of historical reality in the midst of didactic considerations.

The World Mission in Acts

The book gives us a majestic and moving account of the Gospel sweeping on its triumphant way from Jerusalem to Rome.

There is general agreement about the importance of Acts I.6-II in the scheme of the book. We follow the story of witness in Jerusalem, Judaea and Samaria, and "unto the uttermost part of the earth". Scholars may vary slightly in their divisions of the book, but they all agree about the dominance of the witness motif.(I)

We meet the same divergence of view about the historical character of the Master's command to witness, as we have already noted and fully discussed in connection with Mark I3.I0 and the Great Commission.

Lake and Cadbury refer to the passage as "the Lucan form of the Matthaean universal commission". Matthew I0.5 and I0.23, they claim,

"can hardly be reconciled with the universal commission... But far more decisive is the evidence of Acts itself; for if Jesus really commanded the apostles to preach to the Gentiles, would they have been so reluctant as Acts vi - xv proves that they were?"(2)

Harnack uses even stronger language in referring to the "worthless and absolutely fallacious explanation that the mission to the Gentiles was already foretold in the Old Testament and had, moreover, been expressly enjoined by our Lord".(3)

Bo Reicke, on the other hand, holds that "it is not at all out of the question that the apostles had heard a word of that kind from the risen Christ", although he sees the correspondence

(I) See F.J.Foakes-Jackson (Moffatt N.T.C. on Acts, I-4); M.Dibelius (op.cit., I93); F.F.Bruce (The Book of Acts in the New London Commentary on the New Testament, London I954, 39). "We are His witnesses" is a frequently recurring refrain. See 2.32; 3.I5; 5.32; I0.39; I3.3I; 22.I5.
(2) The Beginnings of Christianity, Part I, Vol.IV, London I933, 9.
(3) The Acts of the Apostles, London I909, XXVI.

between the order of the regions mentioned and the actual account of the apostolic mission as an indication that the precise wording was the work of Luke.(I)

Our view of the historical character of this passage will be guided by our standpoint about the considerations already adduced for and against the historicity of Mark 13.10 and Matthew 28.18-20. It is our view that the evidence in Acts and elsewhere in no way rules out the possibility that a real word of Jesus is behind Acts I.8.

"Witnesses in Jerusalem"

Munck looks upon the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost as a sign for Israel. He sees the Church in Acts as a "Jerusalem enterprise", which offered the possibility of preaching the Gospel to the Jews who flocked from all Palestine and from the Diaspora to attend the great festivals. He follows Wendt in the view that the detailed list of those who were present at Pentecost is meant to underline the fact that they were not Gentiles. He interprets Peter's call to "all the house of Israel" (2.36) as a further pointer to the Jewish character of the sign.(2)

There can be no argument about the inclusive Jewish reference of the sign. Pentecost had untold significance for Israel. This is so even if, with Codex Sinaiticus, we omit "Jews" from verse 5. "Devout men" (εὐλαβεῖς) seems to be reserved for Jews.(3) εὐσεβής is used of a God-fearing Gentile like Cornelius.(4)

(1) Op.cit., 17.
(2) Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, 213-214 and 213 n.
(3) The word is used of the men who buried Stephen (Acts 8.2); of Ananias (Acts 22.12); of Simeon (Luke 2.25). See F.F.Bruce (op.cit., 61n.) and Lake and Cadbury (op.cit., 18).
(4) Acts 10.2.

But there are strong considerations which forbid the view of Pentecost as a sign for Israel alone.

a) Peter told his audience: "The promise is to you and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (2.39).

Munck admitw that this quotation from Isaiah 57.19 may involve a reference to the Gentiles, as is the case in Ephesians 2.13 & 17, but he sees an equal possibility that the reference is to the Jews of the Diaspora. This is possible, but it does not seem to be the natural explanation.

Perhaps it is necessary to distinguish between what the words "all that are afar off" would mean to Luke, and what they would convey to Peter. Undoubtedly Luke would see a reference to the universalism of the Gospel. We cannot be so definite about Peter. In H.R.Boer's opinion "it is not likely that he had the gentiles in mind when he spoke these words". After Pentecost he still had difficulties about approaching Gentiles. Therefore, if there was universalism in his mind it must be called "unclear universalism".(1)

It is manifestly impossible to be dogmatic about what was in Peter's mind on this occasion.

b) It is clearly stated that there were proselytes from Rome in the Pentecost audience (2.10). F.F.Bruce notes Juvenal's satirical references to the energy of Jewish proselytizing activity in Rome, and reminds us of Luke's especial interest in Rome as the goal to which the Gospel was destined to travel.(2)

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Luke would look upon the presence of these Gentiles as a sign of the mighty spiritual harvest which God would bring to fruition in Gentile soil. The rest of the book of Acts seems to come down on the side of this appraisal of the meaning of Pentecost.

(1) Pentecost and Missions, London 1961, 37-38.
(2) Op.cit., 63 n.

If, then, we are to accept Munck's description of the Church as a "Jerusalem enterprise", it can only be in Bo Reicke's sense that Jerusalem was the

"organizational centre of a Church spreading out over the world".

Bo Reicke reads Pentecost as

"the final consolidation of the Jewish fellowship in the new people of God, the true Israel, the Church of Jesus Christ".

2.41,42, with its reference to numerous conversions to the apostles' "doctrine and fellowship" marks a new section in Acts.(1)

In his book "Pentecost and Missions", H.R.Boer launched an effective and emphatic protest against the slight attention paid to Pentecost in the story of the Church's world mission, in spite of the fact that mission is the creation of the Holy Spirit, Who is essentially a witnessing Spirit.

"It may without exaggeration be said", claims Boer, "that the preponderance of emphasis in all that Jesus says about the coming Spirit, and the preponderance of emphasis in Luke's account of the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost and in his description of the missionary expansion of the Church in the remainder of Acts, lies on the witnessing activity of the Spirit and of the recipients of the Spirit"(2)

This, surely, is profoundly true. Without this mighty divine witness, to which Acts makes frequent reference, it would be impossible for men to say "we are His witnesses".(3) "The Spirit of God is the great missioner", as J.R.Mott put it.(4)

It does violence to the whole scheme of Acts to view Pentecost as a sign for Israel, rather than as a sign of the

(1) Op.cit., 53.
(2) Op.cit., 109-110.
(3) See e.g. 2.38; 4.8ff.; 4.31; 5.32; 7.51; 8.17; 8.29; 9.17ff.; 10.1 - 11.16; 13.2; 16.6-7 & 9; 15.8-9; 7.55.
(4) The Decisive Hour of Christian Missions, London 1910, 193.

world mission of the Church.

"Witnesses in Samaria"

In Philip's mission to Samaria (8.5-I3) there is a fulfilment of the Master's reference to witness in Samaria.

Cullmann looks upon this mission as the beginning of the Christian mission.(I)

He points out that the Third Gospel had a particular interest in Samaria,(2) and that this was also true of the Fourth Gospel. One of the interests of the writer was to point out the correspondence between the Christ of the Church and the Jesus of history. The Church's willingness to preach in Samaria was no original step, but something that could be traced right back to the mind of Jesus. It was important to establish this point because the words of Matthew I0.5, "Enter not into any city of the Samaritans", might be misconstrued to mean that Jesus shared the Jewish hatred for the Samaritans. His contact with the Samaritan woman indicated that Jesus was the real Pioneer of the Samaritan mission, although he made it clear that this mission, and the Gentile mission in general could not be developed until His death (Jo. I2.20-33). But sowing and reaping in Samaria both went back to Jesus. Behind the disciples' reaping was His command. (ἐγὼ ἀπέστειλα ὑμᾶς)(4.38).

Cullmann has the interesting theory that the ἄλλοι (4.38) into whose labours the disciples had entered, were Philip and the unknown Hellenists who had fled from Jerusalem when persecution had broken out. Samaria was a natural destination for men with such unpopular and revolutionary ideas about the Temple, which had played an important part in sparking off the persecution. The Samaritans had also rejected worship in the Jerusalem Temple. The mission to the Samaritans, claims Cullmann, was therefore

(I) The Early Church, London I956, I85-I92.
(2) See 9.5Iff.; I0.30ff.; I7.IIff.

the "natural transition to the Gentile mission".

Cullmann is undoubtedly right in giving such an important place to the Samaritan mission. This was the first case of preaching the Gospel to non-Jews in a general way. Therefore Philip appears as the forerunner of Paul.

It would, however, be possible to exaggerate the "natural" character of this transition to the Gentile mission. Cullmann is justified in stressing the common ground between the Hellenists and the Samaritans. But we cannot forget the fundamental points of difference with long-standing historical and religious roots. The Jews looked upon the Samaritans as religious and racial ha lf-breeds. They could not forget Samaritan opposition to the re-building of Jerusalem. The heathen elements in Samaritan worship were obnoxious to them. Samaritans were publicly cursed in the synagogues, and the priests even offered prayers that no Samaritan might attain to eternal life.

When one remembers that the animosity was reciprocal, it is clear that Philip the Jew was venturing into the lion's den when he felt constrained to undertake the Samaritan mission: but Philip the Jew knew that God could shut the mouths of lions; and, before all else, Philip the Christian remembered stories of his Master's concern for all men, including Samaritans.

Again, it should not be overlooked that the Samaritans had erected a rival Temple on Mount Gerizim (destroyed by Hyrcanus in 129 B.C.) They attached special sanctity to this place, believing that it was the site both of Abraham's preparations for the sacrifice of Isaac, and of his meeting with Melchizedek. It cannot therefore be assumed that they would be swift to receive the Hellenists' ideas about Temple worship in general. Their opposition was to the Temple in Jerusalem, not to Temple worship as such.

The Samaritan mission, therefore, represents a radical step forward in the missionary movement recorded in Acts.

"Witnesses...unto the uttermost part of the earth"

The Cornelius Story

There is no doubt that Luke looked upon the Cornelius story as a most important milestone in the progress of the Christian mission. The amount of space he devoted to the account of it is sufficient proof. It paves the way for the Apostolic Council recorded in chapter I5, where it is used as a test case.

Dibelius has an excellent account of Luke's central emphasis in the story. He holds that Luke was interested in ascribing all the glory to God for the introduction of the Gentiles into the Church. It was a divine work, not a human insight - not even on the part of a great apostle like Peter.

"This was not done by him, but in him, through God".

The story shows

"the revelation of God's will that the Gentiles should be received into the Church without obligation to the law".(I)

This stress on the divine initiative is thoroughly in line with all that has been written already about world mission as a divine necessity behind all human necessity.

But we must have grave misgivings about Dibelius' assessment of the historical character of the story. To him, originally it was a simple conversion story into which Luke introduced a motif which did not originally attach to it: clean and unclean foods (I0.9-I6). Peter's speech in the house of Cornelius is obviously the work of Luke. Such a comparatively long speech would have been out of place.

Dibelius bases his argument upon the record itself, and upon subsequent history. His main points are:

a) In II.I5 Peter states that the Holy Spirit fell upon the company as he began to speak. Therefore a long speech is ruled out.

(I) Op.cit., II7.

b) There was no reason for Peter to defend himself for going into Cornelius' house. The story of the Ethiopian eunuch is simply recounted without any attempt to justify the contact.

c) Chapter IO contains no reference to eating with Gentiles. Therefore the passage about clean and unclean foods is out of place.

d) By elevating this "harmless" conversion story into a principle Luke has been responsible for historical difficulties. If this story had been historically accurate in every detail, how could circumcision have proved an issue for Peter as is recorded in Galatians 2.Iff., and how could he have behaved in the matter of table fellowship as is described in Galatians 2.IIff.?

There are adequate answers to all these difficulties.

a) The idea of beginning (II.I5) should not be pressed too rigidly. ἄρχομαι can be little more than a "Semitizing redundant auxiliary".(I)

b) & c) It is not in the slightest surprising that Peter, with his orthodox Jewish background, hesitated about going into a Gentile house. The motif of clean and unclean foods is not artificially fastened on to the story. Entrance to a Gentile home involved the food problem. A generous host might, in ignorance, offer "unclean" food at any moment. There was therefore a food problem behind the ceremonial barrier against entering a Gentile home.

It is perfectly possible to believe that Peter's vision reminded him of Jesus' words:

"Nothing that goes into a man from outside can defile him; no, it is the things that come out from him that defile him" (Mk.7.I5).

Peter may have realized that Jesus' saying and his own vision alike pointed in the direction of

(I) J.H.Moulton, Grammar of NT Greek i, Edinburgh I906, I4f.

of the abrogation of ceremonial food laws.

d) The historical difficulties mentioned by Dibelius are only formidable if we could assume that men of principle always act in full conformity with their principles. Even men of principle sometimes find it extremely difficult to know to what extent compromise is justified, and, in fact, unavoidable. Paul's approach to Peter, to which reference is made in Galatians 2.I4-I5, makes it clear that Paul believed that there was no difference between Peter and himself in principle, but that Peter had compromised the principle in a serious way by having second thoughts about table fellowship with the Gentiles.

The story as related by Luke seems perfectly credible. It "bears the stamp both of probability and truth", writes F.J. Foakes-Jackson.(I) Many scholars would not agree with Dibelius that Peter's speech in the house of Cornelius would have been too long for the occasion. In the opinion of Foakes-Jackson it was "peculiarly appropriate to the occasion".(2) C.H.Dodd sees it as the "form of kerygma used by the primitive Church in its earliest approaches to a wider preaching".(3)

The account, of course, shows traces of the hand of the author, as might be expected. For example, in the account of Peter's vindication of his action, the reference to the angel (II.I3) assumes that this story was well-known. It was directed to the readers of Acts, rather than to the original audience. We have a summary of what Peter actually said. A summary always gives the author's view of the things that were most important. But there is no reason to deny that Luke was interested in giving an accurate account of what actually happened, for the very reason that he was convinced that this was the Lord's doing, and not the

(I) Op.cit., 87.
(2) Op.cit., 93.
(3) The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments, 56.

doing of man.

There is no insurmountable difficulty in fitting the story into the pattern of Peter's life and of the history of the primitive Church. This is so, even if Cullmann is right in holding that Peter's contact with the revival in Samaria (Acts 8.I4) left a "decisive" mark upon him, which was behind his inauguration of the Gentile mission.(I) The Samaritans were, after all, half-caste Jews with affinities to the Jews. Cornelius and his friends were Gentiles.

Munck, therefore, is right in underlining the revolutionary character of the Cornelius story, in his treatment of Dibelius' theory that this was a "harmless" conversion story. He agrees with Dibelius that the reference to unclean foods was probably worked by Luke into the story, but he points out that the story that is left when this motif has been separated from it, is far from "harmless": the thought of the Gentiles receiving the gift of tongues and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Munck traces the revolutionary aspect of the story further in the tensions which he finds running through it, tensions which remind him of the story of the Syrophoenician woman. I0.34-43 states, on the one hand, that the Gospel was for Israel alone, and, on the other, that forgiveness was for everyone who believed in Christ. This means that we cannot look upon the passage as Peter's call to the Gentiles.

> "Peter was not sent to the Gentiles any more than Jesus was...Peter has only received the command to preach to Israel",
>
> but he still is commanded by the Spirit to baptize Gentiles - a revolutionary command indeed!(2)

We are bound to agree immediately with Munck that this passage does not portray a call to be a missionary to the Gentiles. There is nothing in Acts which contradicts the portrayal of Peter

(I) The Early Church, I9I.
(2) Op.cit., 230-23I, and the whole treatment of the story (228-23I)

in Galatians 2.7 as entrusted with the "Gospel of the circumcision", while the "Gospel of the uncircumcision" was committed to Paul. This is not inconsistent with the important role which Peter played in relation to Gentiles as well as to Jews. Luke may well have looked upon Peter's behaviour in the house of Cornelius as a fulfilment of Jesus' words about the use of the keys of the Kingdom (Matt.16.19).

It may be claimed that Munck has brought the tensions in 10.34-43 into too sharp a focus. The only verse which might be quoted to support the view that the Gospel was for Israel alone is verse 36:

"The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ..."

When it is noted that this is immediately preceded by

"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him",

and is immediately followed by

"he is Lord of all",

one can hardly claim that there was any radical tension in Peter's mind. Rather it may be stated that there are the same particularistic and universalistic stresses in Peter's speech, as we have found and harmonized in the Gospels. Salvation was of the Jews but it was not for the Jews alone. Undoubtedly there were tensions in Peter's mind when he was called to visit Cornelius. These tensions continued into the future as Galatians indicates, but there is no real evidence, either in this story or later in Acts, that Peter doubted the universal range of the Gospel.

Again, the picture of consternation in Jerusalem when the news came that the Gentiles had accepted the Word of God (11.1-3) is understandable. Persecution had broken out against Stephen and the Hellenists because of their revolutionary views, but the apostles had escaped (8.1). The most likely explanation is that they did not share these radical views, and so were not the

target for the odium of the Jews.(I) This news that the leader of the apostles was fraternizing with Gentiles may have prompted the fear that more wide-spread persecution would break out. It is possible that the approval of Peter's action which followed his report (II.I8) was more whole-hearted on the part of the apostles than of the general run of Church members: but the principle of evangelizing Gentiles had been accepted. The crucial step had been taken. It would not be realized what giant steps lay ahead.

The Apostolic Council

The Cornelius story paves the way for the record of the Apostolic Council in Acts I5.

The historical character of the chapter has been seriously questioned on literary, historical and theological grounds.

I) Literary Difficulties

Dibelius argues for the literary and theological character of the account. It presents the truth that the admission of Gentiles into the Church was not the work of man but of God. Dibelius mentions certain peculiarities which militate against the view that we are dealing with history.

a) Peter's reference to the conversion of Cornelius (I5.7-9)

(I) So Cullmann (op.cit., I9I); and C.S.C.Williams (The Acts of the Apostles, London I957, II4). Lake and Cadbury (op.cit., 87) mention Wellhausen's belief that the writer wanted to show that the apostles were sufficiently good Jews.
Other motives may have entered in. Calvin sees the determination of the good pastor to face peril for the sake of the flock. (Acts Vol.I, Calvin Translation Society, Edinburgh I859, 249-250) F.F.Bruce (op.cit., I75) sees both loyalty to duty and a more orthodox viewpoint than the Hellenists.

could not have been understood by his hearers, but would have been clear to the readers of the book.

b) We do not read of any discussion after Peter's speech as might have been expected.

c) We have a colourless account of the report by Paul and Barnabas of their missionary work, which was the issue of supreme importance. This can only be explained when we recollect that their work was already described in the book of Acts.

Dibelius concludes:

"We thus have only one account of the meeting between Paul and those in authority in Jerusalem, that of Paul in Gal.2".(I)

d) Munck mentions another consideration which he sees as a tell-tale pointer against the strict historicity of the chapter. He considers that it is remarkable that James the brother of the Lord should quote Amos 9.II before a Jerusalem audience in the LXX rather than in the M.T. The natural conclusion is that the speech is to be traced to Luke rather than to James.

It can be fairly claimed that the peculiarities mentioned by Dibelius are not weighty. There is no need to imagine that Luke was attempting to give a detailed factual account of everything which happened at the Council. The form of the summary is obviously influenced by literary considerations. This does not impugn the historical character of the summary.

James's quotation of Amos 9.II in the LXX, and not in the M.T. does look very remarkable, especially when it is remembered that the LXX varies widely from the M.T. The M.T. runs:

"...that they (Israel) may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that are called by my name".

This refers primarily to the restoration of the royal house of David and the possession of the territory which had been included in David's empire.

The LXX reads:

"Thereafter I will return and rebuild the fallen

(I) Op.cit., I00.

house of David; Even from its ruins I will rebuild it, and set it up again, that they may seek the Lord - all the rest of mankind, and the Gentiles, whom I have claimed for my own".

James appears to interpret the prophecy of the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David in connection with the Resurrection and Exaltation of Christ, and the reconstitution of His disciples in the new Israel.(I)

C.C.Torrey has a contribution which goes far towards dealing with the difficulty of James's handling of the passage. He points out that the LXX of Amos 9.II was based on a varying Hebrew text, and that

"even our Massoretic Hebrew would have served the present purpose admirably, since it predicted that 'the tabernacle of David', i.e. the church of the Messiah, would gain possession of all the nations which are called by the name (of the God of Israel)".(2)

2) Historical Difficulties

A great deal has been written about the difficulty of reconciling Acts I5 and Galatians. Why is there no reference to the apostolic decree in the Galatian and Corinthian correspondence? It has been claimed that it would have been peculiarly apposite to the controversies in these letters. Again, why is there apparent tension between Paul and the Jerusalem leaders mirrored in these letters if such a decree was actually made at this stage?

Dibelius, as has been noted already, removes the difficulty by looking upon Acts I5 as a literary performance.

(I) This was typical of an important strand of early Christian thought, for which promises about the establishment of the throne of David were fulfilled in Christ, who was the new Temple, in Whom Jew and Gentile alike were gathered into a new community. See Lk.I.32; Eph.2.I9ff.; Jo.2.I9ff.
In the next chapter it will be indicated that this was a strong characteristic of the thought of Stephen and the Hellenists.

(2) Composition and Date of Acts, Cambridge, Mass., I9I6, 38f.

Others have wondered if the decree belonged to a later date than the apostolic conference even if the latter is rightly put in chapter I5. That might explain why Paul makes no reference to the decree in the Galatian and Corinthian correspondence. It has further been claimed that James's reference to the decree (2I.25) gives the impression that Paul did not know of it.

It is impossible to enter in detail into all the complex historical questions that are raised here. It must, however, be pointed out that many responsible scholars have found an answer to these problems which does not strain the evidence.

F.F.Bruce, for example, offers a reasonable historical sequence based on the theory that Galatians was written in Antioch before the Jerusalem council to the Churches in South Galatia founded by Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary tour of the area.(I) In dealing with the two visits to Jerusalem mentioned in Galatians, he identifies I.I8ff. with Acts 9.26ff., and 2.Iff. with Acts II.30 and I2.25.(2)

On this interpretation, the rapid progress of Gentile evangelization in Antioch, Cyprus and Asia Minor threw up serious problems for conservative Jewish Christians. There was the fear, indeed the certainty, that Jewish Christians would become a minority in the Church, as evangelism was bringing in a better harvest from Gentiles than from Jews. This threw up the possibility that the high moral standards which had been

(I) Bruce (op.cit., 300-30I) marshals a long list of distinguished names in support of this theory - Calvin, K.Lake (the early Lake), V.Weber, D.Round, W.M.Ramsay, C.W.Emmet, A.W.F.Blunt, F.C.Burkitt, H.N.Bate, G.S.Duncan, W.L.Knox, R.Heard, H.F.D. Sparks.

(2) Bruce holds,with good reason, that it is unlikely that Paul omitted all reference to Acts II.30 in Galatians. He was mentioning <u>every</u> occasion he visited Jerusalem. The omission of even one might have caused comment and suspicion.

inherited from Judaism, and even deepened in Christianity, would be weakened by the influx of Gentiles who had carried with them into their new faith a very dubious moral background. One does not need to look further than Paul's Corinthian correspondence to find striking evidence of that.

These conservatives saw the necessity of admitting Gentiles into their fellowship to make up the full complement of the Messianic community. The burning question was the terms of their reception. Some advocated that they should be similar to those required of proselytes to Judaism: circumcision and obedience to the Mosaic law; and so the stage was set for the historic conference.

This approach explains the absence of reference in Galatians to the apostolic decree by the fact that Galatians was prior to the decree.

Bruce explains the absence of reference in the Corinthian letters by maintaining that it would have been pointless to quote the apostolic decree. Paul's Judaizing opponents were attempting to undermine his authority by exalting the prestige of Peter. The decree had no relevance as far as that policy was concerned. Further, Paul knew a "more excellent way" of dealing with questions like meat offered to idols, than the way of bare prohibition. Love was a better way than the way of prohibition, even apostolic prohibition.

Bruce has made an excellent case for the historical character of the Jerusalem conference.(I)

(I) Some scholars would not agree. There have been various attempts to reconstruct the story. J.N.Sanders, e.g. suggests that when Paul disagreed with Peter he virtually cut himself off from the Church in Jerusalem. He and Silas then went off on the Second Missionary Journey. Paul was not present at the Jerusalem Council where Peter was attacked by Christian Pharisees for eating with Gentiles. Peter won the day. He "gained his main point: neither Jews nor Gentiles were to be an inferior cast within the Christian Church. He had in fact fought Paul's battle for him, and done more for the Gentiles within the Church than Paul himself".

(continued on p.I94)

3) Theological and Psychological Difficulties

The characterization of Paul, Peter and James and their respective attitudes to the Jewish and Gentile missions have also been controversial issues in the study of Acts. Do we have a credible picture of these three Christian leaders in Acts I5?

Peter (I5.7-II)

Peter as the leader of the Twelve made the first crucial contribution after a long debate. He championed the Gentile mission and Gospel liberty. God had chosen him to play a crucial role in the initiation of the Gentile mission in the contact with Cornelius. Was it reasonable to follow the advice of the Christian Pharisees (v.5) in laying upon the shoulders of the Gentiles the yoke of the Law which had become an intolerable burden to the Jews themselves?

This speech has been viewed as suspect for two main reasons:

a) It has been claimed that the mantle of the apostle of the Uncircumcision sits strangely on the shoulders of the apostle of the Circumcision whom we meet in Galatians 2.

b) The"Pauline" character of the speech has been questioned.

"Peter speaks of the Law, as if he had studied under Paul", says A.Menzies.(I)

A satisfactory answer can be given to both points.

Note continued from p.I93

In the end, continues Sanders, Paul realized that he had taken up a stand that was too dogmatic. He went to Jerusalem to make his peace with the Church, but was given a cold reception. After the disturbance in the Temple he was arrested. "For the time being he had failed...To Luke, writing more than twenty years after these events, it may well have seemed expedient to draw a veil over the tragedy, and to minimize the extent of the conflict". (New Testament Studies, Vol.II, Cambridge I956, I4I)I43).

Sanders believes that Luke has reproduced "fairly faithfully" what Peter and James said. The extreme inaccuracy of the statement that Paul was present, is surprising. We also note that Luke did not draw a veil over the quarrel between Paul and Barnabas.

(I) Peake's Commentary, 793.

a) There is no inconsistency in the thought that Peter, whose main mission field lay among the Jews, could have made such a contribution as that outlined in Acts I5. If contact with the work in Samaria and with Cornelius had widened the horizons of his mind, and reminded him of his Master's words about world mission, his championship of the mission to the Gentiles seems not only natural but inevitable.

Again, Peter's compromise about table fellowship with Gentile at Antioch would only constitute a difficulty on the assumption that the incident occurred after the Jerusalem Council, as has been maintained by some scholars. The more natural construction is that the clash antedated the Council, and that Peter found his way to the firm ground of which Acts I5 speaks.

That he was involved in such a compromise is not in the least surprising. Cullmann points out that as leader of the Jewish mission he was in a much more difficult position than Paul.(I) He was dependent upon Jerusalem, while Paul was independent of Peter and less dependent upon Jerusalem. Therefore Peter had to avoid unnecessary offence. Paul's arguments apparently convinced him that his action was an offence against the very foundations of the Gospel. The firm position of Acts I5 may well be the measure of the depth of the conviction to which he had attained.

b) Peter's attitude to the Law may well have echoed the view of the primitive Church as Munck has argued.(2)

(I) Petrus: Jünger-Apostel-Martyrer, Zürich I952. Similarly J.N.Sanders (op.cit., I39): "...he quite understandably preferred the risk of offending Gentiles to the certainty of offending his fellow Jews".
(2) Op.cit., 237.

F.F.Bruce suggests that Peter's words may be viewed as a fair summary of the attitude of the ordinary man about the middle of the first century. The strict school of Shammai was beginning to lose its influence.(I)

There is nothing out of place in the thought that Peter stood nearer to Paul than was the case with James.

James (I5.I3-2I)

Peter was followed by James, the brother of the Lord. After summarizing Peter's speech, he pointed out the congruity of the admission of the Gentiles with the words of the prophets. As salvation was open to all, no "irksome restrictions" should be imposed on the Gentiles. There remained, however, the problem of association between Gentiles and Jews who might not have the same outlook on food laws as Peter and Paul. The modus vivendi advocated by James was that the Gentiles should be instructed in a letter to

"abstain from things polluted by contact with idols, from fornication, from anything that has been strangled, and from blood".

This proposal carried the day.

Munck has a fascinating study of the outlook of James. He points out that this picture of James at the Council does not agree with the James of recent research:

"...Paul's opponent,. a righteous Jew who enjoyed great prestige among the Jews".(2)

Munck clearly prefers the picture in Acts I5.(3)

Munck, however, has great difficulty with Acts 2I.I8-26 - the only other passage in Acts where we hear of James in detail. He finds here

"an equivocal person, a cowardly leader of

(I) Op.cit., 307.
(2) Op.cit., III.
(3) Op.cit., 237: "James' account of the scheme of salvation, may quite well express the views of the primitive Church".

the Church, and a bad Christian".(I)

Surely, argues Munck, it was the duty of James and the others to tell the members of the Church quite bluntly that the reports that had been circulated about Paul were untrue. Instead they resorted to a "trick", the proposal that Paul should take part in a Jewish purifying ceremonial in the Temple.

Munck removes the difficulty by deleting τῶν πεπιστευκότων (21.2 (without manuscript authority, as he acknowledges). This makes James's reference to Jews, and not to Jewish Christians.

Munck supports the deletion by the following arguments:

a) In actual fact there were not thousands of Jewish Christians in Judaea.

b) The text does not make sense if the danger does not threaten from outside the Church.

c) "They are sure to hear that you have arrived" (v.22) does not make sense of Jewish Christians.

d) The accusation that Paul was teaching Jews to turn their backs on Moses and to give up circumcision (v.2I) was the very accusation which appeared on the lips of Jews against Paul.(2)

But does this really remove the difficulty of the passage? If this was really a trick, it would have remained a trick whether Jewish Christians or Jews were the target of it. If it was "equivocal" for James to act like this towards Jewish Christians, it would have been equally "equivocal" for him to act similarly towards Jews. It also introduces the unlikely possibility that James and Paul could have imagined at this stage of the Jews' profound hostility to Paul that such a device could lead to a real improvement.

It is clear that Munck's difficulty with the passage is accentuated by his theory that the Judaizers, whose opposition to Paul appears clearly in his letters, were not Jewish Christians

(I) Op.cit., 240.
(2) Op.cit., 24I-242. "Thousands" should not be pressed literally. "'Thousands' is the English idiom for a great number, just as the Greek idiom is μυριάδες ". (Lake and Cadbury, op.cit., 27I).

but Gentile Christians.(I) The concept of "thousands" of Jewish Christians who trailed far behind the liberal viewpoint of Paul, and the possibility that their views were parallel to and influenced by influential circles in Jerusalem, seem to support the traditional identification of the Judaizers with Jewish Christians.

We must guard against a homogeneous account of the Jerusalem Church, composed either of liberals or of Judaizers. Baur, with his picture of a Judaizing Peter and a Judaizing James, supported by a Judaizing Jerusalem Church, is a good example of the latter tendency. Munck is nearer the former. He tends to soft-pedal "Jewish" characteristics in the Church. A good example is his reference to the demand of the Pharisaic party (I5.5) that Gentile Christians should be circumcised and should be subject to the Law of Moses:

> "If we regard I5.5 as a historical account, it can have been at most only a minority that temporarily demanded anything of the kind. But the general view was that the Gentiles were to be received into the Church not as Jews but as Gentiles".(2)

Is this picture of an uninfluential minority really historical? All the evidence seems to suggest that Peter and James and other Church leaders were in favour of receiving the Gentiles as Gentiles, but the indications are that others, probably many others, were more cautious and conservative. This is further supported by the insistence on circumcision by "certain people who had come from Judaea" (I5.I). Possibly they are to be identified with the "certain" who"came from James" (Gal.2.I2). They went further than they were authorized to do by James, in their teaching that circumcision and submission to the

(I) Op.cit., 87-I34.
(2) Op.cit., I23.

Mosaic Law were conditions of salvation.(I) There is little difficulty in fitting the story of Paul's vow into the picture of a Church composed of liberal and conservative elements.

We must conclude that Munck is right in the main lineaments of his view of James. James was in fundamental agreement with Peter and Paul on the issue of the Gentile and Jewish missions. All three men would have assented to the formula, "To the Jew first but also to the Greek". It is possible that Munck is also right in thinking that the Jerusalem agreement also concerned the mission to the Jews, and that one motive in Paul's mind in going to Jerusalem was to ensure that the Jewish communities in Syria and Cilicia would be served with the Gospel.

"The discussion at Jerusalem may signify the turning-point at which the Christian leaders in that city give up the policy hitherto followed of confining themselves to Jerusalem, and agree to send Peter to the Jews".(2)

But while Munck is right in finding "only a Christian James in Jerusalem", and in the letter of James,(3) it is necessary to note that we do not find a replica of Paul or Peter. The shift of leadership from Peter to James must be explained. It cannot have been accidental that James was less suspect than Peter in Jewish circles. Nor can it have been accidental that it was the attitude of James, and not someone else, which the circumcision party misinterpreted. As Peter and the other apostles were increasingly absent from Jerusalem James came forward to greater influence. His relationship to Jesus, his ascetic life, and his attendance at the Temple, where he offered prayers for the

(I) So F.F.Bruce, op.cit., 303. Goguel (Les Premiers Temps de l'Eglise, 64ff.) draws a distinction between the attitude of the leaders in Jerusalem and that of the Church.
(2) Op.cit., I2I.
(3) Op.cit., II8. Munck does not think that the letter was from the hand of this James, but notes its accord with the rest of the N.T. evidence about James. J.B.Mayor lists "remarkable agreements" between James's speech at the Council and the epistle of James. (The Epistle of St.James, London I897,iiif.)

people, commended him to the common people of Jerusalem. It is not surprising, therefore, that the conciliatory proposal accepted by the Council emanated from James. Munck notes the assumption which appears to be behind I5.2I, that the centre of the Gentile mission would be the synagogues of the Diaspora.(I) James perhaps was trying to carry the Pharisaic party in the Church with him, by pointing out that the proposal he was advocating would not tell against Israel's mission to the Gentiles. They would have many opportunities of learning the whole Torah which was read every Sabbath in synagogues throughout the world.

Some of James's presuppositions and modes of expression would, no doubt, have been foreign to Paul, but they were at one in the conviction that the mission of the Church covered both Jew and Gentile.

Paul

Some have maintained that Paul could never have accepted the terms of the decree. Others have even claimed that he was a hypocrite if he accepted the Nazarite vow.

We need not take this very seriously. It does not fit into the impression we gain from Paul's life and writings. Where principle was clearly involved, as in the clash with Peter at Antioch, Paul took an uncompromising stand: but he had an instinct for the things that were vital and the things that were not. Where principle was not involved, he could be tactful, courteous and accomodating, eager to avoid unnecessary offence. (See e.g. Acts I6.3; I Cor.9.I9ff.; Rom.I4.Iff.; I Cor.8.Iff.) C.S.C.Williams seems thoroughly justified in commenting: "Paul could be gloriously inconsistent, if it was inconsistency to behave like a Jew in the mother Church at Jerusalem".(2)

(I) Op.cit., 235.
(2) Op.cit., 240.

Calvin, in his exposition of Acts 2I.I8-26, also found grounds for commendation rather than censure. In this incident he saw a man who

> "through voluntary subjection sought to win the favour of the rude, and such as were not thoroughly instructed that he might do them good; being about to do that not willingly, but because he had rather yield to his brethren than stick to his own judgements...he might have been more rough and round with James...because they had not been more diligent to root out errors among the people".(I)

Almost certainly Paul could not have expressed the motive in this incident in the same way as James:

> "Then everyone will know that there is nothing in the stories they were told about you, but that you are a practising Jew and keep the Law yourself".(New English Bible of Acts 2I.24.)

Paul gloried in the knowledge that he was not under the Law but under grace, but he also believed that the Law was "holy and just and good" (Rom.7.I2), and he had no inclination to enter into a battle of words with James.

The conclusion, therefore, may be reached that there are no adequate grounds (literary, historical, theological or psychological), for surrendering the essential historical character of the record of the Apostolic Council in Acts I5. It recorded, not merely the conviction that the Gentile mission was the work of God and not man, but the actual course of events. It was an important milestone in the march of the Kingdom of God on the uttermost parts of the earth.

It is noteworthy that Acts drops the curtain with a picture of the apostle to the Gentiles witnessing at the very heart of the world. There are many details about the last stages of Paul's life which we would like to know: but the writer's supreme interest was not to give us a detailed account of the acts of the apostles, even of the great apostle

(I) Acts, Vol.2, 284, Calvin's Commentaries (Calvin Translation Society), Edinburgh I844.

Paul, but to offer an account of the Acts of the Holy Spirit in the establishment of a universal Kingdom.

The study of world mission in Acts has vital bearing on this thesis in two respects.

a) It bears out the claim that the point under discussion in the Church was not the reception of Gentiles within the Church, but the terms for their reception.

b) It throws a great deal of indirect light upon the authenticity of Mark I3.I0, Matthew 28.I9 etc.

Here the author finds himself in cordial agreement with H.R.Boer.

Boer discards Harnack's denial of a link between Jesus and the Great Commission, and also G.Warneck's belief that the Great Commission was the natural climax of Old Testament universalism and of Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom.(I)

Boer sets himself the task of reconciling two facts, which many scholars have held to be irreconcilable:

the fact that the Great Commission "played a tremendous role in the witness of the primitive Church",

and the fact that "no reference is made to it". (2)

Boer finds the reconciling factor in the truth that

"the need of consciously obeying the command of Christ was not felt...the ideal form of witness is that which takes place through inner compulsion. Witness began not with the receiving of the Great Commission, but with its internal effectuation at Pentedost... It is as unreasonable to ask why we do not read of the Great Commission as motivating the early witness of the Church as to ask why we do not read of the command to multiply and replenish the earth and to subdue it as the motivation for the reproductive and economic activity of man".(3)

Boer makes the interesting and profound observation that "the prominence of the Great Commission in the modern period of

(I) Op.cit., I42.
(2) Op.cit., I28.
(3) Op.cit., I28-I29.

the Church's history is a sign of vigor and health in so far as it was put forward by men burdened by the undischarged task of the Church; it is a sign of spiritual decadence in so far as emphasis on the binding character of the Great Commission was made necessary by the indifference of the Church to her calling, and by her blindness to the responsibilities which the law of her being placed upon her".(I)

The author is convinced that Boer has demolished Warneck's view of the "natural" inevitability of world mission. Boer rightly recognizes a connection between the Great Commission and Old Testament universalism, but stresses that the most intimate connection of the Great Commission is with the exaltation of Christ and the effusion of the Spirit. The Great Commission was more than the realisation of the universalistic insights of the past. To speak of "natural" inevitability here, fails to appreciate that we are dealing with a gift of sovereign grace. Nor does it do justice to the thought of the Gospel as a "mystery".

"...every step in the drama of redemption comes to us as a wonderful surprise and as a new and unlooked-for happening".(2)

This captures admirably the authentic atmosphere of Acts. In this stirring book we find the best possible illustration of the Master's words of the Spirit:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...he shall glorify me".(Jo.I6.I2-I4)

The members of the primitive Church, like the members of the Church in every age, stood at different levels of development.

Some needed to be lured out of their walled garden of Jewish privilege. "To the Jew first" had a subtle way of becoming

(I) Op.cit., I29.
(2) Op.cit., I47-I48.
An interesting comparison can be drawn between the impact of the Resurrection on the Jewish holy day, and its effect on Old Testament universalism. Even as the Resurrection gave Israel a new holy day which was not discontinuous from the old holy day, so it gave Israel a new missionary faith, with new vision, joy, passion, and dynamic, although there had been a missionary faith in many places in the Old Testament. Even as it took the power of God to raise Jesus from the dead, so also was His power required to awaken the Church to new missionary passion.

"to the Jew only", because evangelism "to the Jew first" was so difficult, so engrossing, so time-consuming.

Others required a shock to their quietism. They expected to witness a dramatic act of God which would convert the Gentiles in a moment, while they assumed the role of wondering spectators.

Others were heavily manacled by racial prejudice, by fear of the dangers of world witness, or by plain indolence. They needed to be set free.

The Spirit of truth, gradually but surely dealt with all these needs of the Church. He brought back to their minds the words of Jesus about world mission, and patiently dealt with all the false inferences they had read into them. But He did vastly more than point back to one command at one point of time; He gave them the Life of the Commander in their communal and individual life. They had something vastly more binding and more inspiring than a commandment; they had Christ Himself. It was His Life that swept the missionary movement forward. They did not keep looking back to a commandment which they wanted sometimes to keep, and at other times to break. They could not help keeping the commandment because Christ was at work in them. They were constrained, not by a commandment, but by the love of the indwelling Christ.

The Eschatological Motive in Acts

We are now in the position to examine the place of eschatology in the world mission in Acts.

Some have maintained that eschatology does not have an important place in the scheme of Acts, pointing out that the eschatological element is slight. It has even been inferrred that the author deals a gentle rebuke to a catastrophic view of things, and that he seeks to lead his readers on to firmer and more permanent ground.

Lake and Cadbury speak of

"the Lucan tendency to change

the centre of the preaching from the future coming of the Kingdom to the already accomplished life of Jesus".(I)

F.J.Foakes-Jackson, in expounding Acts I.6-II, tends to soft-pedal the promise of the Return of Jesus, and gives the impression that the Coming of the Kingdom is only gradual. Missionary preaching takes the place of the expectation of a dramatic invasion of the Kingdom.

"The Lord explains that the kingdom was not of an earthly domination, to be brought about immediately by a catastrophic intervention by God, but must come into being by the more peaceful process of the Apostles acting as witnesses...The Lord...assures them that His Realm will embrace the world, though not in the way they had anticipated. Its growth will be sure, but it will be gradual".(2)

It would be very easy to come to false conclusions about the role of eschatology in Acts. H.J.Cadbury has given us a necessary warning in this connection:

"The eschatological element in the book of Acts taken by itself is often thought to be slight... we are mainly dependent on the missionary addresses. What eschatology there is is tersely given...This means that it is taken for granted rather than that it is slighted. The writer deals at length with other aspects of the message. What he does say on the subject is therefore all the more natural and spontaneous, and perhaps more revealing than if it were specially motivated".(3)

Realised Eschatology in Acts

We have excellent and important examples of realised eschatology in Acts.

2.17

The most striking example of all is 2.17. The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost is looked upon as the fulfilment of Joel's reference to the outpouring of the Spirit in the "last days". The overlapping of the present age and the age to come could not

(I) Op.cit., 8.
(2) Op.cit., 3-4.
(3) The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, 310.

be presented more forcibly. Eternity has broken into time; the Messianic Age is beginning. The historic life of Jesus has final, cosmic significance.

F.F.Bruce makes an interesting point in connection with the reference to "wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath" (v.I9). The quotation perhaps had even greater significance because of the fact that only about seven weeks before, the inhabitants of Jerusalem had seen the sun turned into darkness on the afternoon of the Crucifixion, and in the strange gloom perhaps the moon had appeared blood-red.(I) Heaven and earth alike had testified that Christ had been manifested in "these last times" (I Pet.I.20).

The use which Peter makes of the quotation from Psalm I6.8-II is also most significant. The promise to "raise up Christ to sit on his throne" is interpreted of the Resurrection (2.30-3I). There is no need to wait for a literal Millennium to have Christ on David's throne. He took His seat at the Resurrection.(2)

The Eschatology of Glory

But Acts is at one with other New Testament books in demanding an eschatology of glory. The End is realised in the present and past, but the full realisation lies in the future. The Resurrection of Jesus has proleptic significance. It points forward to the final subjection of all the forces arrayed against Him.(cf.I Cor.I5.25). It is the guarantee of the General Resurrection, and of the Last Judgement.(3)

Cadbury suggests that the reference to Jesus' healing ministry in I0.38 may point to the final victory over the devil.(4) He

(I) Op.cit., 69.
(2) Cf.Mt.28.I8; Eph.I.22; I Cor.I5.25. The Church is the Church of the Reigning Lord.
(3) See 4.2; I7.I8,32; 23.6; 24.I5,2I; 26.8,23.
(4) Op.cit., 3I5.

claims that the realised eschatology of Acts "nowhere comes so near to a single definite expression as it does in the Q saying" (Lk.II.20).

There are three passages in Acts of especial interest for our study.

I) I.6-II

The passage presents in a most striking way the relationship between the ends of the earth and the End of time.

Calvin has a telling exposition. He refers to the ignorance of the disciples' question, "Lord,wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" "They had been diligently instructed by the space of three whole years", but "they betray no less ignorance than if they had never heard a word. There are as many errors in their question as words".(I)

But Calvin is not unduly hard on their mistake. Other Christians who came after them proved no more discerning: "And that which the apostles had conceived of the carnal kingdom proceedeth from the common error of their nation; neither was it marvel if they were deceived herein...those which held opinion that Christ should reign as a king in this world a thousand years fell into the like folly".(2)

Christ corrected their mistakes. He taught them that "they must fight before they can triumph", and He corrected their picture of the Kingdom. "His kingdom consisteth in the preaching of the gospel...He doth reign spiritually and not after any worldly manner".(3)

It is noteworthy that the question of the Twelve is virtually dismissed. Their nationalistic dreams are quietly set aside, but it would be a mistake to imagine that this involves the dismissal of futuristic eschatology, with realised

(I) Op.cit., II.
(2) Op.cit., I5. Bo Reicke points out that the command to wait for the "promise of the Father" (v.4) could have been misunderstood in a nationalistic sense. (op.cit., I6).
(3) Op.cit., I5.

eschatology moving into the vacant place. On the contrary, the angelic message immediately follows:

"This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven".

How are we to interpret "shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go"? Some have held that the reference is to a literal, visible Coming in cloud and glory - even as He had gone literally and visibly. Surely it would be a mistake to lay the main stress on what would be seen by the eye: the literal concomitants or stage setting of the Coming. That surely would mean a reversal to the very outlook so recently corrected by Jesus. Faith is more important than sight, and the Person of the Coming King more important than the stage setting of the Coming. Surely this word was meant to convey to the disciples that this Coming would be a Coming of the Christ they had known, served and loved. The New Testament presents a Christ "who came by water and blood; not by water only, but by water and blood" (I Jo.5.6), i.e. by baptism and crucifixion. He will come again "in like manner". Incarnation, Atonement and Parousia represent one continuous divine redemptive movement. The Christ who would come back would be the same Christ who had already come.(I)

The link between witness and the Parousia is strongly suggestive. Cullmann sees the use of the indicative, "ye shall be witnesses", rather than the imperative, as an indication that the

"apostles are only instruments through whom the eschatological plan of salvation is carried out"(2)

Again we are in touch with the same thought as in Mark I3.IO: the End can only come when the Gospel has been preached to all nations.

(I) This is in line with W.Manson (Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.5, No.2, II9).
(2) The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, 4I7.

2) 2.38-40

The place of repentance in the eschatological scheme appears in an interesting light in 2.38-40. Repentance will save Peter's hearers from a rebellious generation which will know the weight of the divine wrath. (v.38). The promise of the Spirit is for the present company and for "all that are afar off".(Perhaps this is a hint of the world-wide offer of the Gospel).

The passage takes on a deeper meaning when we recollect that it follows closely upon the reference to the prophecy of Joel. Repentance appears as an eschatological lever. Judah had been devastated by locusts. The prophet summons the nation to repent. Repentance will lead to forgiveness, to the return of plenty, to the pouring out of the Spirit before the coming of "the great and terrible day of the Lord". "All that are afar off"(Acts 2.39), may correspond to the pouring out of the Spirit"upon all flesh" (Joel 2.32), even if Peter did not realise their full significance when he quoted the words.

3) 3.19-21

3.19-21 makes a still more definite contribution to the subject of our s tudy.

Peter makes an urgent call to Israel to repent "that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old" (American Revised Standard Version).(I)

This is an important passage for many reasons:

(I) This seems to be a more satisfactory translation of ὅπως ἂν ἔλθωσιν καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως than the A.V.:"when times of refreshing shall come". The Greek suggests the purpose of Peter's call to repentance, rather than the time of the coming of "times of refreshing". R.V., Moffatt and Weymouth have a translation similar to the A.R.S.V.

a) There is a clear reference to the Parousia.

b) It is strongly suggested that repentance hastens the Parousia and sin retards it. One is strongly reminded of 2 Peter 3.II-I2 (Moffatt tr.):

"What holy and godly men ought you to be in your behaviour, you who expect and hasten the advent of the Da y of God".

c) We are again confronted with the important place of the Jews in the eschatological scheme. The Jews' acceptance of the Messiah will be followed by the world-wide blessing anticipated by the prophets.(I)

Cadbury has made an excellent assessment of the eschatology of Acts.

a) It corrects an over-expectant attitude to the Parousia by emphasizing that delay is to be expected.

b) This correction does not attempt to

"spiritualize away the concrete eschatological hopes of Christianity...Present and past do not reduce the importance of the future, or much alter the nature of its expected fulfilment. The eschaton remains intact in the future".

c) Early Christianity was not

"a contemporary unity or a rectilinear development. In different persons or circumstances Christian thought fluctuated one way or another. It was no one-way street".(2)

(I) F.J.Foakes-Jackson uses the word ἀποκαταστάσεως (v.2I) as an illustration that the Peter of the speeches in Acts seems significantly different from the Peter of the Gospel narrative. The word reminds Foakes-Jackson of the teaching of the Stoics that "at the end of every 'period' the world would revert to what it had been at its creation...That Peter meant this is well nigh incredible, though he may have assured the people that the world would be restored at the return of Jesus from heaven to its original purity".(Op.cit., 29).

"Impossible" rather than "well nigh incredible" seems a better description of the first interpretation. It is much better to see ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων against a Hebrew and Biblical background, rather than against a Greek background. The prophets had spoken repeatedly of a final restoration. Cf. the use of ἀποκαθίστανω in I.6 (where the term is, of course, restricted to Israel). See also Mal.4.5; Matt.I9.28; Rom.8. I8-23.

(2) Op.cit., 320-32I, and 3I5-3I6.

It is the author's conviction that in Acts we have many powerful illustrations of the interaction of eschatology and world mission. Eschatology lends urgency to mission, and mission preserves eschatology from sterile fanaticism.

Chapter 3

Stephen, the Pioneer of World Mission

Any study of eschatology and mission in Acts would be incomplete without a reference to Stephen.

In his commentary on Hebrews, and in various articles, W.Manson has an engrossing study of the significance of Stephen and the Hellenists. He views Stephen as a Jewish Christian who had a significant role to play in the development of the Christian world mission. His attitude was strikingly different from the general attitude of the Aramaic-speaking Jews, the "Hebrews" of Acts 6.I.

> "In the actual ordering of things, the inception of the world-mission of Christianity dates from events which had their origin in the work of Stephen; and between the Galileans with their outlook on history, and the proto-martyr with his, there entered as middle-term the Pentecostal baptism of the Church".(I)

Manson suggests that the key to Stephen's originality, and to many factors in the story of the world mission of Christianity, is to be found in Stephen's eschatology, in his "direction of mind towards the Ultimate Event".(2)

Manson asks the significant question:

> "But whereas the original Apostles and witnesses thought that Jesus would come back to them...did Stephen say that they must go out and, so to speak, anticipate the Son of Man's coming by proclaiming Him to every nation...?"(3)

The answer to this question, says Manson, can only be found in Stephen's account of the history of Israel as we find it in Acts 7. Israel appears as a pilgrim people called to move on to a fuller experience of God. God had commanded Abraham to leave familiar scenes and securities (7.3-4). He had commanded Moses to lead Israel out of bitter bondage (7.22-36). But Israel had

(I) The Epistle to the Hebrews, London I95I, 25.
(2) Op.cit., 3I.
(3) Op.cit., 33.

been chronically blind to God's commandments to move on; and now the supreme blindness had been the rejection of Jesus (7.5I-52). That tragic rejection implied the rejection of God's "supra-historical purpose" for His chosen people. Israel found it convenient to pin her faith to historical and earthly fixtures like the Temple. Stephen, on the otherhand, found the mobile Tabernacle a more fitting representation of his attitude to religious history.

If there is one passage which is the pivot of Manson's position it is Stephen's exclamation in 7.56:

"I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God".

Manson interprets this in the light of the vision of "one like unto a son of man" in Daniel 7.I3-I4.

"Whereas the Jewish nationalists were holding to the permanence of their national historical privilege, and even the 'Hebrew' Christians...were ...sheltering under the eaves of the Holy Place, Stephen saw that the Messiah was on the throne of the Universe...Did Stephen also see...that the Temple-worship, the sacrifices, the Law, all the holy institutions of the past, were thereby transcended and antiquated, and that the call to the Church of Jesus was to leave the Temple and all that went with it behind, and to go forward...throwing in its lot with the crucified Son of Man, to whom the throne of the world and the Lordship of the Age to Come belonged?"(I)

There have been many discussions about the precise force of "standing". Was Jesus standing to welcome His servant, or to avenge him, or to confess him before God?(2) C.H.Dodd and G.H. Dalman have warned us against pressing the standing posture, and they may well be right.(3)

The passage reminds us strongly of three passages:

a) Daniel 7.I3f., where "one like unto a son of man"

(I) Op.cit., 3I-32.
(2) F.F.Bruce (op.cit., I68) points out that the proper posture for a witness is a standing posture.
(3) Dodd sees no significance in the substitution of ἑστῶτα for καθήμενον of the LXX. It has the force "be situated". For Dalman, see "The Words of Jesus", Edinburgh I902, 3II. For Dodd, see "According to the Scriptures", London I952, 35 n.

approaches the throne of God to receive universal dominion.

b) Psalm II0 where the priest-king is asked to sit at God's right hand.

c) Mark I4.62:

"Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven".

There is no reason to deny that Jesus believed that He combined in His own Person the "one like unto a son of man", and the priest-king. A similar combination may be traced behind Stephen's words.

"The presence of Messiah at God's right hand meant that the age of particularism was finished".

This interpretation by F.F.Bruce,(I) in line with Manson,seems perfectly possible.

The Stephen material in Acts has been handled in ways radically different from Manson's exposition.

The meaning of "Hellenist"

Cadbury,(2) Windisch,(3) and Grundmann,(4) hold that it is possible to view the Hellenists as Gentile Christians.

The reference to "the Hellenists" and to "the Hebrews", in Acts 6.I, has usually been interpreted along linguistic lines of Greek-speaking Jews from foreign parts, and of Aramaic-speaking Jews who were natives of Palestine.

Cadbury argues against this linguistic differentiation on these grounds:

a) The Greek names of the seven men appointed to look after the poor widows do not limit the bearers to Jews of the Diaspora.

b) It seems strange if the seven men were all chosen from one

(I) Op.cit., I66.
(2) The Beginnings of Christianity, Part I, Vol.V, London I933, 59-74.
(3) Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament II, 508.26-509.39.
(4) Zeitschrift fur die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 38, I939, 54ff.

side in the controversy. It is also strange that these men, whose appointment originated in the need to deal with the practical pressures of Church life so that the apostles might be free to undertake priority commitments, suddenly appear, not as Church administrators, but as preachers.

c) The word Ἑλληνιστάι is not commonly used in a strict linguistic sense.

Cadbury finds no difficulty in the thought that 6.I suddenly introduces us to Gentiles, and their widows, in the Jerusalem Church. This, he claims,

"would really be no more abrupt than the sudden and unexplained introduction of two linguistic groups among the Christians".

Cadbury admits, of course, that there were many Greek-speaking Jews in the Diaspora, but holds that it was not common to call them "Hellenists". Otherwise, the incidence of the term would be more frequent.

Munck does not favour the theory that the Hellenists were Gentiles. He looks upon Stephen's speech as the speech of a Diaspora Jew,(I) but this does not necessarily mean that Stephen was a Diaspora Jew. Whether the speech comes from Stephen or from Luke is an open question. He concludes:

"...Stephen or Philip for instance may be Palestinian Jews, while the others...may have been Diaspora Jews...We can only say for certain that it is unlikely that all seven guardians of the poor were Hellenists".(2)

The most damning point against the view that the Hellenists were Gentiles is that it is very difficult, or impossible, to understand the controversy about the terms on which Gentiles might be received into the Church. Would a controversy have arisen out of the Cornelius case if in actual fact Jew and Gentile were already in fellowship in the Jerusalem Church?

(I) Op.cit., 222 & 219 n.4.
(2) Op.cit., 227.

The innovation of taking Gentiles into the Church is carefully noted at Caesarea and Antioch. Why this unheralded reference to Gentiles in the Jerusalem Church? The author disagrees with Cadbury that this would be no more abrupt than the "sudden and unexplained introduction of two linguistic groups among the Christians". The antagonisms and barriers between two linguistic groups of Jewish Christians were surely less serious than those dividing Jewish and Gentile Christians.

Against Munck's hospitality to the possibility that Stephen was a Palestinian Jew, it can be said that the controversy in the Church is easier to understand if Stephen was a Jew of the Diaspora, expressing the views of his fellow Hellenists. W.L. Knox speaks of possible points of tension between Hellenist and Hebrew Christians.

a) The Hellenist Jews of Jerusalem possessed synagogues of their own where the worship was conducted in Greek.

b) Their loyalty to the Law was suspect.

c) There were proselytes among them who were viewed as second-class citizens of the Kingdom.(I)

The possibility that the seven were all drawn from the Hellenist side cannot be summarily ruled out of court. May we not look upon this as a gesture of generosity on the part of the Hebrews? The complaint had emanated from the Hellenists. Let Hellenists be appointed, then, to safeguard the interests of their widows. They could be trusted to guard against favouritism.

With greater confidence it may be said that there is no real difficulty in the thought that at least some of these Church administrators developed into telling preachers of the

(I) St.Paul and the Church of Jerusalem, Cambridge 1925, 39. Tension arose, as it often does, from a trifling matter. We read of tension in the early Hellenistic period in I Macc.I. II-15; and of tension in the later Hellenistic and early Roman period in J.Klausner's, "From Jesus to Paul", Eng.tr., London 1944, 7ff.

Gospel. We need not imagine that they were bound by modern ideas about the division of Church business into the "sacred" and the "secular", without any overlapping of responsibilities. The very ability which explained their choice as administrators made them effective exponents of the Faith. Their official position gave them a platform to proclaim their beliefs.(I)

Stephen's originality

Some scholars would maintain that Manson has exaggerated Stephen's originality.

It has been maintained that Stephen's speech was irrelevant, and that it was no more than a commonplace summary of patriarchal history, telling the "old, old story" of the disobedience of the patriarchs. An absence of connection between the speech and its setting has also been noted.

It would probably be enough to reply with Lake and Cadbury that

"all observation shows that religious or political pioneers when brought into court never attempt to rebut the accusations brought against them, but use the opportunity for making a partisan address".(2)

But it is highly doubtful if it is necessary to fall back on such a position. There was a clear charge against Stephen: "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God" (6.II).

His words seemed to undermine the lasting validity of the Law, and to disparage the Temple worship which was the foundation of national worship.

We will argue that Stephen's critics were left in no doubt about his answer to these charges. They killed him, not because he answered evasively, and without relevance to the specific

(I) So Knox (op.cit., 40).
(2) Op.cit., 70.

charges, but because they had not a vestige of a doubt that his answers to these charges revealed his radical difference from their beliefs. They came to the conclusion that their charge was proved: he was guilty of blasphemy, and was a saboteur of all that was precious to Jewry.

M.Simon would deny Manson's account of Stephen's originality along another line: he sees Stephen's attitude as Judaeo-Christian, and not Hellenist.(I) He finds the inspiration of Stephen's position in Judaistic opposition to the Temple cult as exemplified by Nathan, Hosea, Trito-Isaiah, and the Rechabites. The Stephen of his construction opposed the Temple as apostasy from the authentic traditions of Israel. Like other Jews of the Dispersion he contrasted the Temple with the Tabernacle, to the advantage of the latter.

The most remarkable feature of Simon's exposition is that he finds no specifically Christian message in Stephen's speech. He explains this by the fact that the speech mirrors primitive Christian theology.

Simon's position is open to objection along three lines.

a) It is difficult to explain the savage opposition which Stephen evoked, if his message included no specifically Christian note.

b) Simon's interpretation of Stephen's attitude to the Temple and cultus is not convincing, although many other commentators have followed a similar interpretation.

There is no need to read a categorical denunciation of the Temple as such into the words, "...the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands"(7.48). It seems better to view this as an attack on a wrong attitude to the Temple, which was thoroughly characteristic of the prophets. Jeremiah had flayed those who imagined that the possession of the Temple implied a

(I) Journal of Ecclesiastical History,II, No.2, 1951, 127-142; St Stephen and the Hellenists in the Primitive Church (1958).

hold upon God. Religious words could become "lying words" when they suggested that confidence could be pinned to a block of buildings (7.4). Ezekiel saw that God did not need a static throne in a static Temple, as some people imagined. He had a vision of a mobile throne which guaranteed that the whole world was the sphere of His influence. Therefore the exiles in Babylon, hundreds of miles away from the Temple, did not need to sit weeping by the rivers of Babylon (chapter I).

Calvin's exposition seems much more satisfactory than Simon's. He lays aside the impression that Stephen was administering an "indirect rebuke" to Solomon. Behind the building of the Temple was a direct commandment from God, to which was added the promise that God would meet His people there. "Solomon knew full well that God was to be sought in heaven (I Kings 8.23)."(I)

Therefore Stephen was not rebuking Solomon but attacking people who superstitiously imagined that God was tied to the Temple.(2)

Munck does not accept Simon's belief that Stephen was attacking the Temple in itself. He points out that Isaiah's words in 66.If., occur in "a denunciatory sermon against the ungodly". Stephen's handling of the quotation is apt in the light of his attack on the Israelites for their resistance to the Holy Spirit (7.5I).(3)

Simon's view seems to require that Stephen did not believe Nathan's prophecy that a son of David would build a house for God (2 Sam.7); and further, that he did not believe that God had commanded Solomon to build the Temple. He also imposes on Solomon an attitude to the Temple more naive than that clearly outlined in Scripture. This requires too much. There is not a shred of evidence to support it.

It must be acknowledged, however, that while Simon has gone too far, he is right in thinking that the thought of the Tabernacle was more congenial to Stephen than the thought of the

(I) Acts, Vol.I, 229, in Calvin's Commentaries (Calvin Translation Society) Edinburgh I844.
(2) Similarly Lake and Cadbury, op.cit., 8I.
(3) Op.cit., 222n.

Temple. The comment of F.F.Bruce is admirable:

"The brevity with which Solomon's building is introduced and dismissed, expresses plain disapproval. Yet it is not Solomon's own act that Stephen deprecates...It was rather the state of mind to which the temple gave rise - a state of mind which the mobile tabernacle could not have engendered - that Stephen reprobates..." (I)

On this interpretation, Stephen's attack was not on the Temple, but on the godlessness which manifested itself in a wrong attitude to the Temple.

Even as it is possible to challenge Simon's interpretation of Isaiah 66.If., so his interpretation of Amos 5.25-27 may be challenged. An outright attack on sacrificial worship is not implied in Acts 7.42-43 (where the Amos passage is quoted), as Simon thinks. Rather Stephen appears to trace the idolatry of Israel right back to the wilderness period, which had frequently been idealized as the period of Israel's pure love (Jer.2.2). To that very period belonged the ugly story of the golden calf (v.4I). Accordingly God "gave them up to worship the host of heaven" (v.42). On this interpretation a negative answer is implied to the question:

"Have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness?"

Their worship was not authentic worship of the God of Israel; it was worship of the planetary powers. Israel's worship, therefore, even in the wilderness was plagued by idolatry.

Surely F.F.Bruce has captured Stephen's real intention. Commenting on Simon's deduction from Stephen's words, that sacrifice ipso facto was not approved by God, he says:

"This deduction from Stephen's words is on a par with the deduction drawn from the great OT prophets' attack on contemporary sacrificial practice, that they were opposed to the principle of sacrifice in itself and not simply to its misuse. The deduction in both cases results from an inadequate appreciation of prophetic diction - its tendency to say 'not this, but that', where we should say 'not only this, but also that'

(I) Op.cit., I59.

...Stephen speaks in the true prophetic tradition".(I)

Cullmann is on sounder ground than Simon in interpreting Stephen's speech in the light of Jesus' own attitude to the Temple. He traces a special interest in the Samaritans, both in Luke's Gospel and in the Fourth Gospel. The latter shows familiarity with the tradition about the connection of the Hellenists with Samaria. The author had a special interest in the first missionaries, as is indicated by his report of the Greeks' desire to see Jesus (I2.20ff.) But he was even more interested in the actual origin of preaching beyond Israel. The description of Jesus' encounter with the woman of Samaria indicates that this was begun by Jesus Himself. Jesus refers to worship "in spirit and truth", which would move on a deeper level than worship either in the Jerusalem Temple or on Mount Gerizim (4.20ff.) Jesus sees the people of Sychar flocking to Him as the first-fruits of the mighty harvest which would be gathered by the apostles after His death (4.35). These pioneer missionaries in Samaria entertained revolutionary views about Temple worship, which were parallel to Stephen's condemnation of it.

Cullmann points out that the issue of the Temple arises early in the Fourth Gospel (2.I3ff.) He finds the point in the Jewish taunt to Jesus - "You are a Samaritan" (8.48) - in the fact that Jesus, like the Samaritans and the Hellenists, was criticized for His attitude to the Temple.(2)

Munck adopts an intermediate position between Cullmann and Manson, on the one hand, and Simon, on the other. He says of Stephen's speech:

"Its importance in the string of pearls to which

(I) Op.cit., I55n. Manson says similarly (The Epistle to the Hebrews, London I95I, 30): "What Amos meant, according to Stephen, was not that God had not commanded sacrifices and oblations, but that Israel had diverted its offerings and its sanctuary to idolatrous purposes". Similarly Munck (op. cit., 222n.)

(2) The Early Church, I86-I89 & I92.

we have compared the narratives in Acts must be more strongly underlined than it ha s hitherto been...Stephen's speech about fugitive Israel serving God in a strange land receives a certain force, as it forms the transition from the description of the church in Jerusalem to the description of the mission in "all Judaea and Samaria and to the end of the earth'(I.8)".I)

But Munck protests against drawing a sharp contrast between Stephen and the early Church. The charge against Stephen was the same as that against Jesus.(2) Stephen's answer to it "contains nothing that he could not have learnt from Jesus".(3) There was therefore "no contrast between Jesus, Stephen, and the original Church as such".(4) Accordingly Munck lays aside Baur's view that the early Church, in contrast to Stephen, had strong links with the Temple which saved its members from extremities of persecution after Stephen's death.(5) He points out that the Temple was a natural missionary objective for Jesus' disciples.

The author is in complete agreement with Munck that Stephen's speech is an important theological introduction to the account of the world mission. There also can be no question about the significant parallel between the assault on Jesus and that on Stephen: but the evidence surely does not bear out Munck's argument for identity of outlook between Jesus, Stephen and the early Church. How can we explain, from such a premiss, that it was Stephen, and not Peter or James who was the first Christian martyr?? The narrative does not give the impression that this was accidental.

Further, one can agree heartily that "the speech contains nothing that he could not have learnt from Jesus", without having to accept the conclusion that there was "no contrast between Jesus, Stephen and the original Church". There are different levels of learning from Jesus. The evidence seems to indicate

(I) Op.cit., 222-223.
(2) See Matt.26.6I & 65.
(3) Op.cit., 224.
(4) Op.cit., 225.
(5) Op.cit., 226.

that Stephen had learned more deeply the significance of Jesus and of His Church, and the radical new beginning implied by the Cross, Resurrection, and the baptism of the Spirit. F.F.Bruce speaks impressively of Stephen's contribution:

"Whatever form of words Stephen used which gave rise to the charge that he said Jesus the Nazarene would destroy the temple, it seems plain that he had not only repeated the words which Jesus Himself had spoken, but also grasped and expounded their inner meaning. The apostles and many of the rank and file of the Jerusalem church might continue to attend the temple services and be looked upon as devout and observant Jews; Stephen saw that the work of Christ logically involved the abrogation of the whole temple order and its supersession by a new edifice not made with hands, and yet within the main stream of OT revelation. Jesus Himself had said, 'one greater than the temple is here' (Matt.I2.6); these and other sayings of His about the temple were apparently preserved by the early church in Jerusalem, but it was Stephen who appreciated their full force. The gospel meant the end of the sacrificial cultus and all the ceremonial law. These were the outward and visible signs of Jewish particularism...This was the argument, pressed by Stephen in synagogue debate, which formed the real basis of the case for the prosecution".(I)

This means that the "false witnesses"(6.I3) were "false" from the Christian standpoint. They misrepresented Stephen's real meaning. His Christ had come "not to destroy but to fulfil": but from the Jewish standpoint their witness was true, in the sense that Stephen's preaching, like the preaching of Jesus before him, meant the end of the Temple, the sacrificial cultus and the ceremonial law. Such "fulfilment" from the angle of traditional Judaism was actual destruction.

On this interpretation the mistake of the nation was to cling to the old bottles instead of welcoming the new wine. There was no attack on the bottles, as Simon infers.

c) Simon's claim that there is an absence of a Christian message in Stephen's speech cannot be allowed.

(I) Op.cit., I35-I36. L.W.Barnard has this description of Stephen: "To the Jews he was a liberal extremist; to many Christians his views did not suit their present position vis-a-vis Judaism. He was a man born before his time".(New Testament Studies, Vol.VII, Cambridge I96I, 35).

Many scholars have taken a radically different position.

R.P.C.Hanson(I) follows R.B.Rackham(2) in the view that Stephen is preaching Jesus all through the speech although His name is not once mentioned explicitly. Joseph and Moses are types of Christ. M.Black points out the Christological use made of Deuteronomy I8.I5 in the speeches of Peter and Stephen (3), and finds

> "the whole point of Stephen's long speech down to verse 37 (where the text is applied to Jesus)" in "the parallel between the rejection of Moses, the first saviour of his people, and that of Jesus, 'the prophet like unto Moses'".(4)

Similarly Bo Reicke says that Stephen

> "sets Christ right in the middle of Scripture as the right interpreter of the O.T. revelation".(5)

Stephen the forerunner of Marcion?

If the pendulum swings to one extreme in Simon's position which looks upon Stephen as one who remained in essence a Jew, it swings to the other in the view that a position like Manson's does not give a sufficient account of the originality of Stephen.

Knox has an account of Stephen as an extremist, going to lengths which the Christian Church has never supported. He suggests that the seven were "really leaders of a doctrinal revolt"(6) which threw up issues which were not settled until the Council of Jerusalem. Stephen preached the imminence of Christ's Coming, and said that at that Coming there would be no further need of the Law and of the Temple, which from the outset had been false developments. His speech in Acts 7 is

(I) Theology, L (I947) I42ff.
(2) The Acts of the Apostles, I904, 92-95.
(3) Acts 3.22; 7.37.
(4) Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.6, No.I, 3.
(5) Op.cit., I75.
(6) Op.cit., 40.

"entirely non-Pauline in its view of the O.T".(I) Knox suggests that the only parallel in primitive Christian literature is the Epistle of Barnabas.

"The whole method involves...a completely arbitrary selection of certain passages in the O.T., and a radically false interpretation of them; it can only be made logical and consistent by the Marcionite doctrine that the God of the O.T. is a different being from the God of the N.T."(2)

If our interpretation of the significant passages in Stephen's speech has been sound, Knox's view of Stephen cannot be allowed. We follow instead Bo Reicke's account of Stephen as a forerunner of Paul. He sees Stephen's continuity with the most dynamic elements in the Christian tradition, both in the past and in the future. Stephen was the first known champion of the world-wide preaching of the Gospel. This, however, was not his discovery: he merely emphasized what Christ had taught. His line was different from that of Peter and the Twelve in the sense that he went beyond them. Peter had understood the Old Testament as a Christ-prophecy (3.24), but it was Stephen, who for the first time made the principle of Gentile mission the Church's consistent course, in agreement with the transmitted command of Jesus.

"If Luke's account of Stephen is historical", writes Bo Reicke, " - and this cannot be doubted for any good reason -...the preaching of Stephen becomes the first step to the Pauline Gospel".(3)

After touching on the inevitability that Stephen impressed Paul, Bo Reicke speaks of Stephen's attitude to the Old Testament: "Stephen has not let himself be led astray, as was true of certain Gnostics, by scorning the Old Testament and the old covenant. In part his speech is delivered to make clear the revelation-content

(I) Op.cit., 5I. Similarly Barnard (op.cit., 33-34).
(2) Op.cit., 54. Barnard believes that Barnabas was "directly influenced by Stephen's views, embodying them in his work". He thinks of Stephen and Barnabas as "solitary figures of the left". (Op.cit., 36-45).
(3) Op.cit., I74-I75.

of Holy Scripture, and especially of the Law. But his opponents scorn this treasure. They will not see that Holy Scripture fundamentally concerns Christ, the righteous One...A clear understanding of the relative, and not absolute meaning of the Old Testament Law, of the Jewish people, and of the holy land, was necessary for the healthy development and transmission of the Christian Faith. Without the appearance of courageous souls like Stephen and Paul, the Church would have remained a Jewish sect".(I) They taught that the Law of Moses, the people of Israel, and the holy land, were not proto-types of the Gospel, the Faith of Christ and of the Church, but only shadows (Heb.IO.I).(I)

This picture of Stephen as a genuine interpreter of the greatest glories of the past, and as a pioneer of the greater glories of the future fits excellently into such evidence as we possess.

In conclusion, this study bears out Manson's view of Stephen in the following respects:

a) He was a Jew of the Diaspora whose attitude differed from that of the "Hebrews".

b) The key-difference arose in his consciousness that the voice of God was calling him to venture further into the deep - both in faith and in evangelism. The field was the world, of Jew and Gentile.

c) The eschatological motivation of this missionary drive is more problematical, not because any evidence can be produced against it, but because the precise evidence in support of it is slight. It can hardly be said that Acts 7.56 constitutes decisive evidence. It does suggest, however, that Stephen was in actual fact influenced by the link between missionary preaching and the End. The End could be "anticipated" (to use Manson's word), by faithful missionary preaching.(2)

(I) Op.cit., I75.
(2) H.P.Owen has a short study of Acts 7.55-56, which follows

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W.Manson's approach. He gives much importance to the standing posture of the Son of Man in Stephen's vision. "Christ rises in preparation for his Parousia...Christ is eager to return...Our task is simply to remain faithful (Luke xviii.8) since only the Father knows 'the times and the seasons' (Acts i.7) and even he cannot send the Son until the ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων (Acts iii.21)."

Why was Stephen favoured with such a vision? Owen finds the answer in Stephen's world vision. "For it was precisely the proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentiles that had to occur before Christ could return; and if anyone knew this it was surely Luke, the companion of Paul and the Evangelist to the Gentiles". (New Testament Studies, Vol.I, Cambridge 1955, 224-226).

This approach is both interesting and possible, but can it be said (in the absence of more definite evidence) that this is what the passage teaches?

Chapter 4

Eschatology and Mission in Hebrews

It seems that this is the best point at which to consider W.Manson's fascinating question:

> Did Stephen's "passionate concentration of mind on the eschatological nature of the Christian calling...provide the real starting-point from which to seek an understanding of the specific message of Hebrews"?(I)

Manson's main positions might be summarized as follows:

I) The "Hebrews" were Christian Jews who shared the reluctance of Stephen's opponents in Acts to face the demands of the world mission of the New Israel. They did not share his enthusiasm to "anticipate" the End by going out to the non-Christian world.(2)

2) These Christian Jews were possibly members of a house-Church within the congregation in Rome.(3)

3) The Coming of Christ into time is crucial, throwing all past religious history into shadow.

4) The threatening sin of this minority group in the Church was not reverting to Judaism, but refusing to move forward in response to the constraint of their eschatological calling.

Manson draws the following comparisons between Hebrews and Acts to support his theory about the influence of Stephen behind Hebrews:

a) The role of the angels (Heb.2.I-5; Acts 7.53).

Christ is greater than the angels. He, not the angels is Lord

(I) The Epistle to the Hebrews, 36.
(2) After studying the admonitory sections of the epistle in chapter 3 Ma nson concludes that it is not "absolutely determinable" whether the Hebrews were Jewish Christians or some other group. (Op.cit., 86). But after study of the theological argument in chapters 4 & 5 he writes: "...we seem justified in concluding that the Jewish-Christian character of the group has been proved".(Op.cit., I6I).
(3) F.B.Clogg also thinks that it is likely that the letter was written to a house-Church in Rome. (An Introduction to the New Testament, London I937, I32).

of "the world to come" (Heb.2.5). The word spoken through Him is greater than the "word spoken through angels" (Heb.2.2).

Manson sees behind this some conservative interpretation of the Law which was threatening to make the readers drift away from the salvation in Christ.(I)

b) Jesus the Forerunner (Heb.6.I9-20; I0.I9-3I).

Jesus is our Forerunner who has passed through the 'veil' to the Throne of Grace, carrying the anchor to which our souls are made firm. This reminds Manson of Stephen's futuristic outlook:

"We do not wait passively for the Lord to come to us from heaven, but we go out, so to speak, towards Him and the heavenly world".(2)

c) The nature and function of faith(Heb.II.I-40).

Hebrews and Stephen (Acts 7.2-7) both base their exposition of Abraham's faith on Genesis I2, while Paul uses Genesis I5.6.(3)

Manson concludes:

"The Epistle in its concentration of interest on the supernal and heavenly end of the Christian calling and in the particular terms of its emphasis on the exaltation of Jesus above the Mosaic Law and the Cultus stands in the direct line of succession to the teaching of Stephen and the world-mission" (4)

Many scholars have interpreted Hebrews in a different way.

J.Moffatt maintains that the recipients were Gentiles, thus treating the title as a mistake.(5)

The usual arguments brought forward by those who favour such an approach are:

a) Old Testament quotations are from the LXX, not from the Hebrew, as might have been expected if the recipients were Jews.

b) Moffatt claims that there is no proof that the readers were in danger of lapsing into Judaism.

c) There is no mention of the Temple or of circumcision.

(I) Op.cit., 50-5I.
(2) Op.cit., 65.
(3) Op.cit., 77.
(4) Op.cit., 86.
(5) Moffatt explains the title by the fact that those who were

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These are hardly compelling arguments.

Some scholars think that the use of the LXX may point to Alexandria as the place of origin. Alexandria was the leading centre of Jewish life outside of Palestine. The allegorical use of the LXX also suggests the Alexandrian type of exposition after the manner of Philo, who sought to demonstrate the affinities between Plato and the Jewish faith.(I)

Again, the admission that Moffatt is right in his view that there is no proof that the danger facing the recipients of Hebrews was a relapse into Judaism, certainly does not carry the implication that they were Gentiles. It can be said with equal truth that there is no proof that Gnostic and Hellenistic speculations were wooing them away from Christ.

The last argument can be easily met from the standpoint of Manson's view of Hebrews as a document of the world mission reflecting Stephen's outlook. As has been suggested, Stephen was more at home with the tabernacle than with the Temple. Perhaps this was also true of our author. Again, if these Christians were resisting the out-going sweep of the mission, that was the issue, and not circumcision.

There seem to be no cogent reasons for rejecting the belief that the recipients of the letter were Jewish Christians.(2)

The different estimates of the correspondences between Hebrews and Stephen are of more significance for our study.

Moffatt also notes correspondences: "The nearest approach to Πρὸς Ἑβραίους, in its treatment of the OT, is the speech of Stephen, the Hellenistic Jewish Christian, in Ac.7.I-53, where

Note (5) continued from p.229
responsible for it imagined that it was meant for Jewish Christians. But it "might have been called ad gentes as aptly as First Peter which also describes Gentile Christians as ὁ λαός (I.C.C. Commentary on Hebrews, Edinburgh I924, xv-xvii).

(I) So W.Neil (The Epistle to the Hebrews (Torch) London I955, I6-I7).

(2) This is favoured by Clogg (op.cit., I33); Neil (op.cit., I6); A.S.Peake in Peake's Commentary, 889.

we have a similar use of the typological method and a similar freedom in handling the OT story".(I)

But Moffatt stops far short of Manson:

"The occasional resemblances between Stephen's speech and Πρὸς Ἑβραίους are not so significant as the difference of tone and temper between them, e.g. in their conceptions of Moses and of the angels".(2)

Moffatt also gives prominence to the fact that, in contrast to Stephen, Hebrews does not dwell on the crime of the Jews in putting Jesus to death.

About the last point, it is surely enough to comment (with Manson) that the Hebrews did not share the involvement of Stephen's audience in the death of Christ.

Again, if our interpretation of the speech of Stephen has been adequate, there is no "difference of tone and temper" between Stephen and Hebrews in their conceptions of Moses and of the angels.

The author of Hebrews and his readers shared the belief that God employed angels in the mediation of the Law at Sinai. The author respected the function of the angels, although he would not have accepted Philo's view that the Mosaic legislation was valid and supreme as long as the world endured. Moffatt is justified in making these points,(3) but there is no need to accept his implication that there is a "disparaging tone" in Stephen's reference to the angels (Acts 7.38 & 53) - the same tone as Moffatt finds in Galatians 3.19.

How can we find any disparagement, either of Moses or of the angels, as mediators of the Law, in the words:

"You have betrayed him and murdered him, you who received the Law as God's angels gave it to you, and yet have not kept it"? (Acts 7.52-53 - New English Tr.)

Lake and Cadbury rightly refer to Stephen's "underlying

(I) Op.cit., lxii.
(2) Op.cit., lxii.

assumption" that the Law was the word of God "which ought to be observed but was not".(I)

Both Moses and the Law are glorified, but Moses was a type of Christ pointing to One who was the glory of God.

All this fits perfectly into the teaching of Hebrews that Jesus is greater than the angels and greater than Moses. Moses was a servant; Jesus is the Son.(3.5-6).

Eschatology in Hebrews

The place which scholars have given to eschatology in Hebrews makes an interesting study.

Clogg could write about the theme and message of Hebrews without any specific reference to eschatology. Such eschatology as is implied in his summary is obviously realised eschatology. "In Him has been given the realization of the promises to the fathers".(2)

Moffatt thinks that primitive eschatology was responsible for an interruption in the pattern of the author's deeper thought. With his Alexandrian philosophical training he held that the present world is the shadow and copy of the real, i.e. the eternal world. He was walking here in the footsteps of Philo who had worked out this Platonic idealism. But

"he is still near enough to the primitive period to share the forward look (see, e.g., 2.2f. 9.28 I0.37), and unlike Philo, he does not allow his religious idealism to evaporate his eschatology. But while this note of expectation is sounded now and then, it is held that Christians already experience the powers of the world to come".(3)

The assumption here is that his speculative interest was primary, and was bound to be so, as his eschatological interest

(I) The Beginnings of Christianity, Part I, Vol.IV, London I933, 69.
(2) Op.cit., I4I-I42.
(3) Op.cit., xxxiii-iv.

was the lag-over from his past which would have to be discarded as time carried him further away from the primitive period.

This kind of assumption has been shared by many. They have viewed Hebrews as an attempt to restate the Gospel in terms that would be acceptable to Greek philosophy.

It may be granted immediately that the author of Hebrews shared the concern of both John and Paul to restate the Gospel in a way that would be understandable in the Graeco-Roman world of their day. The problem of communication is the concern of every creative Christian thinker in every age: but there is no evidence that his speculative and philosophical interest was primary.

An examination of the Gospel in Hebrews reveals realised and unrealised elements in inextricable union. Futuristic eschatology was a clear part of that Gospel. To imply that the futuristic element was conditioned by the juvenile and elementary stage at which Christian thought stood at that time: that it was a fungus growth on the body of doctrine which later ages could quietly dissect from the Faith without loss, does not mean a scientific examination of the Gospel seen through the eyes of the author, but the introduction of subjective considerations about what is basically irrelevant in the Gospel.

C.K.Barrett bears out Manson's position that eschatology (including futuristic eschatology) is central in Hebrews. He sees the epistle as a practical sermon, a λογος παρακλησεως. The theme of judgement which "belongs to elementary but essential Christian doctrine" (6.2), is used to encourage regularity in Christian assembly (10.25); serious response to the Gospel (2.3); resistance to apostasy (10.26f.); and resistance to wilful sin (10.39; 10.27; 12.29).(1)

(1) The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, 363-364.

Barrett quotes many passages to support the characteristic Christian position that eschatological events have already happened, and for that very reason Christian hope must look into the future.

"Salvation is rooted in the past and neglect of it in the present results in future judgement".(I)

God has spoken to us through His Son "in this the final age" (I.2). Jesus is not only the ἀρχηγός (initiator); He is also the τελειωτής (consummator) (I2.2). As He is our Forerunner we can be utterly confident (I0.22), believing that He will bring us safely to our journey's end (I3.I4). How thoroughly salvation is rooted in the past appears from an examination of 9.26, where the consummation is treated as an event in past history. Barrett contrasts the strong futuristic emphasis in Matthew's "end of the age" (I3.39,40,49; 24.3; 28.20). (2)

Barrett sees the present and future character of eschatology in Hebrews in the passage dealing with God's rest:

"The rest because it is God's is both present and future; men enter it, and must strive to enter it. This is a paradox but it is a paradox which Hebrews shares with all primitive eschatology.(3)

The most significant passages in Hebrews, in Barrett's estimation are the passages which combine God's action in the past and future. (See e.g. 7.3; 7.24; I0.I2ff.; 2.I-4).

Barrett argues that Hebrews makes an important contribution to the problem of eschatology:

"The most significant contribution of Hebrews to the growing problem of N.T. eschatology lies in the author's use of philosophical and liturgical language. By means of this terminology it is possible to impress upon believers the nearness of the invisible world without insisting upon the nearness of the parousia. The author of Hebrews did believe that the parousia was near (I0.25) but lays no stress on this conviction".(4)

(I) Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.6, No.3, 237.
(2) Op.cit., 236.
(3) The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, 372.
(4) Op.cit., 390.

Barrett in this passage is interpreting "the nearness of the parousia" in a chronological sense. We have sought to maintain that the theological interpretation of "nearness" is of more significance in understanding the New Testament outlook. Whatever thoughts the author of Hebrews may have entertained about the chronological nearness of the Parousia, their setting in his theological position that the climax of history was in the past,ensured that these thoughts would not run out into the arid sands of fanaticism and eccentricity. No doubt he made good use of philosophical language in the communication of his Gospel, but he did not import something from philosophy which subtly changed the content of his Gospel. The tools to solve the problem of New Testament eschatology lay in the New Testament ifself rather than in the thought-categories of Alexandrian philosophy.

There are many passages in Hebrews which are strongly reminiscent of the urgency, the realism and the persistence, which are clearly present in Mark I3.

I0.I9-3I is especially noteworthy. In this passage realised eschatology and unrealised eschatology are both harnessed to give impetus to the urgent call to faith and holy living. Christians may approach God's holy presence with boldness, but let them not forget that the veil which they pass is a living Veil bearing the marks of infinite sacrifice (vv.I9-20). Stubborn trifling with sin is therefore an indescribably serious activity. Ultimate reality has projected itself into time through Christ. This is love's last appeal. Love can do nothing more impressive than this. This High Priest, with the marks of blood upon Him is the link between the eschatological present and future. That future may break in "soon, very soon" (v.37). Let them therefore be ready.

The realism of this urgent call appears in the reference to persecution. (I0.32-34). The Church had to face danger without as well as danger within. They had nobly endured vilification

and material loss. Let them hold on tenaciously that they might reap the reward to which they were entitled.

10.37 indicates one of the inner dangers with which the Church had to contend: the danger of disillusionment. The author gives the assurance:

"Soon, very soon...he who is to come will come; he will not delay" (New English Tr.)

Manson comments:

"More clearly than anywhere else in the Epistle, it would appear that disappointment over the delay of the Parousia of Christ was one cause at least of the community's apathy and loss of faith".(I)

Manson hazards the suggestion that there were the two attitudes in the Church at Rome corresponding to the two attitudes in the Church at Jerusalem. Some members adopted a quiescent posture, waiting for Christ to come to them; others shared Stephen's belief that the Church must "anticipate" the Parousia by going out actively to preach the Gospel to all nations (Mk.13.10; Matt.24.14).

Whether or not one is impressed by Manson's interpretation of 10.37, it is clear that the author would have repudiated hectic and sterile emotionalism in relation to the Parousia. The near-approach of the "Day" must inspire "love and active goodness", and regularity in worship (10.24,25). One is strongly reminded of the practical challenge of eschatology in Mark 13, in the Pauline writings, and, indeed, everywhere in the New Testament.

What can we say, in conclusion, of Manson's theory that Hebrews is a document of the world mission of Christianity, reflecting Stephen's active eschatological outlook? The fruit is everywhere in conformity with such an eschatological root: but an interrogative mark must surely be left beside the theory. It is significant that many of Manson's sentences have an interrogative form, denoting that the theory was no more than tentative. It must surely take its place as an attractive possibility in the list of issues in connection with Hebrews of which we are not sure.

(I) Op.cit., 72.

Chapter 5

Eschatology and Mission in I and 2 Peter

The World Mission in I Peter

The Christian world mission is assumed rather than enjoined in I Peter, which belongs to the period when the tide of the universal Gospel was in full sweep (to borrow one of Selwyn's thoughts). Bo Reicke speaks of

> "the most definite, the most energetic and at the same time the most optimistic mission views. The Gospel shall be spread to all beings, while there is time. Judgement will soon come, iv.7. Until then all, or at least as many as possible, must have come in contact with the Gospel: for on the basis of his attitude towards it each will be judged, - indeed, for that very reason the Gospel has been preached to the dead also, iv.6".

Christian preaching does not only mean preaching by word of mouth; it includes preaching by behaviour. Christian wives may win over their husbands without a word being said (3.I). Again, "the Gospel of Suffering has within it a power that conquers all".(I)

The letter is addressed to "the elect sojourners of the Dispersion" (I.I-2). Calvin thought that the use of "Dispersion" tied the reference down to Christian Jews.(2) It is better to hold that the Church is the new Dispersion, even as it is the new Israel. Christians are no more than sojourners in a hostile world (2.II). Their true citizenship is in heaven (Phil.3.20). There are many references in the letter which support the view that Peter was writing to Jews and Gentiles.(3) The Word is to be preached to Jew and Gentile without discrimination.

The universal character of the Church is not something sudden and fortuitous. Peter traces it right back to the eternal plan of

(I) The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism, Copenhagen I946, I32-I33.
(2) Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles (Calvin Tr.Society) Edinburgh I855, 25.
(3) I.I8; 2.I0; 4.3. See also the passage addressed to slaves. Very few Jews were slaves.

God (I.2). The Christian Church is in continuity with the Church of old; it is no more than the fulfilment of the vision of the prophets, of a Church whose doors would be thrown wide open to all comers.

Selwyn finds an interesting personal reminiscence in the link between universal preaching and baptism. It was "through the command to baptize a Gentile that St.Peter himself had come to realize the Catholic scope of Christianity".(I)

The Eschatological Motive for World Mission in I Peter

It cannot be questioned that there is an eschatological current in the tide of the universal Gospel in I Peter. In Selwyn's opinion there is "no book in the N.T. where the eschatology is more closely integrated with the teaching of the document as a whole". The Petrine eschatological teaching is simpler than the eschatology of the Johannine writings. It is important for that very reason. It is "free from the controversial preoccupations of parts of St.Paul's epistles and from the philosophical interests of St.John". Therefore we have a "singularly clear mirror of Christian faith and life as we may suppose it to have been in the sixties of the first century. The case is not greatly altered if we date the Epistle in the eighties".(2)

The eschatology of I Peter follows the same general pattern as we have traced in other New Testament writings.

I) It is realised

Christianity confronts men with a crisis of faith (2.7-8). "Now" is a recurring refrain in I Peter. Christians are "now the people of God" (2.IO); they have "now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop" of their souls (2.25); baptism does "now" save them (3.2I).(3)

(I) The First Epistle of St.Peter, London I958, 327.
(2) Article on Eschatology in I Peter (The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, 394).
(3) See also I.6; I.8; I.I2.

This means that the Christian is living "at the end of the times" (I.20). Christ is either indescribably precious or a rock of offence. Christ crucified has injected the future into the present. The eschatological community, the Church, is the result. Peter shared the convictions of Paul and of the author of Hebrews about the unique once-for-all character of Jesus' death.

2) The realised End is not fully realised

Futuristic eschatology leaps out from passage after passage.

Peter has rightly been called the apostle of hope. It is noteworthy that his hope appears undimmed by the delay of the Parousia. There are no traces of the de-eschatologising of his faith. On the contrary it is clear that his imminent expectation of the End exercised a vital influence upon his hope. Of such anticipation Calvin wrote (in his comment on Luke 2I.28):

"... from the time when Christ once appeared, there is nothing left for the faithful, but with suspended minds ever to look forward to his second coming".(I)

But the "suspended mind" does not mean for Peter suspension from the practical interests of life. It is a "sound mind", a balanced mind (4.7); a prayerful mind (4.7); a mind full of fervent love (4.8); a hospitable mind (4.9).

3) Persecution is a sign of the End

Persecution adds edge to the imminent expectation of the End. "The very frustrations and calamities of this world", writes Cranfield, "are signs, and even pledges, of the end".(2)

There are strong resemblances between I Peter and I and 2 Thessalonians in the link between persecution and the Last Judgement. Peter's tracing of the will of God in suffering (4.I9) is also strongly reminiscent of "such things must needs be" in Mark I3.7.

Hope thus shines triumphantly through the darkest persecution

(I) C.E.B.Cranfield (I & II Peter and Jude, London I960, II2).
(2) Op.cit., II2.

which fiend or man can devise.

Selwyn writes finely of the fundamental stress in the epistle:

"There is still a judgement to be accomplished...the event is to be looked for with awe by believers and unbelievers alike. The emphasis in this epistle is on the blessedness of the life to come for Christians; on the hope and joy with which even in suffering they should look forward to it; on the life in glory". (I)

There can be no doubt that Peter's eschatological convictions exercised a profound general effect on his witness. The question must now be asked: is there any evidence in this letter that eschatology exercised a specific influence upon his sense of world mission?

We have seen good reason to find in I Peter a view of persecution as a sign of the End. Is there any evidence that Peter also viewed preaching as another sign of the End?

Christ's Preaching to the Spirits in Prison

Missionary and eschatological ideas seem to intersect most clearly in the two passages which refer to Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison (3.I9-20; 4.6).

Pison's comment on these passages serves as an excellent introduction to our study of them:

"There is here a definite attempt to replace an eschatology based on a mechanically rigid scheme whether of logic or chronology by an eschatology ethically conditioned by the necessity to provide room at some time or other in this life or in the next for the preaching of the Gospel to everyone (Matt.24.I4). This allows opportunity for ethical progress and is a possible if not a necessary interpretation of the Synoptic outlook".(2)

These passages cannot be offered lightly as proof passages

(I) The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, 399.
(2) The Christian Hope, I45. Similarly R.H.Charles (Eschatology, 2nd. ed., 434-436):"...we have a clear apostolic statement that the scope of redemption is not limited to this life in the case of certain individuals, human or angelic".

for any point of view. Salmond says of them:

"They are among the dark oracles of the New Testament, the unsolved if not insoluble problems of its interpretation...modesty and reserve of judgement most become the student".(I)

Similarly, with great relevance, Bo Reicke speaks of a "general desire to know too much, far more than there is in the text".(2)

There has been disagreement about almost everything in these passages: the scene of the preaching; the time of the preaching; the composition of the congregation; the character of the preaching; the success of the preaching.

The Scene and Time of the Preaching

It has been maintained that the earth was the scene of the preaching, and that the pre-existent Christ preached through the agency of Noah.(3)

Others have seen hell as the scene of the preaching with Christ as the Preacher, triumphantly harrowing hell (a conception which became popular with patristic writers after the year I90.(4)

Calvin rejected the idea of a descent to hell, in his own vigorous way:

"Common has been the opinion that Christ's descent into hell is here referred to; but the words mean no such thing... I have no doubt but Peter speaks generally, that the manifestation of Christ's grace was made to godly spirits, and that they were thus endued with the vital power of the Spirit".

After death they waited for Christ in their watch-tower of expectancy. The

(I) Christian Doctrine of Immortality, Edinburgh I897, 458 & 477.
(2) Op.cit., II9.
(3) Salmond lists Augustine, Aquinas, Hugo of St.Victor, Bede, Beza, Gerhard, Turretin, Besser, Wichelhaus, Fuller, Hofmann, and Schweitzer in support of this view. (Op.cit., 474). Selwyn (op.cit., 3I6) adds John Lightfoot, Bishop Pearson, Leighton, and C.H.H.Wright.
(4) Selwyn finds no evidence of patristic quotation of I Pet.3.I9 before I90.

Law was a "sort of prison in which they were kept". Calvin finds a parallel in Galatians 3.23.(I)

The interpretation that Christ preached through Noah is forced. The author is convinced that Selwyn is right in his opinion that this theory can be confidently rejected (2) in spite of the distinguished names which can be marshalled in support of it. It would not have arisen, surely, if the idea of Christ preaching to the dead had not seemed theologically repugnant. It is not easy to rid oneself of dogmatic presuppositions in the consideration of these passages. The evangelical thinker who believes with James Orr that the Bible concentrates "every ray of exhortation and appeal into the present",(3) finds himself here on unfamiliar ground.

It seems most natural to think of this preaching as taking place in Hades in the interval between the Death and Resurrection of Christ. The idea of a descent to Hades is not unfamiliar in the New Testament.(4)

The Composition of the Congregation

The following possibilities have been suggested:

a) Supernatural spirits, of whose sin we read in Genesis 6.

b) Human spirits.

c) Windisch finds a reference to both supernatural and human spirits. Selwyn sees Enoch's passage about fallen angels and wicked men in prison (chapters xxi-xxii) as supporting the possibility that both angels and men were included in Peter's mind, but thinks that the primary reference in 3.I9 is to supernatural beings.(5)

(I) Op.cit., II3-II4.
(2) The First Epistle of St.Peter, 3I7.
(3) The Christian View of God and the World, Edinburgh I908 (IOth. ed.) 344.
(4) Acts 2.27, 3I; Rom.IO.6-8; Eph.4.8-IO. Cf.Matt.I2.40.
(5) Op.cit., I99-200.

d) The position is further complicated by the fact that some scholars see different congregations in 3.I9 and 4.6.

To Salmond, the congregation of 3.I9 was composed of the sinners of Noah's day, while the preaching of 4.6 was to Christians who had died. The Gospel had been preached to them for the express purpose that, although like other men they had suffered in their body the doom of death which was God's judgement, they might live in the spirit. Their example was quoted by Peter to stimulate similar faithfulness unto death.(I)

Working with a similar approach, some scholars (2) have seen a parallel here to Paul's encouraging words about Christians who had died before the Lord's Return (I Thess.4.I3).

Other scholars have sought to interpret the "dead" of 4.6. of the spiritually dead.

The author believes that it is most natural to follow Cranfield in the view that 4.6 refers back to 3.I9. The men who perished in the Flood are singled out for special mention because they were notorious sinners.(3)

The Character of the Preaching

Bo Reicke has an interesting account of the various interpretations of the "preaching" of Christ:(4)

a) Christ offered salvation. b) He called to repentance.

c) He confirmed a sentence of damnation.

d) "He told them the secret of the Gospel, quite generally without any information of their release".

e) "He showed them His true glory, so that they were put to shame".

Bo Reicke rejects the first three interpretations. One wonders about his grounds for doing so, in view of his assumption,

(I) Op.cit., 484.
(2) E.g. Selwyn (op.cit., 337 & 339).
(3) Op.cit., I02. In Heb.I2.23 we have πνεῦμα of human spirits.
(4) Op.cit., II9.

which he feels is reasonable, that κηρύσσω in 3.I9 has its usual New Testament meaning - "to preach or proclaim the Gospel". The Gospel here is Christ's communication of "the secret about Himself as the humbly suffering, and thereby victorious Messiah". (I)

This must be questioned. In our study of the use of κηρύσσω in Mark I3, we followed Cranfield in the view that Gospel proclamation involves a witness to God's goodness (i.e. a witness on behalf of God), and a witness to men that is aimed at their conversion, but a witness that will mean their judgement if they do not receive it.(2) Bo Reicke's account of the Gospel in the above passages reminds one of Lohmeyer's exposition of δεῖ κηρυχθῆναι in Mark I3.I0 as "a moment of the apocalyptic drama".(3) The only difference in Bo Reicke's view is that the main Actor was not an angel but Christ Himself. This restriction of the meaning of κηρύσσω is doubtful. κηρύσσω in the usual sense implies the possibility to repent. Gospel knowledge is not merely knowledge about the Christ-secret, but of the possibility to respond to that secret under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Further, Bo Reicke seems to destroy the force of his own excellent exposition of 3.I9 and 4.6. by this restriction of the meaning of κηρύσσω . He links 3.I9 and 4.6, viewing 3.I9 as referring to the universality of redemption and 4.6 to the universality of judgement. He writes:

"...the thesis in iv.6 must have the purpose to give an argument for the preceding assertion of the approaching general judgement, by stating that also the dead have had an opportunity to hear the Gospel, in Hades, so that they can be judged immediately.

Here..the thought must be implied that the Gospel is to be communicated to all beings so that the Judgement can be performed

(I) Op.cit., I20.
(2) Thesis, 36.
(3) Thesis 32.

on the basis of everybody's attitude to the Gospel...we have good reason to direct the attention to what we stated regarding iii.I9, that this verse implies the principle of a universal mission, a universal evangelization".(I)

Can it be claimed in any worthwhile sense that 3.I9 refers to a "universal evangelization" if the Evangel implied no good news for the congregation that could be taken home personally with salvation as the outcome, but only the communication of a secret?

Selwyn has a more consistent treatment of the use of κηρύσσω in 3.I9. κηρύσσω usually refers "to the Gospel and its offer of salvation, to which the appropriate response is repentance". Selwyn, however, discards this positive use of the verb and postulates a "neutral meaning", on the analogy of Revelation 5.2, where it is used of angelic proclamation. Christ proclaimed the subjection of these angelic powers: "...the day of their rule was ended...as Noah had been delivered from destruction to become the recipient of God's first covenant with men, so now the Christian Church was redeemed through baptism into the liberty of a new moral and spiritual life over which sin was no longer to dominate, and of which Christ's resurrection was the guarantee".

Selwyn points out that this subjection was a vital matter, as in parts of Asia Minor it was believed that the angelic powers were in rivalry to Christ.(2)

It must be acknowledged that if κηρύσσω can have a neutral meaning in one passage it may have it in another, but as this is not the usual meaning, there is no good reason to decline the usual meaning in 3.I9 and 4.6.(3)

The Success of the Preaching

(I) Op.cit., 208-209.
(2) The First Epistle of St.Peter, 200.
(3) Similarly Cranfield (op.cit., I03); Salmond (op.cit., 464 and 484); C.Bigg (The Epistles of St.Peter and St.Jude in I.C.C., Edinburgh I90I, I62.)

Two opposite tendencies may be confidently rejected:

I) There is no case here for dogmatic universalism.

Some have given the impression that this great apostle of hope was laying a foundation for the "Larger Hope" that ultimately all men would be saved.

Orr is fully justified in speaking of the "slender foundation on which to build so vast a structure".(I) The author is also in fundamental agreement with the comments of both Bo Reicke and Selwyn in dismissing the "Larger Hope". Of 3.I9 Bo Reicke says: "It does not say that the spirits were released from prison, it does not say that all or some of them became believers".(2)

Selwyn remarks that

"it is not a question of doubting the charity of the Epistle, which stands out on every page",

but whether these passages can properly be used to decide the range of the Christian hope.

"...Scripture faces men with a very terrible alternative to its promises of salvation after death. With these promises and warnings, the teaching of I Peter is fully in keeping, while it makes no significant addition to them".(3)

There are points in the context which tend to clip the wings of the "Larger Hope", preventing it from soaring to the view that all will be saved. In 3.20b-2I, we have two contrasts: between the eight who were saved in the Flood and the multitude that perished; and between the tiny Christian Church and the vast pagan world.(4) We are reminded of Matthew 7.I4 and 22.I4.

2) There is no case for a dogmatic denial of everything that has been associated with the thought of the "Larger Hope". There is, in fact, no cause for anything dogmatic.

Even a conservative evangelical like James Orr maintains of these verses:

"...the suggestions they offer are not to be neglected".(5)

(I) Op.cit., 345.
(2) Op.cit., I2I.
(3) The First Epistle of St.Peter, 357-359.
(4) "The sum of what is said is this," comments Calvin (op.cit., II6),"that the world has always been full of unbelievers, but that the godly ought not to be terrified by their vast number".
(5) Op.cit., 345.

Cranfield has this excellent summary of the teaching of 3.I9:

"The best thing is to realize that we encounter here a mystery...It is a hint within the canon of Scripture that the atoning efficacy of Christ's death was available to those who died in paganism in the ages before Christ, and also, surely, a hint that those who in subsequent ages have died without ever having had a real chance to believe in him are not beyond the reach of his saving power".(I)

The author offers the following tentative conclusions:

I) The one sure fact about these passages is that Peter believed that Christ preached to the "spirits in prison".(2)

2) This sure fact will remain for ever a mysterious fact, mysterious because we know so little about it, and because the unseen world must always have a mysterious side to our finite minds.

It is possible that the mystery is more profound for us than it was for the first readers of the Epistle. Bo Reicke suggests that "they had their own conception"of this preaching of Christ "Quite likely on the basis of a certain Christian education".(3) We have already noted that while 2 Thessalonians 2.6 is an exceptionally difficult verse for modern expositors, it was not in the least mysterious to the Thessalonians. These I Peter passages may be another illustration of the same phenomenon.

3) But because this is a mysterious fact we cannot leave it as a "naked fact, an impenetrable unintelligible fact" - to borrow language which Denney used in connection with a certain attitude to the Atonement.(4) We are bound to attempt to relate the fact to the mind of Peter and his readers.

Why did Peter refer to the fact of Christ's preaching? It

(I) Op.cit., I04.
(2) Rendel Harris's emendation which makes Enoch the preacher may be discarded although Moffatt and Schultz accept it. It does not fit into the context, and would not have been suggested apart from the difficulty of the passage.
(3) Op.cit., I25.
(4) Studies in Theology, London I895, I06.

is likely that the practical purpose was uppermost in the mind of this intensely practical man. He presents Christ's Passion with the light of victory playing upon it, light striking in upon the darkest realms beyond the grave to people who might need the inspiration of such convictions in the dread hour of persecution and death.

The possibility of persecution demanded such a Faith; and just as clearly the certainty of missionary witness required it. The picture of Christ preaching to the imprisoned spirits may have had force along two lines: to inspire compassion and conviction. Christian missionaries were followers of a compassionate God who had "waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing" (R.V.): they were followers of a Christ whose compassion had run the long dark mile to give a second chance to stubborn sinners. If Christ had counted it worthwhile to preach to these imprisoned spirits they must challenge the darkest shadows of sin in the conviction that the darkness cannot master the Light of the world.

But it would indeed be surprising if Peter had not a theological purpose in speaking of Christ's preaching, even if we grant that it comes second to his practical purpose.

That theological purpose may well have had a soteriological and an eschatological character. In Mark I3.I0 the future significance of the preaching of the Church is in view. In these Petrine passages the retrospective significance of the Atonement suggests that there is hope for those who have never had a real opportunity to respond to the Gospel. The rays of hope reach, not merely forward into the future (as in Mark I3.I0), but backward into the past. Here Fison may well be right in his view that we are to trace the influence of Matthew 24.I4. If so, soteriology runs into eschatology. The End cannot come until all have had an opportunity of hearing the Gospel. The overwhelming weight of Scripture teaches that this opportunity comes during the present lifetime, but these Petrine passages counsel against over-confident generalizations. But mystery remains, and probably will always remain.

2 Peter

There are two passages in 2 Peter of special interest for our study.

2 Peter 3.I2

The phrase σπεύδοντας τὴν παρουσίαν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμέρας demands special attention. It may well be the only verse in the New Testament which speaks specifically of "hastening" the Coming of Christ.

Some scholars have doubted this. They have preferred the rendering, "seeking earnestly" (cf. A.V. - "hasting unto"). Cranfield holds that

> "this general meaning is almost certainly to be preferred...to the meaning 'hastening' (i.e. by repentance and good works causing the Parousia to occur more quickly)".(I)

Many, on the other hand, have found the better sense in "hastening".

R.Brook compared the verse with Acts 3.I9f.: repentance leads to the sending of Christ.(2)

Moffatt saw a link with the same passage in Acts and with the teaching of Jesus. Repentance, prayer and faith can hasten the Advent,

> "for the order of the world is not mechanical but moral, and Jesus had taught that his followers might, as it were, thus shorten the interval of waiting".(3)

It is a matter of interest and importance that so many modern translations have adopted the idea of "hastening"the Coming. (4)

(I) Op.cit., I9I. Similarly C.Maurer in Theologisches Worterbuch zum Neuen Testament, VI, 727, n.7.
(2) Peake's Commentary, 9I5.
(3) The General Epistles (M.N.T.C.) 209-2I0.
Bigg added the "holy behaviour and pieties" of God's children (I Pet.2.I2) to the list of eschatological levers which could bring the great Day nearer. (Op.cit., 298).
(4) See R.V.margin, R.S.V., Moffatt, Wand, Weymouth, New English Tr.

But it has to be acknowledged that doubt remains about the translation of the phrase.

We are now in the position to appreciate more fully the wisdom of Warren's view that if the idea of hastening the Kingdom were based on this text alone, it would be resting on a precarious foundation. But, as we have sought to demonstrate, it does not stand or fall with one passage: it seems to be taught or presupposed in many passages.

The Problem of the Delayed Parousia (3.I-I3)

The attitude to the problem of the delayed Parousia has bearing on the general positions of our study.

It is significant that we can find no traces in this late work of any de-eschatologising tendencies on the lines involved in the argument of the Consistent Eschatologists. Rather the problem of the delayed Parousia is treated as an unreal problem. It is, in short, only a problem to those who are inept in recognizing the ways of the Lord. God's ways are not man's ways, and His time is not man's time (3.8). It is His compassion, and not His forgetfulness or His powerlessness, that is behind the delay of the Parousia. He wants to leave ample room for repentance (3.9).

This stress on the compassion of God reminds us forcibly of what has already been said in I Peter of God's longsuffering patiently waiting in the days of Noah, and of a compassionate Christ, preaching to imprisoned spirits. The End is conditioned, not by any rigid temporal considerations, but by the love of God. Compassionate Christian preaching is the corollary of this picture of the compassion of God. If repentance, prayer, faith and holy living may hasten the Parousia, so may preaching.

Here we do not find a writer falling over backwards to correct mistakes in the primitive Christian view. On the contrary,we find familiar notes: the Lord will come as a thief (3.I0); and so there is a need of preparation. The only

adequate preparation is holy living (3.II-I4). Cranfield comments most pertinently:

> "These verses..suggest that the early Church as a whole had interpreted the nearness of the Parousia less unimaginatively than the scoffers - and some modern New Testament scholars".(I)

There is only one adequate explanation: in the discipline of work, prayer and preaching, the early Church had the secret of keeping her spiritual temperature at the right level. While she sought to hasten the Parousia, her temperature could not soar to the fever of the fanatic who consulted his time-calendar, and did little else; and it could not sink to the coldness of those who had never caught the glimpse of an eternal world which might break in at any moment.

(I) Op.cit., I88.

Chapter 6

Eschatology and Mission in Revelation

There is a most radical diversity of approach to Revelation. Some would deny it a place in the record of Christian revelation, and would maintain that its native world is the world of contemporary Jewish apocalyptic.

The name of C.H.Dodd has been associated with one of the most trenchant and far-reaching attacks on Revelation. It is easy to understand Dodd's antipathy to Revelation. If there is one book in the New Testament which brings into prominence the futuristic element in eschatology, it is Revelation. Throughout the history of the Church it has been the happy hunting ground of those who have sought to unfold the pattern of things to come, expounding its significance as a preview of the events at the End of the age. The first verse explains the book as an unfolding of "things which must shortly come to pass"; while the book ends with a promise of the speedy Coming of Christ (22.20). Dodd takes a serious view of this concentration on the future:

> "...We must judge that this excessive emphasis on the future has the effect of relegating to a secondary place just those elements of the Gospel which are most distinctive of Christianity - the faith that in the finished work of Christ God has already acted for the salvation of men, and the blessed sense of living in the divine presence here and now...This line of development led into a blind alley. In the second century its stream of thought ran out into the barren sands of millenarianism".(I)

Dodd's criticism of Revelation does not merely hinge on the contention that futuristic eschatology has moved into the proper place of realised eschatology: it is much more serious than that. He holds that

> "in its conception of the character of God and His attitude to man the book falls far below the level not only of the teaching of Jesus but of the best parts of the Old Testament ...The God of the Apocalypse can hardly be recognised as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor has the fierce Messiah, whose warriors ride in blood up to their horses bridles, many

(I) The Apostolic Preaching, 87-90.

traits that could recall Him of whom the primitive kerygma proclaimed that He went about doing good..."(I)

Dodd does not say so, but one is left with the impression that if the early Church, after wavering about the inclusion of Revelation in the canon, had made the opposite decision, the loss would not have been serious.

Even scholars who would not go nearly all the way with Dodd are prepared to acknowledge that there are features in Revelation which are very different from the Gospels.

Fison has an interesting discussion of the place of Revelation in the history of the development of Christian eschatology.(2) He sees it as more typical of the eschatological view of the primitive Church than "the daring reconstructions of St Paul and St John". To modern thought Revelation may look like "a throw-back to Judaism". To the primitive Church it may have looked

"more like a logical development of Judaism, introducing the name of Jesus, but otherwise leaving its eschatological outlook largely untouched".

Of the picture of Jesus in Revelation, Fison writes: "All the reticence and reserve of Jesus have completely disappeared".

In its place we are given a "blood and thunder panorama".

Preston and Hanson find it necessary to devote a section in their commentary to the question, "Is Revelation a Christian Book?"(3) They find no suggestion in the book that evil men can be changed (with the exception of 21.24 and 22.2). Nor is there any trace of the forgiving spirit manifest in Jesus' prayer, "Father forgive them..." But they come to the conclusion that Dodd is wrong in claiming that Revelation relegates the work of Christ to the background. On the contrary, it is right in

(1) Op.cit., 89.
(2) The Christian Hope, 146-148.
(3) The Revelation of Saint John the Divine, London 1949, 29-34.

the centre.

"Nowhere in the New Testament is Jesus given higher honour than he is in Revelation. Indeed identical worship is given to him as to the Father (cf. ch.5)."

It is the Lamb, triumphant through self-sacrifice who is "worthy to be the bearer of God's judgements".

Torrance emphasizes even more strongly the Christological setting of the eschatology of Revelation. The Apocalypse is "above all the revelation of Jesus Christ".(I) Its supreme concern is not to unveil calendar events but the bitter conflict between Christ's Kingdom and the kingdoms of this world. It points, not to a judgement, but to the judgement of the Son of Man. The wrath of which the book speaks is, similarly, not some abstract wrath, but the wrath of the Lamb (6.I6), a wrath in which God shows the same loving character which He has revealed in the Lamb of God within history.

Torrance sees "the same Jesus of whom we read in the Gospels", in Revelation, but he too notes that there is a marked difference. In his exposition of the awe-inspiring picture of Jesus in I.I3-I7 he explains the difference by the fact that John now sees Jesus from the Easter-side of Calvary, with all the glory of the Ascension playing upon Him. Until Jesus has been similarly transfigured before our eyes, claims Torrance, we do not truly see Him in His fullness. But while there must be a difference, the Jesus of John's vision is "like unto the Son of Man". "Behind the thunder of the trumpet he hears the gracious voice of Him who spake like no other man...Jesus remains man even as the Lord of glory".(2)

If Revelation is deeply Christocentric, as the present writer believes, the substance is taken from Dodd's criticism. A steady recollection of the symbolical character of many of the

(I) Review of "The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers" by LeRoy E. Froom (Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.6, No.2, 209).
(2) The Apocalypse Today, I5-I7.

terrible pictures drawn will further undermine Dodd's position. It is out of place to give a literal meaning to the picture of the Messiah's warriors wading through a sea of blood. Remarkable pictures meet us on every page of Revelation - "a woman sitting on seven mountains"; a woman in birth-pangs, "clothed with the sun and moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars"; "a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent", etc., etc. No one would dream of taking these details literally. We are dealing in broad impressions, in true apocalyptic fashion. Our Western fastidiousness may dislike the reference to the sea of blood which Dodd has singled out for special comment, and similar references to the fowls of the air eating the flesh of overthrown foes of the Messiah (I9.II-2I), but this does not mean for a moment that the writer was gloating sadistically in these awful details, or that he gave them a literal meaning. In chapter I9 we have, in fact, two warnings this this is not literal war. We are told twice over that the weapon of victory was a sword which "proceeded out of the mouth" of the Conqueror. We have, in short, a vivid picture of a complete victory. The details simply underline the seriousness of the conflict with the forces of sin - a thought which finds parallels throughout the whole New Testament. We need not conclude that John anywhere forgot that the Lamb had shed His blood that the blood of rebels might not be shed in conflict with the holy will of God. These awesome passages remind us of the mystery of iniquity, that sinners are prepared to offer "resistance unto blood" to the self-sacrificing love of the Crucified. This is no "fierce Messiah", but a Messiah who cannot condone sin.

Chapter 6

The most interesting passage in Revelation for a study of Eschatology and Mission is chapter 6. Charles has argued for the

dependence of this chapter on Mark I3, Matthew 24 and Luke 2I.(I)

Cullmann, in expounding 6.I-6, gives great prominence to the rider on the white horse. He holds that he has the task of proclaiming the Gospel as a sign of the End, even as the judgements associated with the other horsemen are signs of the End:

"As a last offer of salvation it (i.e. preaching) runs parallel to all those terrors which are specifically connected with a particular form of men's wickedness".(2)

Cullmann supports his interpretation by the reference in II.3 to the witnesses who prophesy, and also by I4.6f., which speaks of the angel with the eternal Gospel giving to all nations a last call to repent. The Gospel must be preached before the End.(3)

In his exegesis of 6.I-6, Cullmann makes the following points:

a) It is difficult to hold that the first horseman shares the sinister appearance of the others.

b) White, in Revelation, is a heavenly attribute, and so we must doubt if the role of this rider is to scatter destruction, as is true of the other riders.

c) "The crown...gives to him the character of a beneficent power".

d) "Conquer",in Revelation, does not refer to conquering through violence, but to victorious divine action.

e) If this horseman is held to refer to some hostile power (the Romans or the Parthians), it would mean that he would have the same task as the rider on the red horse.

f) I9.IIff. gives us the best clue to the meaning of the first horseman. The figure of that passage has the task of preaching the world wide Gospel.

"He is called faithful and true; the name by which he is called is the Word of God".

(I) Revelation Vol.I (I.C.C.) Edinburgh I920, I58-I60.
(2) Christ and Time, I6I.
(3) Op.cit., I6I-I62.

There are grounds for contesting all these points.

a) It is difficult to hold that, unlike the others, the first rider has not a sinister appearance.

The four horses clearly recall Zechariah's four horses (I.8ff., and 6.I-8), patrolling the earth to execute judgement upon Babylon, Egypt and the other heathen nations of the world.

It is probably wrong to emphasize, as some have done, that the bow is a less ominous weapon than the sword of the second rider. The bow is a fearsome enough weapon in passages like Isaiah 5.26ff., Jeremiah 50.I4 etc. We are possibly meant to think of the terrible use made of the bow by the dreaded Parthians, whose victory under Volagases over the Romans in 62 had proved them a force to be reckoned with. Kiddle says, surely rightly, that the horse

"represents a conqueror's power, for dragoons were to that age what bombing aeroplanes are to our own".(I)

Against the background of Zechariah it seems unlikely that the first rider fulfils a role that is radically different from that of the others.

b) "White" need not refer exclusively to divine victory. Kiddle, Swete, Charles, Beasley-Murray, E.F.Scott, and C.A.Scott all see a reference to human conquest.

c) It is obvious that a crown can be a symbol of ruthless power rather than of beneficence. It all depends on the character of the person who wears the crown.

d) The interpretation of "conquering and to conquer" need not involve that the first rider is a divine figure or a human figure in sympathy with the divine purpose. The whole of Revelation teaches that the final victory will not be won by human violence but by the sacrificial love of God. The terrible forces of Revelation 6 are subject to the overruling power of God, and are being manipulated by Him for His own glorious purposes.

(I) The Revelation of St.John (M.N.T.C), London I940, II4.

Preston and Hanson speak of the events of 6.I-8 as "brilliant little vignettes of God's judgements working out in history".(I) The Seven Seals introduce us to a "Theology of Power". Power may be abused in history but history remains the history of God's working. By denying the power of God and enthroning their own power, men bring upon themselves suffering of every description - the finger of God's judgement imprinted on the sands of time.

e) If this is a general picture of terror, there is no reason the first rider should not have the same general task as the second.

f) There is very much more substance in Cullmann's exposition of the first rider in the light of I9.IIff.

The figure in I9.IIff. clearly refers to Christ. He is"called Faithful and True".(Cf. Jo.I4.6). "In righteousness He doth judge". "His eyes were as a flame of fire".(Cf.Rev.I.I4). "Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword".(Cf.Rev.I.I6). "His name is called the Word of God". (Cf. Jo.I.I).

Again, the first rider is similar to Christ in that he rides on a white horse and wears a crown.

Many expositors have argued that such similarities suggest an identification of the first horseman with Christ.(2)

The similarities can be exaggerated and the differences must not be overlooked. The first rider has one crown; the Rider of I9.II has"many crowns". The first rider carries a bow; Christ carries the sword of the Word. Strictly speaking, as has been pointed out again and again, the two riders have nothing in common except the white horse, a point which supplies exceedingly slender evidence for tracing an identity between the

(I) Op.cit., 79.
(2) Charles (op.cit., I64) lists the following: Victorinus, Primasius, Bede, Bullinger, Paraeus, Grotius, Vitringa, Düsterdieck, B.Weiss.
H.R.Boer (op.cit., I00) also follows this interpretation.

two.

Further it seems improbable that the One who opens the seals should also be the first rider.

One consideration often brought against the view that both riders are Christ seems to the present writer to have little weight.

"It brings Him on the scene much too early", writes Moffatt (I), "for it is not till a very late point in the development that He enters on His victorious career".

Similarly Swete claims:

"A vision of the victorious Christ would be inappropriate at the opening of a series which symbolizes bloodshed, famine and pestilence".(2)

If our interpretation of the Lamb of God passages is accurate, and if realised eschatology plays an important role in Revelation, the above conclusions do not follow. It is our conviction that for the New Testament in general, including the book of Revelation, Christ "enters on His victorious career" in a most profound sense, at Calvary. Again, if in Mark I3 there is nothing inappropriate about the picture of the preaching of the world-Gospel as a sign of the End, side by side with the very terrors which are mentioned in Revelation, revealing the present and future triumphs of God in the midst of the strongholds of human sin and suffering, there is no need to hold that the picture of the victorious Christ is inappropriate here. We do not, therefore, quarrel with Cullmann's view that preaching can mean "a last offer of salvation" running "parallel to all those terrors which are specifically connected with a particular form of men's wickedness": but the doubt remains if we are entitled to interpret the passage in this fashion.

Torrance would be sure that we are not. He actually sees a symbol, not of Christ, but of Antichrist.

(I) The Revelation of John (The Hartley Lecture for I9I9), 27I.
(2) The Apocalypse of St John, London I907, 86.

"Can there be any doubt", he asks, "that this is the vision of anti-Christ?".

The similarity to Christ of the rider on the white horse is used by Torrance to remind us of Satan's flair for imitating Christ, for turning himself into an angel of light. (See 2 Thess.2.4). The Satanic deception has been dangerously successful.

"That is why the Book of Revelation seems to suggest that the triumphs of the white horse and its rider are bloodless victories".(I)

This is extremely suggestive, and deserves consideration.

The suggestion that the first rider represents the victorious progress of the Gospel has been treated more kindly by many commentators.(2) It seems that this theory comes nearest to Cullmann's own exposition. He does not identify the person of the rider. He seems to be thinking of an abstraction or of the personification of the Christian community.

Moffatt, after touching on the identification of the first rider with Christ, writes:

"More consideration is due to the suggestion that the first rider represents the victorious progress of the Gospel".(3)

Torrey argues with conviction for a similar approach (4):

"The most important factor in the unfolding of these years which must elapse before the End is the vitality of the faithful people, the victorious advance of the Christian Church in spite of terrible opposition...The one seated on the white horse, then,

(I) The Apocalypse Today (Proof Copy) London I960, 52.
(2) Charles (op.cit., I64) lists Hilgenfeld, Zahn, Alford, Kübel, J.Weiss, Andreas, Arethas, Lyra, Ribeira.
(3) He mentions the following points: a) A white horse is common to both riders. b) Both wear a crown or crowns. c) The Gospel is the Word of God; Christ is the Word Incarnate. d) In Mk. I3.7-I0, world wide preaching precedes war, earthquake and famine - the birth pangs of the Messianic age.
(4)Apocalypse of John, New York I958, III-II2.

represents the Church during the interval before the second Coming of the Messiah. No consideration opposes this conclusion".

In addition to some of the points already mentioned, Torrey finds significance in the

"prediction of repeated and enduring victory ('conquering and to conquer')",

and in the bow in the hand of the first rider.

"The Church, however militant, had little to do with bloodshed; the sword was of course reserved for the rider on the red horse".

Torrey pays scant respect to the theory that the first rider suggests the victory of the Parthian armies over the power of Rome. "This is a strange conjecture. The God of Israel had his own plan for the end of Rome, as depicted in Revelation; he did not need the Parthians".

This is rather arbitrary. It is, of course, clear that God has no absolute need either of evil men or of good men. He is not imprisoned in any considerations outside of Himself: but He has seen fit to use both evil men and good men for the furtherance of His plans for all nations. Even "the wrath of man" can be manipulated to serve His lasting praise. God could make use of Parthians, if He cared.

Are there weighty considerations against the interpretation of the first rider in the light of the missionary movement?

Moffatt doubts the relationship between Mark I3 and Revelation 6 on two grounds: a) There is no reference to pestilence in Mark I3. Earthquake, which takes its place, appears in the sixth seal in Revelation.(I)

b) The sequence of the seals in Revelation is natural and does not require explanation by reference to Jesus' eschatological discourse.

a) seems to be slight. While there is no reference to pestilence

(I) The order in Revelation is - I) Wars. 2) International strife. 3) Famine. 4) Pestilence. 5) Persecutions. 6) Earthquakes, eclipse of sun, etc.
The order in Mark I3 is - I) Wars. 2)International strife.3) earthquakes. 4) Famines. 5) Persecution. 6) Eclipses of the sun and moon etc.

in Mark I3, there is a reference in Luke 2I. Again, knowledge of Mark I3 need not imply slavish imitation of the order of its woes.

b) The correspondences between Mark I3 and Revelation 6 are so striking that the influence of the eschatological discourse seems to be the most natural explanation.

Charles, who has no doubt about the influence of the eschatological discourse, also rejects the view that the first rider has a missionary task.

"...there is an essential likeness among the Riders: they clearly belong together, and represent the ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων (Mark I3.8). All four have to do with judgements". (I)

If, however, we accept the influence of the eschatological discourse, it is difficult to see how we can reject the possibility that John was influenced by the sign, which, in our view, is the sign par excellence - the necessity to preach the Gospel throughout the world (Mk.I3.I0). He may have introduced it in the symbolism of the rider on the white horse.

It must be concluded that while there is no decisive consideration against Cullmann's interpretation, there is no decisive consideration to support it. The interpreter cannot forget the extreme difficulties in interpreting this highly symbolical book, and the alternative interpretations of the passage, which cannot be excluded. Many gifted commentators, after weighing all the evidence, prefer to believe that the four riders give a general portrayal of the last judgements. The radical contrast between Cullmann and Torrance in the approach to the first rider counsels the necessity of caution.

If the eschatological motivation for world mission rested on this passage alone, the foundation would be questionable. It cannot be claimed that Cullmann's theory is more than

(I) Op.cit., I64.

attractive possibility.

But the similarities between Mark I3 and Revelation do not rest on one passage whose exegesis is uncertain. There are broad similarities in the picture of the Church appearing in both sources. The main correspondences are as follows:

I) A witnessing Church. 2) A Church, persecuted but destined to triumph. 3) An expectant Church. 4) A Church whose expectancy is firmly grounded in history.

I) A Witnessing Church

It is clear that witness-bearing plays an important role in Revelation. The word μαρτυρία (or other cognate forms) appears nine times. The writing of the book was itself a witness-bearing act (I.2). It was witnessing to Jesus which had caused John's imprisonment on Patmos. The martyred souls beneath the altar had met their deaths through witness (6.9). The only man other than the author who is mentioned in the book is Antipas "my faithful witness" (2.I3).

Witness just as clearly appears on a world canvas. John's "glorious universalism" (Moffatt) sees Christ's redemption reaching to "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (5.9). To John, the triumph of God is not merely a triumph through individual conversions; it is a cosmic triumph enfolding every nation and every part of the universe. It is not merely a triumph in some distant heaven while the merry-go-round of evil spins defiantly on its way; it is a triumph on earth. The power of Rome will give way to the power of Christ. The kingdoms of this world will

"become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever" (II.I5. cf.2I.24-26; 22.2 & I7).

Let us now examine some passages of especial interest.

The Two Witnesses(II.3-I3)

There is the divergence of exposition which one learns to expect in the study of Revelation. One witness is usually understood to be Elijah, the other, Moses, or Jeremiah or Enoch.(I)

Theechoes of the Old Testament in vv.5-6 seem to favour Elijah and Moses. The fire reminds us of 2 Kings I.I0f.; the ability to prevent rain,of I Kings I7.I; the turning of the waters to blood and the plagues, of Exodus 7. Then the strong tradition that Elijah would appear before the Messiah's coming (Mal.4.5), supports the reference to Elijah. There was a similar tradition that he would be accompanied by Moses.

The author believes that the best interpretation is that the witnesses represent the missionary activity of the whole Church.(2)

This is suggested by the following details:

a) The beast makes war on the witnesses (v.7). This is strongly reminiscent of the attack on the world Church in I3.7. It would be rather odd to think of the beast making war on two individuals.

b) Men from the whole world view their dead bodies (v.9).

c) The witnesses are represented by lamp-stands and by olive trees. We are reminded of the seven lamp-stands in chapter I which refer to the seven Churches, and of Zechariah's vision of two olive trees on either side of the golden lampstand (chapter 4). To John, apparently, the lamp-stands and the olive trees portray the Church in its prophetic capacity.

It seems to the author that this passage furthers Cullmann's view of the importance of mission in the eschatolcgical

(I) Bousset favours the tradition that they were Elijah and Enoch. (Offenbarung des Johannes, 383.)
(2) So Beasley-Murray (New Bible Commentary, II82); Swete (op.cit.,I34).

scheme much more impressively than the rider on the white horse. The reference to witness is much more obvious. The following points are especially interesting:

a) The remarkable picture of the power of the witnesses and their immortality until their task is done (vv.5-6) reminds one of the divinely-grounded necessity of witness in Mark I3.I0.

b) The fate of the witnesses at the hands of Jew and Gentile "when they shall have finished their testimony" (v.7), recalls the references to persecution in Mark I3, The heaviness of the persecution comes out in the reference to three and a half days - corresponding to the three and a half years of the witnesses' prophesying. Swete speaks of the "days" of persecution as

"a short triumph in point of fact, but long enough to bear the semblance of being complete and final".(I)

To use the figure of John II.9: the "day" of witness during which the witnesses cannot stumble is followed by a "night" of persecution, but the night must give way to the dawn of God's final victory. John echoes Ezekiel 37.I0 to speak of God's quickening power promoting the witnesses to heavenly exaltation (vv.II-I2). It is natural to compare the Son of Man coming in glory with His angels and Church (Mk.I3.26-27).

c) The earthquake of v.I3 finds a possible parallel in Mark I3.8. Swete interprets this to mean

"the breaking up of the old pagan life which would follow the foreseen victory of the faith".(2)

The prophets used earthquakes to symbolize great social and spiritual upheavals.(3)

d) The outcome of the ministry of the witnesses in some form of repentance is noteworthy. The force of "the remnant gave glory

(I) Op.cit., I38.
(2) Op.cit., I40.
(3) See e.g. Ezek.37.7; 38.I9; Haggai 2.6; Rev.I6.I8.

to the God of heaven", has been variously interpreted. It has been maintained that "repentance" is the incorrect word to use of this reaction of fear.(I) But there are clear cases of the use of the expression of genuine repentance.(2)

Charles sees a reference (in the fashion of Romans II.25,26) to the conversion of Israel to Christianity in the last days.(3) The restriction to Israel is doubtful. The presuppositions of the passage seem to be universal.

It may be said, in conclusion, that the passage seems to give strong support to the belief that the End cannot come until all men have been given an opportunity to repent in response to the Gospel.

The Angel with "an Everlasting Gospel" (I4.6-20)

A devastating array of commentators can be marshalled to warn us that this is not the Gospel in the normal sense.(4)

Kiddle writes most emphatically:

"John did not believe in last-minute conversions. The angel's eternal gospel was not good news for the inhabitants of earth, at least, not for the great majority of them. It was not a last warning to the wicked...There is now no hope for them".(5)

(I) Kiddle, op.cit., 206.
(2) Rev.I6.9; Josh.7.I9; Jer.I3.I6.
(3) Op.cit., 292.
(4) E.g. Charles (op.cit., Vol.2, I2):" εὐαγγέλιον here is not to be translated as if it were τὸ εὐαγγέλιον "; Moffatt (op.cit., 337): "It is not the Gospel itself which is intended, but the announcement which the angel makes"; Swete (op.cit., I8I-I82): "St.John has in view not the Gospel as a whole, but rather a Gospel which is a particular aspect of it, the Gospel of the Parousia...The Angel's call seems to be the reverse of a Gospel; it announces that judgement is imminent, and summons the pagan world to repentance;" Preston and Hanson (op.cit., IOI): "This EVERLASTING GOSPEL is not, apparently, the gospel of the life, death and resurrection of Christ"
(5) Op.cit.,278.

It is difficult to accept this excision of the Gospel as the"power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth". It is clear, of course, that the judgement motif is primary in the passage which gives us an awe-inspiring picture of the Day of Wrath, but this does not mean that there is no Gospel in the normal sense.

The context gives us, not merely a picture of those who perish in the judgement of God, but also a picture of "the dead which die in the Lord" (v.I3).

The whole passage gives us a vision of the hour of crisis and judgement. Will men worship the Creator or the creatures which come out of the sea (chapter I3)? It is quite gratuitous to hold, with Kiddle, that the passage presents no hope for the wicked. The contrast between this passage and the "Gospel" in the Four Gospels can easily be overdrawn. We cannot forget how inextricably the element of judgement is woven into all the Gospels. The Fourth Gospel especially teaches that judgement takes place inexorably in the presence of Jesus, a judgement that is both present and future.(I)

Anderson Scott finds a close parallel between the use of "Gospel" in Revelation I4.6 and in Mark I.I4-I5:

"Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ...repent ye, and believe the Gospel".

"In both cases", writes Scott, "the near approach of the Divine event was the 'good news'; and those who received it as such would testify thereto by showing repentance and the fear of God, and worshipping Him in faith".(2)

There is no reason to deny the parallel. The difference in emphasis must, of course, be acknowledged. The divine event in in Mark I.I4-I5 is the divine presence in grace, while in Rev. I4.6ff. it is the divine presence in glory.

We may conclude, therefore, that there are no grounds for

(I) 3.I8; I2.47-48.
(2) The Book of the Revelation, 258.

excluding "good news" from the angelic proclamation. If there is still a possibility of repentance, that very possibility is "good news".(I)

The Supreme Witness (chapter I9)

Chapter I9 refers to the rejoicings of heaven at the marriage of the Lamb, and to the final battle between the Lamb and His adversaries.

In the majestic vision of the rider on the white horse (I9.II-20), we have a reminder that human witness and angelic witness alike depend on the witness of Christ Himself. In a unique sense He is the "faithful witness" (I.5). He is "called Faithful and True" (I9.II). He is the Word of God (I9.I3). The blood-stained clothing of the Rider (dipped not in the blood of His enemies, in contrast to Isaiah 63.Iff., but in His own blood), sets forth strikingly that this Figure moving towards a crushing final victory over His foes has accepted the sacrificial death of Calvary, not for His friends but for His enemies.

The solemn symbolism of the passage underlines the urgency of the call to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Those who hear the call are truly blessed (v.9), and those who reject it face a fearful doom.

Verse I0 brings out forcibly the nature of the Christian call. Torrey holds that this is a most important verse and complains that its meaning has not been understood by commentators. He makes two points: a) The words of the angel indicate that we are dealing with written prophecy and that it is claimed that there is a place for this book in canonical Jewish Scripture.

b) More significantly, John's book deserves this honoured place because of its testimony to Jesus. "The testimony of Jesus

(I) Similarly Swete (op.cit., I82-I83): "Yet there is a gospel in the implied fact that repentance is still possible, and the very judgement that impends promises a new order which is the hope both of the Church and of the world".

is the spirit of prophecy". He must have thought that his testimony was in the tradition of the testimony to Jesus in the Four Gospels. John's Gospel is echoed in the reference to Jesus as the Word of God.

"The proximity of this title to vs. I0 may be purely accidental", writes Torrey, "but it is far more likely that when the Apocalyptist wrote this verse it suggested to him the glorious witness borne by John's Gospel - a true 'prophecy'".(I

Such an understanding of the role of Revelation seems basic in the proper understanding of the book. John is in the succession of Hebrew prophets. Their witness was forward-looking to a Messiah who was to come (I Pet.I.II). The hall-mark of New Testament prophecy is that it witnesses to Christ. Such prophecy is impossible without the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit (I Cor.I2.3).

The prophecy of John, in conformity with all prophecy, is a call to personal contact with Christ the Word of God, who alone can bring men close to God.

The reference to the marriage of the Lamb reminds us, (and was probably meant to remind all Christian readers), of Jesus' parable about the marriage of the king's son (Matt.22.I-I4). People who believed in the solemn realities of which chapter I9 speaks, must have been impressed with the urgency of the task to go out into the highways to invite all men to the wedding feast. They must have echoed the gracious invitation which appears towards the end of the book:

"Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (22.I7).

Such an invitation is sufficient evidence to make us extremely chary of the view that John was a prophet of doom who saw little hope for the wicked. For the precise reason that his testimony was testimony to Jesus he could not jettison hope. Witness, therefore, in Revelation, is no conventional milestone

(I) Op.cit., I5I-I52.

on an eschatological road, but a passionate invitation to come to a Jesus who could satisfy the soul-thirst of any man.

2) A Persecuted Church

World-wide persecution is one of the chief themes of the Apocalypse. John himself was imprisoned in Patmos because of his Faith (I.9). Antipas had been martyred for the same Faith (2.I3); and there will be many more martyrs. We have a vision of a beast coming out of the sea

"to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given unto him over all kindreds, and tongues and nations" (I3.7).

We have many references to wholesale martyrdom (e.g. 6.9-II; 7.9-I7; I6.6; I7.6; I8.24).

Scholars vary about the date and historical circumstances of Revelation. The majority favour 95-96 A.D. towards the end of Domitian's reign, when persecution against Christians broke out, on a scale which brought persecution to Asia for the first time. Domitian took the claim to divinity more seriously than any of his predecessors. State officials had to call him "our Lord and God". Some of his own Christian relatives were executed for refusing to take part in Emperor-worship. John saw the issue uncompromisingly. No man who confessed "Jesus is Lord" could also say "Caesar is Lord". This was a fight to the death which was part of a larger issue - the division of mankind between obedience to Christ or Antichrist.

Other notable scholars prefer an earlier date in the reign of Nero(I) or Galba(2).

The differences about the date need not concern us. There can

(I) E.g. Westcott and Hort.
(2) So Torrey (op.cit., 58-59).

be no doubt about the importance of the forecasts of persecution. John had a clear pastoral purpose. He did not write to satisfy curiosity about coming events. Rather he said to his fellow Christians: "Be warned. Stand fast, and you will inherit a glorious future. Renounce your Faith and your Lord, and you will feel the weight of the divine judgement which will strike against all the enemies of our God and of His Christ. The darkness of persecution may be chilling, but a glorious dawn will certainly break through".

3) An Expectant Church

The near-expectancy of the Parousia is unbroken in Revelation. We have no elements to correspond to "The End is not yet", of Mark I3.7. In the very first chapter the urgent message comes: "The hour of fulfilment is at hand...Behold, he is coming with the clouds" (New English Tr. of I.3 & 7).

In the last chapter, the Church sends heavenwards the Spirit-breathed prayer, "Come", and calls on all who hear that prayer to marshal their own deepest longings behind it (22.I7). That prayer calls forth the response of the Coming Lord, "I come quickly". In the profound dialogue of prayer the reply comes instantly, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"(22.20). The preciousness of Maranatha could not be underlined more heavily.

Barrett speaks of the use of liturgical means in the Apocalypse "to re-express the eschatological faith of primitive Christianity".(I) He bases this upon the view of many scholars that Revelation mirrors the liturgical practice of the primitive Church.

E.F.Scott, e.g. writes:

"...a cardinal place is given to the worship in Heaven which is the pattern for that of the Church on earth...The earthly Church is likewise represented as praising God

(I) Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.6, No.3, 238.

in song..."

Some of these songs "may be taken from the actual psalmody of the Church...The atmosphere of worship hangs everywhere about the book which was intended to form part of a Church service".(I)

Commenting on this type of view Barrett says: "...in its worship the Church retains and renews the tension originally formulated in the hope of a speedy parousia; Revelation itself preserved this hope, but it also helped to make possible a Christian faith without it".

If Barrett's statement only implied that the time-calendar of the primitive Church required adjustment it would be unexceptionable, but his reference to the re-expression of the eschatological faith of primitive Christianity in liturgical terms seems to imply more than that, ie. the introduction of wiser and more permanent overtones.

We must surely hold that the Parousia-hope is as vital in liturgical worship as in sacramental worship, which must retain the eschatological emphasis "till He come" if it is to remain in recognizable relation to the New Testament. Liturgical and sacramental worship alike require the inspiration which flows from the thought of the coming victory of Christ.

It is, of course, important to maintain that eschatology needs a context of worship in which justice will be done to the whole gamut of Christian theology. Without such a context there is a direct road to one-sidedness and fanaticism: but it can equally be claimed that worship needs the tension that is supplied by eschatology.

While the near-expectancy of the Parousia in Revelation occurs in a more pronounced form than in many New Testament writings, we have noted repeatedly how similar convictions pervade the New Testament.

(I) The Book of Revelation, London 1939, 138-142.

The author is convinced that Barth's belief that Naherwartung is crucial for the Church in every generation is helpful in the understanding of the Parousia-faith of Revelation, and of every other New Testament book. The nearer a person comes to Christ, the nearer does the Parousia appear to be. When God acted decisively in Christ, the Second Coming was brought near, for all His acts in Christ are one. The interpretation of the "nearness" of the Coming in chronological terms alone, misses a level of truth that is very satisfying and very true to many New Testament passages.

Preston and Hanson finish their commentary on Revelation with this fine reference to the timeless significance of the Parousia-faith of Revelation:

"...it bids us believe in an active, living God...a God who has played the decisive part in history when he sent Jesus Christ among us, and in whose ultimate control of events lies our sole confidence. Only if we hold this faith can we retain any real hope in this present world, and answer courageously with John: 'Come, Lord Jesus'".(I)

4) A Church whose expectancy is firmly grounded in history

Even as we find realised eschatology in Mark I3, and throughout the New Testament, we find it in Revelation.

The Lamb of God

We must never forget that John's futuristic convictions were strongly influenced by his view of the supreme demonstration of God's love in the past. The importance of the conception of the Lamb of God is seen by the fact that it occurs no fewer than 29 times in the book. It is surely no accident that in the doxology

(I) Op.cit., I45.

at the very beginning of the book we are introduced to John's view of the importance of the death of Christ:

"To him who loves us and freed us from our sins with his life's blood, who made of us a royal house, to serve as the priests of his God and Father (New English Tr. of I.5-6).

The love of Christ is a present force (τῷ ἀγαπῶντι ἡμᾶς): but its chief demonstration is seen in the liberating deed of the Cross which delivered from sin (λύσαντι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ).

Sometimes the Lamb appears as a victim; sometimes as a triumphant leader (spiritual or military).(I) While the latter thought is characteristic of Jewish apocalyptic, the former certainly is not. E.F.Scott sees John's transformation of the triumphant Messiah into the Lamb as his "grand innovation on all apocalyptic thought".(2) The role of the victor and the victim are combined in the picture of the Lamb standing

"as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes" (5.6). Ἀρνίον ὡς ἐσφαγμένον points to the finished work of the Cross (cf. the aorists ἐσφάγης καὶ ἠγόρασας (5.9). ἑστηκὸς (5.6) reminds us that the Lamb is not dead but "has the virtue of its death in it". (Denney).(3)

The horns and the eyes symbolize power and knowledge. This is a victorious Lamb (cf.I7.I4).

It is because of this sacrificial triumphant death that all power belongs to the Lamb. It throws the most significant light upon the work of Providence in history.

"It is really a pictorial way of saying that redeeming love is the last reality in the universe" (Denney)(4)

In this same sacrificial love the persecuted can find the power to endure even unto death (I2.II).

(I) So Charles, op.cit., Vol.I, cxiii.
(2) Op.cit., II8.
(3) The Death of Christ, London I9II, I77.
(4) Op.cit., I78.

Revelation, therefore, ascribes a once-for-all character to the blood of the Lamb, and, at the same time, a progressive influence causing members of the "people of priests" to grow up into the likeness of Jesus whose mightiest witness was the deed of the Cross.

Denney rightly points out that this is an appreciation of the death of Christ "in the language of worship" and that we have no right to expect the "dialectic treatment" which we find in Paul's writings.(I)

A steady recollection of the importance of the Lamb in Revelation will save us from three mistakes:

I) The view that Revelation is exclusively concerned with futuristic eschatology.

2) The claim that the Jesus of Revelation is a fierce Messiah, lacking in the compassion of the Gospels.

E.F.Scott believes that much injustice has been done to Revelation by forgetting its theme:

"It does not profess to deal with the Person or the teaching or even the redemptive work of Christ. It deals with Christ as the Protector and Avenger of the Church".(2)

But the book never forgets that this mighty Protector is the Lamb of God who founded the Church by His death, and whose death exerts a magnetic appeal on men of every nation.

3) The belief that there is no trace of the authentic Christian forgiving spirit in the book.

We have already noted the comments of Preston and Hanson in this connection.(3)

But if John believed that Christ died to liberate men from sin and that His death had universal significance, it is difficult to imagine that he would not have been swift to maintain the Christian duty of forgiveness, if the point had been put to him. Again, we have to remind ourselves of the

(I) Op.cit., I8I.
(2) Op.cit., II5.
(3) Thesis, 253.

theme of the book. It is not a Gospel sermon, and it is not written for some community of quarrelling unforgiving Christians; it sets forth Christ's care of His Church, and His grip on human history. That grip had been taken at the Cross, and it would never be relaxed until the End.

The Millennium

Torrance also uses the concept of the millennium to demonstrate how thoroughly the Church's expectancy is grounded in history. In his exposition of Revelation 20, which shows the ihfluence of both Augustine and Calvin, we see both realised and unrealised eschatology.

Points of especial interest are:

a) "Millennium...is the most potent eschatological image for the finished and glorious work of Christ, for the fulfilled but hidden Kingdom".(I)

We have a symbolic reference to Jesus' description of Himself as Alpha and Omega. The Hebrew Aleph is represented by I000,and Omega is the symbol for infinity.

b) The vision of chapter 20 gives us "the silver lining" behind history, history from the divine standpoint.

In chapter I9 we see the beast and the false prophet clashing in history with the mighty Rider on the white horse. But they are no more than an "incarnation" of the dragon, the devil, who is behind them. Chapter 20 gives us a glimpse of the real nature of the struggle in history: the devil is on a chain; Christ reigns now.

c) The binding of the devil (20.2) is interpreted in the light of the binding of the strong man by the Stronger, in Matthew I2.29.

d) Time is moving towards a climax. The devil will be loosed again (20.7-8), "for God insists on bringing all the work of

(I) Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.6, No.2, 2I0.

evil to a head". There will be a "final desperate attempt on the part of Satan to delude the nations".(I) But this will be countered by a crushing, final divine victory (20.9).

"One day the husk of sinful time will be rent and millennium-time, Kingdom-of-God time, shall be revealed in union with eternity".(2)

e) The Church shares in the reign of Christ by witnessing to Him and suffering with Him. This is what is meant by the "first resurrection" (20.5-6). This is the parallel in Revelation to the thought of Galatians 2.20.

Torrance's exposition makes excellent sense in the light of the teaching of the rest of Revelation and of the New Testament. We are left with something creative, and relevant for Christian thought in every generation.

There have been radically different reactions to Revelation 20.

One almost senses the embarassment in Salmond's allusion to "this peculiar anticipation of the end".

We have already noted Dodd's evident dislike of "the barren sands of millennarianism".

Others show a keen interest in the millennium, but it is the interest of the antiquary. The millennium becomes a deposit on the Christian shore left by the tide of Jewish apocalyptic thought. Its proper place is the museum, and it can have little influence and little authority in the thought of the Church.

Preston and Hanson write:

"The doctrine of the millennium...cannot be regarded as having great authority".(3)

Much has been written about the peculiarity of the idea from the Christian standpoint.(4)

The fact that the millennium in Torrance's exposition is not an oddity does not prove the reliability of the exposition. It is

(I) The Apocalypse Today, I70.
(2) Op.cit., I66.
(3) Op.cit., I24.
(4) So Kiddle (op.cit., 39I & 398): "The whole of verses I-I0... bears a strangely remote appearance to readers of a later age".

at least theoretically possible that the millennium is a foreign body in the general pattern of New Testament eschatology. But the feasibility of that construction must also be closely examined.

We now have to consider the possibility of Torrance's symbolical interpretation of the millennium.

The Literal Interpretation of the Millennium

Many scholars hold that a literal interpretation of the millennium is the only possible interpretation. They think that John believed in a literal reign on earth for a 1000 years.

Within the general framework of this literal approach there are vast differences in interpretation.

I) The millennium is a literal fact which is part of Christian eschatological belief.(1)

2) The millennium was a literal fact in John's mind, but it cannot have this significance for the world Church.

Many scholars have explained the naturalness of the belief in the mind of John the Jew and John the Christian.

Charles, e.g. refers to the convictions of prophets like Jeremiah, Isaiah, Jonah, Malachi, Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah and Joel, that the Messianic Kingdom would be an everlasting Kingdom on this earth. But dualistic despair about the present earth gradually led to a change. After about 100 B.C., apocalyptic works like I Enoch xci.-civ., Psalms of Solomon, 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra portrayed a transitory Kingdom on earth.(2)

Many scholars (3) feel that John drew on this essentially Jewish conception for a distinctively Christian purpose - to supply a special reward for the martyrs. It is clearly assumed

(1) Those who assent to the premillennial view hold such a doctrine. Walter Scott expounds this viewpoint in "Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ".
(2) Op.cit., Vol.2, 142.
(3) E.g. Kiddle (op.cit., 391); Preston and Hanson (op.cit., 124).

that this Jewish and Christian motivation cannot exist for the modern Christian.

3) Other scholars find literal and symbolic elements in John's thought of the millennium, some with lasting authority for the Church, others without authority.

Preston and Hanson believe that John meant the fact of the Millennial City to be taken literally, but many of the details are to be taken symbolically. The descent of the City from heaven is not a literal descent, but a reminder of the common New Testament emphasis that the Church is the gift of God.

The measurements of the walls in 2I.I6-I7 are not meant to be taken literally. The literal interpretation would force us to "imagine a city with walls I,500 miles high and only 2I6 feet thick!"(I)

The literal detail is not meant to be taken seriously. The general teaching is that "Christians are a people apart".

Beasley-Murray would challenge Torrance's interpretation of Revelation 20 on two crucial points: the binding of Satan, and the first resurrection.

Beasley-Murray interprets the binding of Satan in contrast to his expulsion from heaven to earth in I2.9. He writes:

"xx.I-3 reveals an advance on this situation, for there he is taken from earth, which he may no longer corrupt, to the abyss, the abode of evil spirits...; on no account is it permissible to confuse the earth with the abyss".(2)

In the abyss he cannot influence the nations.

Further, to Beasley-Murray, the first resurrection must be a literal resurrection. Surely, he argues, John would have made it clearer if he had been thinking of two different conceptions of resurrection.(3)

Beasley-Murray comes to the conclusion:

"An impartial reading of these visions compels the recognition of a doctrine of the millennium in chapter xx."(4)

(I) Op.cit., I35. (2) Op.cit., II94. (3) Op.cit., II95.
(4) Op.cit., II94.

This hardly seems to touch the real problem of the doctrine of the millennium. Is it a literal doctrine or a symbolic one? Beasley-Murray has a doctrine of the millennium which differs from that of Augustine, Calvin and Torrance, as it does from the doctrine of innumerable Christian sects which have worked out their own fanciful notions of the millennium. Which is the correct doctrine? That is the involved question.

The Difficulties of the Literal View

It must be frankly acknowledged that any interpretation of Revelation 20 is attended by difficulties, but in the view of the author the difficulties connected with a literal view of the millennium are quite insuperable. They are internal to Revelation; they arise out of the contrast with the rest of the New Testament; and they are theological.

The Millennium in Revelation 20

The exegetical gymnastics of literalists make an interesting study. There are three main difficulties for them in Revelation 20:

a) The persons who share in the millennial reign.

b) The temporal character of the reign.

c) The scene of the reign.

a) Verse 4 mentions only two companies - those beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and those who refused to submit to the beast. This does not fit the scheme of the premillennarian, and so Walter Scott does not hesitate to go beyond the letter:

"The 'they' evidently refers to a well-known class;...they are the sum of Old Testament and New Testament believers, raised or changed at the Coming into the air. This is a much larger

body of saints than the martyrs".(I)

b) The temporal character of the millennium is most dubious.

Scott changes from literal to symbolic with the most remarkable swiftness and assurance. He acknowledges the symbolic character of the binding of Satan. The key, the chain and the seal refer symbolically to the curtailing of Satan's liberty, but the thousand years in his judgement

> "should not be regarded in any symbolic sense, but as describing the exact and literal denomination of time".(2)

Such an attitude forgets that numbers in Revelation have a language of their own. Even Scott acknowledges the symbolic character of the number seven. He admits that it is "representative of the Church universal". It is strange, therefore, to force the literal character of "thousand".

Milligan, after referring to the consistent symbolic use of numbers in Revelation, says:

> "If the number a thousand is to be here interpreted literally, it seems in that respect to stand alone".(3)

c) The literalist cannot point to any reference to a reign on earth in verses 4-6. In fact it is stated that the vision concerned "the souls of them that were beheaded", not glorified saints with glorified bodies. The reference to "thrones" recalls Revelation 4.4, where the thrones were located in heaven.

It seems clear that this so-called stronghold for the doctrine of a thousand years reign on earth is a very shaky stronghold.

The Millennium and the Rest of the New Testament

It is a fact of crucial importance that we do not have a

(I) Quoted by W.J.Grier, in "The Momentous Event", Belfast I945, 84.
(2) Op.cit., 83.
(3) The Book of Revelation (The Expositor's Bible) London I889, 344.

reference anywhere else in the New Testament to a period between the Second Coming of Jesus and the consummation. The New Testament is completely silent about a personal reign on earth for a thousand years and about a literal restoration of Israel to the promised land, with Jerusalem as the seat of government. Everywhere else the Second Coming is followed by the General Resurrection and the Last Judgement. Even when Paul deals with the future of Israel in Romans II he has nothing to say about a literal restoration of Israel in a literal millennium. If he had believed this, surely he would have mentioned it. The argument from silence is, of course, notoriously unreliable. But it may be claimed, with some confidence, that an argument from a complex book which overturns the general impression of the whole New Testament must be viewed as even more unreliable.

The Theological Difficulty

The millennial half-way house to the consummation poses theological difficulties of the most serious character. How can it fit into the New Testament emphasis on the once-for-all character of Jesus' victory at the Cross? The picture which is often drawn of a last chance for the nations through world wide evangelization during the millennium before the final curtain drops, would make it necessary for us to change our language about "love's last appeal" in Christ Crucified and Risen. The appeal, strictly speaking, becomes a penultimate appeal before the final appeal in the millennium. The glorious personal appeal of Jesus may educe a response of a deeper character than the reign of the Risen Lord in the power of the Cross. The very possibilitiy of such a view cuts across an important New Testament emphasis.

The literal interpretation of the millennium presents us

with two possibilities:

a) In this particular doctrine John was unable to rise above the level of his Jewish apocalyptic heritage. He was more of a Jew than a Christian, unconsciously standing on ground that was dangerous to fundamental Christian truth.

b) John was consciously supplementing, or even contradicting, the common New Testament identification of the Second Coming with an immediate consummation. He was writing as a Christian, either to give the martyrs the reward they richly deserved, or to serve some other practical or theological motive.

We have noted that John rose above Jewish thought about the Lamb. We cannot deny the possibility that he also rose above it in connection with the reign of the Messiah.

We have also argued that the sacrificial death of the Lamb occupied an important place in John's thought, in line with the New Testament view of the centrality of the finished work of Christ. It seems unlikely that he would hold a view of the millennium which would contradict or endanger this stress.

The above difficulties vanish if we accept a symbolic interpretation of the millennium.

There is impressive strength in Torrance's exposition of the millennium, in its Christological character, in its view of the interpenetration of time and eternity, and in its account of the eschatological importance of the witness of the Church.

a) Its Christological character

The book of Revelation truly becomes a "Revelation of Jesus Christ", not of some fantastic picture of the millennium which it is difficult to correlate either with Christian doctrine or Christian practice.

Torrance makes the charge that it was the departure from the Christological eschatology of the New Testament which led to the degeneration of eschatology in the first Christian century.

"More and more the eschatological life of the Church comes to be thrust into the future entirely, and in that context the notion of millennium comes to mean something very different..." Under the influence of late Jewish eschatology

"the whole notion is politicised, for it is bound up with the nationalist aspirations of the Jews and is interpreted cosmologically and secularly in terms of the restoration to Israel of world-sovereignty with its centre at Jerusalem".(I)

There is a fatal distinction between the earthly reign of the Messiah and the final appearance of God Himself.

b) The Interpenetration of Time and Eternity

We see in Torrance's view the marriage of realised and unrealised eschatology, which in the author's view is fundamental in New Testament eschatology. The victory is both in time and at the end of time when eternity finally breaks in.

Fison, in his account of the importance of the doctrine of the millennium in the development of Christian eschatology, comes to similar conclusions:

"The millennium is an attempt to safeguard the double element of both τέλος and finis which is essential to any truly Christian eschatology. It reinforces the doctrine of the parousia in its refusal to abandon hope for this world under the pretext of securing it in the next...it is a valuable corrective to merely individualistic and otherworldly interpretations of the Christian hope".(2)

c) The Eschatological Importance of the Church

If the "first resurrection" (20.5-6) really means the Church's union with Christ in His Death and Resurrection, witness occupies a necessary place in the eschatological plan. Revelation lays the main emphasis upon witness through suffering. We are reminded of the New Testament picture of suffering as one of the signs of the End.

Brunner has a profound study of Revelation 20 which bears out Torrance's main positions.

(I) Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.6, No.2, 210-211.
(2) The Christian Hope, 148.

He rejects the thought of Chiliasm that the Kingdom of God is fully realisable in history before the End. This contradicts Jesus and the apostles, and is incompatible

"with the power of sin still operative even in the regenerate, and with the power of death".(I)

Brunner agrees with the Reformers that we can hope too much for human history, but he throws down the necessary warning that we can also hope too little.

"We must subscribe to the sober judgement of the Reformers",

but this must not mean that

"we set limits to the creative power of the Holy Ghost...Was it really a sound and sober distrust of enthusiasm or was it merely a doctrinaire but sinful pessimism when the Reformers finally dismissed the thought of a kingdom of justice and peace to be eventually realized within history?"(2)

Hope for the present is thus a mighty driving force, but the momentous event on which the Christian hope is fixed

"will work not merely within the framework of human life but will transform its fundamental structure: it is fixed on the life of the world to come".(3)

We must conclude that the Church portrayed in Revelation was profoundly influenced by eschatology, in faith, in life and in witness.

(I) Eternal Hope, 76.
(2) Op.cit., 73.
(3) Op.cit., 76.

General Conclusion

The conclusions reached from the study of Mark I3.IO in the setting of Mark I3 are endorsed by our study of the rest of the New Testament.

There can be no question that eschatology profoundly influenced the missionary preaching of the primitive Church. It is clear that for Jesus and the early Church the End was conditioned by missionary preaching, which was a sign of the End.

The eschatological motivation of mission appears most strikingly in such passages as Mark I3.IO, Matthew 24.I4, Matthew IO.23, Acts I.6-II, Acts 3.I9-2I, and Romans 9-II. The obvious presence of eschatological motivation in these passages lends likelihood to the possibility that this is also present in some of the obscure passages to which we have referred: 2 Thessalonians 2.6, I Peter 3.I9-20 & 4.6, Revelation 6.I-6 & II.3-I3, and 2 Peter 3.I2. The cumulative effect of the more definite passages and the more problematical ones may support the accuracy of W.Manson's treatment of the eschatological interest of Stephen and the Hellenists. Isolated passages are not so impressive, but when they are all taken together the general effect is very impressive indeed.

It must, however, be noted that the influence of eschatology could be exaggerated. The author has argued that Schweitzer and Werner have fallen into this error with the contention that the decisive event in the eyes of Jesus and the apostles was the future Coming of the Messianic Kingdom. He follows Cullmann in the view that the decisive event was the historical work of Christ Crucified and Risen.

Even Denney has a statement about the role of futuristic eschatology in the primitive Church, which must be viewed with caution. He maintains that eschatology was the topic of theology which

> "probably filled a larger place in the

common Christian mind than any other; it was the doctrine of the new faith".(I)

There can be no doubt that Denney's words assess accurately the attiitude of mind which must have characterized many members of the primitive Church, e.g. in Thessalonica at the time when Paul had to write to the Church in that place. In this respect Denney's statement serves as a necessary warning against over-confident generalizations about the eschatological convictions of the primitive Church. The mental and theological content of the eschatological faith of many ordinary Church members could hardly be expected to move on the plane of a great thinker like Paul. The eschatology of the slaves to whom I Peter was addressed would probably be literalistic, and in certain respects markedly different from the eschatology of Peter.(2)

If the author's argument has proceeded along the right lines, Denney's words about eschatology as the pillar doctrine of the new faith would not be true of Paul and the apostles. It must also be remembered that the "common Christian mind" must have been progressively influenced by the mind of the apostles, for whom the pillar doctrine of the faith was not the Parousia but the divine saving act in Christ Crucified and Risen.

The author is satisfied that P.T.Forsyth's exposition of the key missionary motive interprets the New Testament missionary movement most faithfully. Forsyth held that the Cross was both the key to the missionary message and the

(I) Studies in Theology,
(2) G.W.H.Lampe (Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No.2, 24) draws a similar contrast between the mental level of men like Origen and Augustine, and that of "the simple lower middle-class Christians who formed the solid body of church members", who "held firmly to a realistic eschatology based on the notions of chiliasm, bodily resurrection...".

secret of the missionary method. He writes:

"The great and real charter of Missions" arises "out of the nature of Christ's Person and especially from His Cross, His Resurrection and His exalted life, judgement and reign...

The first missionary was God the Father...who gave us not only a prophet but a propitiation. The second missionary was the Son...who...humbled Himself to death, even the death of the Cross. And the third missionary is the Holy Ghost...And the fourth missionary is the Church. And these four missionaries are all involved in the divine redemption which... makes us debtors and nothing but debtors for ever and ever".(I)

That was the debt which Paul expressed so strikingly - "I am under obligation to Greek and non-Greek, to learned and simple" (Rom.I.I4). His sense of mission could not be explained in terms of any eschatological dogma; it was the inevitable overflowing of a personal love for the Christ who came once to a Manger, a Cross and an Empty Tomb, who came to Paul on the Damascus Road in the power of the Resurrection, and who will come again in the final consummation. Because eschatology is Christocentric it can never be discontinuous from the Cross.

The eschatological motivation of mission is only one side of the New Testament picture. The profound influence of mission on eschatology is the other side of the picture. Mission lent tone and balance to eschatology, guaranteeing that it meant faith and not fanaticism, dynamic and not theory. Mission as the sign par excellence laid a restraining hand on all other signs, ensuring that the Christian prayed and preached and worked on the road of life, instead of studying the signs from the balcony. Because eschatology was missionary theology it sent the Church forward in the steps of Jesus and Paul.

Practical Bearing of this Study

(I) "The Missionary Message of P.T.Forsyth", by D.W.Lambert, in Evangelical Quarterly Vol.xxi, No.3, 204 & 208.

What use are we to make of the eschatological convictions behind the New Testament missionary movement?

Schweitzer would answer: "They are to be expounded in all their strangeness and remoteness so that we may discover what the early Church really believed: but they cannot be accepted as authoritative for us. Modern mission acknowledges the authority of the living Spirit".

Dodd's answer would be: "These convictions are to be assessed in accordance with the principles of realised eschatology, which became increasingly influential in the early Church, and were destined to become the decisive criteria for the eschatological faith of the world Church".

Bultmann would maintain: "We cannot make any use of New Testament eschatological convictions without radical reinterpretation".

This comes out very clearly in such a statement as -

"The mythical eschatology is untenable for the simple reason that the parousia of Christ never took place as the New Testament expected. History did not come to an end, and, as every schoolboy knows, it will continue to run its course. Even if we believe that the world as we know it will come to an end in time, we expect the end to take the form of a natural catastrophe, not of a mythical event such as the New Testament expects."(I)

These three answers are alike unsatisfactory because they do not do justice to <u>all</u> the New Testament evidence.

In answer to Schweitzer it must be pointed out that Paul's doctrine of the Spirit is intimately bound up with his Christology and his eschatology. The Spirit is ἀρραβών and ἀπαρχή . To cut this link between past, present and future, cuts the very nerve of New Testament doctrine. Why should we accept the authority of New Testament pneumatology while rejecting out of hand the authority of the eschatology?

(I) "New Testament and Mythology", in Kerygma and Myth (ed. Hans Werner Bartsch, London 1953) I-44. Quotation from p.3.

This is not scientific Biblical exegesis but is in itself an act of faith which seems to rest on nineteenth-century philosophical presuppositions rather than on New Testament foundations.

In answer to Dodd, it must be said that the sifting out of the wheat of realised eschatology from the chaff of Jewish eschatology with its futurist emphasis is a doubtful procedure. The New Testament offers futurist eschatology as wheat along with realised eschatology.

In answer to Bultmann, it may be claimed that the statement:

> "History did not come to an end, and, as every schoolboy knows, it will continue to run its course", (unless there is the intervention of some "natural catastrophe),

is as much an affirmation of faith as the statement in the Creed, "He shall come to judge the quick and the dead", but it is an affirmation of faith bearing the obvious influence of scientific materialism which cannot allow a supernatural intervention at the end of time.

The truth seems to be that man needs some eschatological faith. It may be the eschatological faith of the Communist that history is moving towards the final victory of Communism, or the faith of the scientific materialist that the end can only be precipitated by human folly or brought about by some natural catastrophe. Or it may be the eschatological faith of the New Testament that the kingdoms of this world will"become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ". We move here in a realm of faith which is not irrational but suprarational, in which the concepts of Communism or scientific materialism or traditional Christian thought look very puny indeed. Here mystery meets us at every turn.

The author believes that the eschatological motivation of mission, so clearly present in the New Testament, has authority for the Church of the ages.

Modern mission must pay attention to three great eschatological signposts.

I. Eschatology points to a salvation past (qua realised eschatology), and it points to a salvation future (qua unrealised eschatology).

World mission can only mirror the power of the New Testament mission when it takes full account of the realised and unrealised elements in eschatology. The omission or neglect of either realised or unrealised eschatology will mean a mutilation of eschatology with a consequent impoverishment of witness.

This means that for the world Church "eschatological" has a more complex connotation than it ever had in Jewish eschatology with its linear view of time. Christian eschatology, of course, has more sympathy with the linear account of time than with the cyclic view of Greek thought: but to the Christian, time has not merely a beginning ("in the beginning God created"), a centre (the Cross), and an end. In the interval between the two Comings of Christ there is an overlapping of the present Age and the Age to come. Mission, therefore, does not merely condition the finis of the present Age, and make possible its τέλος. It has proleptic significance. It is more than a condition for the revelation of the End; it is "characteristic of the already existing End", as Boer puts it.(I) The End is not merely a point of time; it is the whole period between the two Comings of Christ. In that period mission is the distinctive task of the Church. Preaching is both a sign that the End will come, and that the End has come. We have already received of God's fullness in Christ, but that fullness is veiled at the moment and is only visible to faith. One day it will be visible to sight. "We shall see Him as He is" (I John 3.2), at the consummation.

2. Eschatology points to Christ.

It is important to remember that the marriage of

realised and unrealised eschatology is explained by the fact that Christian eschatology is deeply Christological. It has a magnificent concentration on Eschatos rather than on Eschaton. That is why there is no room in it for fantastic and unprofitable speculation.

3. Eschatology points to the whole world.

The End cannot come until the Gospel has been offered to all nations.

The role of the Jew in the link between eschatology and mission is most interesting and has been frequently overlooked by the Church. The New Testament does not merely suck Jewish mission into the current of the universal mission, as might be imagined from the missionary outlook of many Christians. The unpopularity of Jewish mission can only be adequately explained by neglect of the teaching of the New Testament. A study of eschatology and mission points to the importance and distinctiveness of the Jew in the eschatological stream. Nothing in the New Testament contradicts the emphasis of both Jesus and Paul, "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek". This must give an impetus to Jewish mission unless it is allowed that both Jesus and Paul were mistaken in their view of the high importance of the Jew.

When the missionary Church follows these eschatological signposts the mission of the Church will recapture the New Testament atmosphere.

I. Mission will be humble.

Eschatology teaches that only God can bring in the Kingdom. In this faith there is an answer to the sense of incompleteness which characterizes the most energetic Christian work - "so little done; so much left undone". When we make room for the eschatology of glory we have the assurance that God's final triumph ultimately does not depend on our weak efforts.

There is similarly in this eschatological approach an

antidote for making extravagant claims for what may be accomplished by our missionary efforts. The accent must lie on faithful preaching rather than on successful preaching, as measured by the number of converts or of new Churches established. "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful".

2. Mission will be urgent.

Christ's "other sheep" are to be reached by missionary preaching which can "hasten" the End. The author believes, as he has indicated already(I) that there is no need to be suspicious of the term "hasten", provided it is used against the background of the sovereign freedom of God. Every aspect of missionary work - preaching, suffering, and daily living - is the work of God in the deepest sense. The missionary in his desire to hasten the End is bound to say, "not I, but Christ".

This is true to the insight of the Reformers that mission is primarily the work of a God who is completely free in His acting. But they did not fail to realise (in the words of J.Van Den Berge) that

> "it has pleased God to lay the task of the transmission of the faith in the hands of men...a bridge of human work and human activity has to be laid between Christ and the ends of the earth".(2)

The Kingdom is the gift of God. Human missionary enthusiasm cannot "ascend into heaven" to force Christ to come back. But God's gift drops into the hands of workers, not into the hands of drones. Human speculation cannot pry into the time of the Coming of the Kingdom, but in God's sovereign plan the time of the Coming is connected with missionary work. This is a divine necessity.

This means that slackness in the discharge of the missionary task could involve human history in a doom which only the mercy of God restrains at the moment. But missionary urgency is in no danger of degenerating into despair through disappointment about tangible results. The

New Testament does not leave the world at the mercy of the sin of man, the ingenuity of the devil, or the disobedience of the Church. Terrible as the results of human accidents or miscalculations would most certainly be in this precarious modern world, history is not in the toils of the vagaries of man; it is in the grip of the Providence of God. That faith is impossible without Christian eschatology. It is equally impossible for it to exist without a sense of urgency.

3. Mission will be hopeful.

The range of the hope for history defies exact human definition. The only limits which can be set are supplied by the Gospel itself, with its radiant salvation-side, and its reverse side of judgement.

The range of the hope certainly cannot be limited by conceptions of a fixed number appointed to salvation in terms of an inflexible sovereign decree, as it were behind Christ's back. Election is in the Cross - that mighty dynamic for mission which transcends anything that ever appeared in Jewish apocalyptic teaching, or in the teaching of any other religion.

When we ask a bout the scene of the hope and the setting of the final victory of God we are involved in complicated questions.

There are passages which suggest that the scene of the Age of glory will be the world in which man lives his life. The New Testament puts us in touch with the expectations of "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet.3.I2). This seems to involve renovation of the world as we know it, not destruction.(I)

(I) There seems to be a cosmic καινὴ κτίσις corresponding to that which takes place in the individual (2 Cor.5.I7). The expectation of the restoration of all things is mirrored in several passages - Matt.I7.II; Mk.(.I2; Acts I.6.

It is surely not an evasion to claim that the scene of the hope and precise descriptions of the hope are secondary questions. The fact of the hope is the crucial issue. It is as impossible to describe the consummation of the hope as it is to describe the "furniture of heaven" or the "temperature of hell" - to use Niebuhr's striking expressions.

Human nature has often failed to resist the temptation to impose upon the fact of the hope certain interpretations of the historical and temporal precursors of the hope.

There have always been people who have imagined that the reading of the signs of the times entitled them to trace a certain historical pattern under the guidance of Biblical prophecy, e.g. about the return of the Jews to Palestine. There has been an interesting evasion of Jesus' categorical statement that no man can know the "day and hour" of the Coming. While that must be accepted by every believer in the authority of Jesus, it has sometimes been imagined that it is possible to know the approximate "day and hour". The statement has been made: "All prophecy is now fulfilled; nothing stands in the way of the Return of Christ". Such an approach has sometimes made some section of the Church a waiting Church, rather than a working and a preaching Church. This is impossible when the Church remembers that she can never know when the key sign has been fulfilled: world wide preaching of the Gospel.

Paul's use of the Christian hope has given a classic example to the Church of the ages. In his mighty exposition of the place of the Jew in God's eschatological purposes (Romans 9-11) there is not a line about the return of the Jew to Palestine; there is not a verse which could be used to work out the exact or the approximate date of the

Return of Jesus: but there is a confident statement about a great hope in the context of a great missionary responsibility to Jew and Gentile.

Paul had no doubt that the hand of God was at work in history - contemporary history, as clearly as past history, but his energetic missionary work made it quite impossible for him to sit down and wait for the Coming of the Lord.

This is the way of true wisdom for the Church in every generation. She must share the concern of Biblical eschatology about the fact, not the timing of the hope. No individual, no nation, no period of history can be written off as beyond redemption. She serves a great God and a great Gospel. This great Gospel "must first be proclaimed among all nations". Then, and only then, can the End come.

APPENDIX

The Evidence of the Captivity Epistles

World Mission without Eschatology?

In pages I44-I49 of the thesis the author held that the theory of radical development in Paul's eschatology cannot be allowed as it does not fit all the evidence.

This position must be examined in greater detail, especially in the light of the evidence of the Captivity Epistles. Many scholars would claim that in these later writings of the Apostle we have world mission without eschatology (at least in the sense steadily followed throughout this thesis). Paul became so engrossed in the exacting commitments of world mission that eschatology retired into the background of his mind. If that is too sweeping, it is held that it must at least be conceded that unrealised eschatology was progressively overshadowed by realised eschatology.

R.H.Charles gives us an excellent example of this type of theory.(I) He traces four stages in the Apostle's eschatological thought -

I) I and 2 Thessalonians;

2) I Corinthians;

3) 2 Corinthians and Romans;

4) Philippians, Colossians, and Ephesians.(2)

I) At this stage, according to Charles, Paul was still in the toils of Jewish eschatology with its blood and thunder theology of vengeance.

2) In I Corinthians there are traces that he is slipping out from the grip of his Jewish past. It is

(I) Eschatology, 443-463.
(2) In view of the difficulty in dating Philippians (about A.D. 54, if written from Ephesus, and about A.D. 62, if written from Rome), it may be doubted if Philippians belongs to the third or fourth stage. This is of little consequence as the significant development, according to the theory, took place during the third stage.

noteworthy that there is no reference to the Antichrist who featured so largely in the Thessalonian epistles.

3) The really significant changes belong to the third stage, in two respects: a) the time of the resurrection of the body; b) the spread of Christ's Kingdom.

a) The moment of the resurrection is placed at the believer's death, while previously it had been attached to the Parousia. It is claimed by some scholars that Paul had been brought face to face with the possibility of death in the perils of his missionary work. Up to this third stage he had thought of himself as alive at the Coming, but now he had to adjust his mind to the possibility that at any moment a dangerous missionary situation might lead to his death. His resurrection-doctrine had, therefore, to be adjusted. He may even have come to believe that a pre-existent body was waiting for him in heaven.

b) We see the great Apostle moving beyond the gloomy picture in earlier epistles of the Man of Sin and a great apostasy on the very eve of Christ's Coming. In Romans II, e.g., we see a shaft of brilliant sunshine tearing aside the darkness: the Apostle looks forward to the conversion of the entire Jewish and Gentile world.

4) In the Captivity Epistles his thought comes to journey's end in the moving picture of the cosmic significance of Christ.

There is here a further development along universalistic and resurrection lines.

"There can be no room finally in the universe for a wicked being, whether human or angelic". (Charles)(I)

Again, the resurrection body means the slipping off of the old body (like an old garment) which had been hiding the new body from view. By the work of the Holy Spirit the

(I) Op.cit., 46I.

new body had already been growing within the old. Death is the great unveiling, the revelation of the essential body.

Criticism of Theory of Development

Charles' theory, and allied theories(I), are open to criticism along several lines.

I) There are no indications whatever in the Pauline epistles that Paul's enemies were aware of radical development in his eschatological thought. If there had been such development it would have been a convenient tool to undermine his apostolic authority.

2) It is more curious still that we find no evidence that Paul himself was conscious of this development. His silence would be most puzzling. If he had been so wrong in his early epistles, we might expect him to make some allusion to the light which had come to him, to ensure that others might be saved from fumbling in shadows. Many great scholars have openly confessed that they had to relinquish earlier positions. The confession by Paul of partial apprehension of the truth, if not of actual error, would have been the mark of an honest spirit anxious to give the best possible guidance to pilgrims on the path of truth.

3) The reason suggested for development in the idea of resurrection, i.e. a sudden awareness of the possibility of death, seems psychologically suspect. Denney asks most pertinently:

"Is it not absurd to say that a man, whose life was constantly in peril, had never thought of death till this time"?(2) "Can anyone seriously believe that, as Sabatier puts it, 'the image of death, with which the Apostle had not hitherto concerned himself, enters for the first time within the scope of of his doctrine'"?

(I) Held, e.g. by Pfleiderer, Teichmann, Sabatier, Holtzmann, C.H.Dodd, W.L.Knox, W.D.Davies.
(2) The Second Epistle to the Corinthians (The Expositor's Bible New Edition) I80.

Paul had occasion to speak to bereaved people (in Thessalonica and elsewhere). If the grim reality of death had never touched him until its shadow fell across his personal life, we have a strange impression of his sympathy.

4) The theory stands or falls with the Biblical evidence.

Biblical Evidence for the Theory

This is surprisingly scanty when the revolutionary aspect of the theory is remembered.

a) There is no direct evidence that world mission in the Captivity Epistles exists without eschatological motivation.

W.L.Knox argues that there was a stage in Paul's ministry when eschatology became an embarassment. His experience in Athens, where his exposition of the Resurrection had made him the target of ridicule, convinced him that the eschatological presentation of the Gospel would not do for the Gentile world. It was a turning point for him. His epistles show a "progressive adaptation of the Christian message to the general outlook of the Hellenistic world".(I) 2 Corinthians is a revision of the eschatological message in the interests of the communication of the Gospel.

This amounts to the elimination of futurist eschatology in the interests of evangelistic diplomacy. It presents Paul in a thoroughly unconvincing light. The Paul of the New Testament was prepared to state the truth, no matter how many stumbling blocks were involved. Of course he was deeply interested in the communication of the truth, but he never trifled with truth for the sake of communication.

(I) St.Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, Cambridge I939, 26.

W.D.Davies will not accept this Hellenistic conditioning of Paul's message, but he sees the overshadowing of futuristic eschatology as the years passed. He agrees with Dodd that in the letters after I Corinthians "the advent hope is in the background rather than in the foreground of his thought".(I)

This seems to mean that it no longer mattered to Paul. Davies quotes with approval Dodd's view (which the author has already criticized)(2), that the future tenses "are only an accomodation of language...There is no coming of the Son of Man 'after' His coming in Galilee and Jerusalem..." These passages must be interpreted symbolically.

No one would desire to deny the symbolic character of the Advent passages, but they symbolize fact - future fact as well as present fact - truth in history as well as truth in eternity.

Others do not attempt to present a reasoned case as both Knox and Davies have sought to do. It is quietly assumed that the relative silence of the Captivity Epistles about futuristic eschatology indicates that there was a profound change in Paul's thought.

There is no reason to believe this. It is important to remember that eschatology was not a burning issue for the Colossians, the Ephesians or the Philippians in the same sense as it was for the Thessalonians. If,therefore, he had written at length about eschatology he would have been writing beside the point. Eschatology was not a key issue in the Colossian heresy. He wrote Ephesians to present God's purposes for the universe and the role of the Church in furthering these purposes. Again, eschatological

(I) A Companion to the Bible, ed. T.W.Manson, 404, as quoted by W.D.Davies in "Paul and Rabbinic Judaism" London I948.
(2) Thesis I07-I29

confusion was not one of the problems of the Philippian Church.

b) What passages may be adduced in support of radical development in Paul's doctrine of the resurrection of the body?

The evidence of the Captivity Epistles can only be assessed against the background of the interpretation of key passages in earlier writings. They include:

i) 2 Corinthians 5.I-I0.

Sabatier held that 2 Corinthians, and especially 5.I-I0 threw the most significant light on Paul's theological development. The development is supposed to appear in words like

"...if the earthly frame that houses us today should be demolished, we possess a building which God has provided - a house...eternal, and in heaven. In this present body we do indeed groan; we yearn to have our heavenly habitation put on over this one..."(New English tr. of 5.I-2).

The key words are ἔχομεν and οἰκίαν · αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

It has been held that ἔχομεν means that the Apostle believed that he would possess the new body when he died, and that αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς carries the implication of the pre-existence of the body.

It is clear that this very complicated passage may be interpreted in other ways. ἔχομεν may simply indicate that the resurrection body is a certainty because it is the gift of God. Death cannot sever from the God who prepares a suitable habitation for believers during life on earth, after death, and in the resurrection.(I)

ii) It has been claimed that 2 Cor.3.I7-I8 and 4.I6-I8 also supply grounds for believing in an inner transformation

(I) So J.Denney (op.cit., I74-I85); H.A.A.Kennedy (St.Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, 265); S.D.F.Salmond (Christian Doctrine of Immortality, 569); G.Vos (The Pauline Eschatology, I88-I89).

(Continued on p.303).

of the body before death.

"Because for us there is no veil over the face, we all reflect as in a mirror the splendour of the Lord; thus we are transfigured into his likeness, from splendour to splendour; such is the influence of the Lord who is Spirit" (2 Cor.3.I7-I8)..."Though our outward humanity is in decay, yet day by day we are inwardly renewed. Our troubles are slight and short-lived; and their outcome an eternal glory which outweighs them far. Meanwhile our eyes are fixed, not on the things that are seen, but on the things that are unseen: for what is seen passes away; what is unseen is eternal"(2 Cor.4.I6-I8).

This, again, is not the only possible interpretation of these passages. In fact it seems to be most unnatural to focus attention on the body rather than on the whole redeemed personality.

In 2 Corinthians 3.I7-I8 there is a contrast between the glory of Moses and the glory of believers. Moses' glory was a visible bodily glory which faded, but the glory of believers is an inner glory which progressively increases by the working of the Spirit.

"We are inwardly renewed" (2 Cor.4.I6) seems to refer to the life which is hid with Christ in God,which cannot be dominated by outward conditions.

iii) Further "proof" texts in support of development in Paul's resurrection-doctrine are the reference to "the splendour, as yet unrevealed, which is in store for us" (Rom.8.I9), and the words

"and now your life lies hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is manifested, then you too will be manifested with him in glory" (Col.3.3-4).

Note (I) continued from p.302

It is frequently held that there is inconsistency between 2 Cor.5 and I Cor.I5 about the time when the resurrection body is given. This is only so on the assumption that Paul was a systematic theologian in the modern sense, and that he was as interested in metaphysical and speculative theories about the intermediate state as many who have written about it. His supreme concentration was on Christ, not upon the state of the body. It is doubtful if he was really interested in the exact time of the enrobing with the spiritual body.

But it must be pointed out that Romans 8.I9 speaks of the revelation of the supreme splendour of sonship, not merely of the revelation of the body.

Colossians 3.3-4 need not refer to the manifestation of a body already possessed by the believer. It is the life of the believer in its total content, not merely the body, that is under consideration. The believer is involved in the Death and Resurrection and Return of Christ. The manifestation of Christ will mean the manifestation of the hidden glory of the Christian. The best parallels are I John 3.I-2, John I7.22, and Romans 8.I7. What really matters is likeness to Christ, not the precise character of the resurrection body.

We now must consider the Biblical evidence against the theory of radical development in Paul's eschatological thought.

There is not a large eschatological element in the Captivity Epistles but eschatology is clearly present.

i) Paul's use of "mystery".

H.R.Boer has a significant treatment of the term. He has an interesting table which brings out the emphases in the "mystery" concept.(I) They are: a) its eschatological setting; b) its Christ-centeredness; c) its universalistic reference. The eschatological "now" (Paul's designation for the "last days"), and eschatological terms like "the fullness of the Gentiles" and"the fullness of the times" are important strands in the concept. The "mystery" is more than the offer of salvation to the Gentiles. That was part and parcel of Israel's eschatological expectations (Is.2.2). It is more than the revelation of Christ alone, for that too was clearly prophesied in the Old Testament. The "mystery", claims Boer, is the eschatological union of Christ with His

(I) Pentecost and Missions, I53-I60. Passages quoted from the Captivity Epistles are Ephesians I.9-I0, 3.3-6,8-II, 5.32, Colossians I.26-27.

Church, both Jewish and Gentile, and the fact that this is destined to have cosmic significance. But the "mystery" does not merely cause us to soar through the cosmos thinking great thoughts of the cosmic significance of Christ and His Church. We are brought back to Christ's relationship to men in the Church. It is "earthed".(I)

"This mystery has been revealed to be proclaimed and it is proclaimed to be believed...The mystery is therefore of the greatest missionary significance".(2)

We are back to the eschatological motivation and framework of world wide preaching.(3)

ii) The evidence of Philippians also tells against acceptance of the view of radical development in Paul. We have five references to the near-Return of Christ.(4)

3.20-2I is extremely important for our present discussion:

"We...are citizens of heaven, and from heaven we expect our deliverer to come, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transfigure the body belonging to our humble state, and give it a form like that of his own resplendent body, by the very power which enables him to make all things subject to himself"(New English tr.)

Quite clearly the transformation of the body is placed at the Parousia. Whether we think of Philippians belonging to the third or fourth stage in Paul's development, we have the odd picture of Paul developing by fits and starts, sometimes

(I) See Eph.5.32; 6.I9; 2.I4; 3.I-9; 3.6; Col.I.27. The "mystery" is in the context of preaching.
(2) Op.cit., I58-I59.
(3) The eschatological content of the concept is also stressed by Bornkamm (Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament IV, 829): "Der Begriff μυστηριον bekommt nicht an allen Stellen des NT seinen Inhalt durch die Christusoffenbarung und geht nicht überall im Kerygma auf. Der eschatologische Sinn des Begriffs hält sich jedoch durch."
(4) I.6; I.I0; 2.I0; 3.20-22; 4.I-5.

venturing out into the deep waters of a more mature eschatology, and then running back, like a frightened child, to the shallows. This inconsistency appears in other places. 2 Corinthians 4.I4 and 5.IO must be considered alongside the radical development claimed for other passages in 2 Corinthians. The inconsistency seems fatal to any extreme form of the theory.(I)

iii) Futuristic eschatology is not prominent in Colossians, but there are two significant references: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (I.27); and 3.4:

"When Christ, who is our life, is manifested, then you too will be manifested with him in glory".

We are bound to conclude that there is no reason to maintain that there was any radical development in Paul's eschatology. Those who hold a contrary view must shoulder the burden of proof.

There is, of course, no need to deny s ome form of development in Paul's thought.

The author has argued that too much cannot be made of the undoubted fact that in the later epistles eschatology is less prominent than in the earlier writings. The argument from silence must be viewed with extreme caution. For example, Paul's silence about the Man of Sin in later writings does not carry the conclusion that he ceased to believe in that sinister figure. It cannot be proved that if he had been asked a direct question about the Man of Sin he would not have given substantially the same answer as he gave to the Thessalonians: but his silence about the Man of Sin cannot be passed over as quite unworthy of c omment. At the very least it must be said that such thoughts were not of central importance in his theology. His supreme concentration was on the Man of the Cross, whose redeeming love had apprehended him, and whose final victory could not be blocked by any Man of Sin. It will always remain a mystery exactly what Paul believed about the Man of Sin

(I) A.Schweitzer was surely right in arguing that Paul's expectation of the Second Advent in Romans and Philippians told against the theory of development.(The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, 53).

(at an earlier as well as at a later stage in his life), but there cannot be a vestige of a doubt that if he had been asked about the iron rations of the Gospel he would have said, "Christ died for our sins...and he rose again" (I Cor. I5.3-4). That was the soul of the body of his eschatology, but the glorious future Coming of the Lord was a part of the body without which the body would have been a mutilated body.

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