PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING THE GOSPELS AND ACTS

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A. Genre of the Gospels

For many scholars who work with the Gospel material, it is axiomatic that the Gospels can no longer be seen as biographies of Jesus[1]. There are even those such as R. Bultmann, who consider the Gospels *sui generis*, their *Gattung* being determined by and developed out of the unique primitive Christian kerygma.[2] Granting that the Gospels contain the unique Christian message and that their form is partially determined by their content, it is not the case that the form of the Gospels is without analogy in certain types of biographical and historical writings of antiquity. While it is true that the Gospels are not biographies in the modern sense of the word (i.e., they do not reflect much interest in personal appearance, the sociological and psychological factors of character development, precise chronology), it does not follow that they were not intended or understood as biographies by the standards of antiquity. Some ancient biographies, such as Tacitus' *Agricola*, reflect an interest in chronology in its broad outlines, but a concern for precise chronology is not characteristic of either *Hochliteratur* or *Kleinliteratur*.[3] Thus, the Gospels cannot be distinguished from ancient biographies on this basis.[4]

Further, depicting character development was not a *sine qua non* of ancient biography,[5] and only Luke among the Evangelists shows any trace of such an interest (cf. 2.52). In Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, no interest is shown in character development; rather, Socrates is presented as a mature character throughout. A common method of character portrayal in antiquity was the indirect method of allowing a person's actions and words to indicate his character (cf. Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, or Theophratus, *Characters)* which is also the main technique of the Evangelists. Though the Gospels make little attempt to set their main character against the background of his times, this was not always characteristic of ancient biographies.[6] Further, description of a character's physical features was not a universal trait for it is not found in Roman literature until Sallust and only became conventional in Suetonis' day.[7] Ancient biographical and historical writing was often didactic or apologetic or eulogistic, but never purely historical in purpose.[8]

Bultmann's contention that ancient biographical writing lacks any link with myth or cult,[9] as well as the view that Mark's eschatological outlook would have precluded him from using the techniques and types of ancient literature, have been refuted by C.H. Talbert.[10] On the last point, the Qumran community, which was eschatologically oriented, produced various sorts of documents. Early Christian (unlike Gnostic)

eschatology was of a world transforming, not world negating, nature (cf. Rom 8.18-25). If it is contended that while a Christian community might produce Qumran-like documents, they would not be interested in writing 'popular' biographies in a Hellenistic or Roman mold, it may be answered that Christianity's emphasis on missionary outreach might occasion just such documents.[11] It is reasonable to expect the Evangelists to use accepted library methods.

In regard to the use of myth in ancient biographies, Talbert shows that certain historical figures (among them Alexander, Augustus, Empedocles, Apollonius) were written about employing both normal and historical information and the myth of the immortals. "In attaching itself to clearly historical personages this mythology affected the literary genres of history and biography."[12] Talbert's arguments that the Synoptic writers use this myth to show Jesus' significance are not nearly as convincing as his demonstration of mythical elements in ancient biographies.[13] It is undeniable that both the Gospels and various ancient biographies attribute supernatural births, deeds, and ends to their characters. The myth of the descending-ascending redeemer figure was also used in antiquity of historical figures and it could be said that we see this pattern applied to Jesus in John.[14] Talbert argues that this pattern does not appear in Hellenistic biography because the ancients could not conceive of an immortal putting on mortality. In any event, his case that myth was used of historical persons both in biography and other ancient literature not likely influenced by Christian ideas, seems established. Finally, when one examines such didactic lives as Diogenes Laertius' *Empedocles,* or Pseudo-Callisthenes' *Life of Alexander,* or the communities of followers of a particular ruler or philosopher (such as the cult of Alexander at Alexandria), myth seems to be used to inculcate or to further reverence or even worship of an historical person.[15]

Because ancient biographers wished to present a vivid and true picture of their character through a narration of his words and deeds, they were genuinely concerned to ascertain what their hero actually said and did.[16] This often involved consulting both oral and written reports, eyewitnesses, and the man himself if possible. Naturally, the amount of critical judgement applied to this material varied, but it was often applied satisfactorily enough for C.W. Votaw to affirm, "These Greek and Roman biographies of the ancient period from the fourth century B.C. to the third century A.D. achieve in varying manner and measure the biographical ideal."[17] Though neither the ancient biographers nor the Evangelists had an abstract or purely academic interest in the words and deeds of their subjects as historical phenomena, it does not follow from this that the Evangelists and at least some ancient writers were not deeply concerned about whether or not their hero actually said or did this or that.

It appears likely that many of the first recipients of the Gospels would have seen them as lives of Jesus, albeit episodic ones, written accor-

ding to the conventions of ancient biographical and historical literature.[18] Certainly there are differences in tone and content between the Gospels and ancient Lives. The ancient Lives do not have the pervasive theological content we find in the Gospels. Then too the kerygma has affected the Gospels' form to some extent, though not enough to warrent the claim that the Gospels are *sui generis*. But in the main, as B.H. Streeter rightly says, the difference between the Gospels and ancient biographical and historical works, ". . . lies in the subject treated, not in the historical ideal of the several writers."[19]

B. The Synoptic Problem

The solution to the Synoptic Problem assumed in this essay is commonly called the four source hypothesis. In view of the revival of the Griesbach hypothesis by W.R. Farmer and others, it is worthwhile to state briefly some reasons for accepting this view. Out of the total of 661 verses in Mark, only 55 are not found in some form in the First Gospel. Luke has over half of Mark's material, but Mark's material makes up less than half of either the First or Third Gospel. Positing Matthean priority it is very difficult to explain why Mark would omit so much valuable material from the First Gospel (Infancy Narrative, Sermon on the Mount, nearly all the parables) ". . . in order to get room for purely verbal expansion of what was retained."[20] The same argument applies supposing Mark's dependency on Luke. If one posits Marcan priority, Matthean omissions are explainable in terms of his theological purposes and/or attempts to avoid repetition. Luke's 'great omission' (Mk 6.45-8.26) is more enigmatic, but then Luke exercises more independence from Mark than the First Evangelist and the 'great omission' may be further evidence of this fact.

Further evidence arises for Marcan priority when one notes how the First and Third Evangelists alter difficult Marcan constructions (Mk 2.7 cf. parallels); omit or ameliorate potentially offensive texts (cf. Mk 3.21 and parallels, Mk 10.18 and parallels); or change a more colloquial and Semitic Marcan account into better Greek (e.g., Mk 2.4 'Krabatos'; Matthew 'Kline'; Luke 'Klinidon').[21] Further, in the triple tradition Matthew and Luke agree in order only insofar as they agree with Mark. Where one deviates from Mark's order, the other supports it, with the sole exception of Mk 3.31-35 which is found in a different context in each Gospel.[22] The reproduction of 51% of Mark's exact words in Matthew, and 53% in Luke in their common material clearly points to interdependence and in combination with the factors mentioned above also favors Marcan priority.[23] Thus, in matters of content, sequence, and wording, the evidence all favors Marcan priority.[24]

What of the Ur-Marcus hypothesis favored by Bultmann and others? It is urged that Luke's 'great omission' is only explainable on the assumption that his Mark did not have 6.45-8.26. Luke's greater freedom with Mark, in comparison with the First Evangelist, weakens this argument,

as does the fact that some of Mk 6.45-8.26 is found in Matthew (thus requiring one to posit that Matthew's Mark and Luke's Mark were different). The minor agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark can be explained mainly in terms of stylistic improvements (changing Mark's historical present to an imperfect or aorist; using a different conjunction or preposition), or in terms of textual corruption (i.e., assimilation or scribal improvement - 'kurie' is likely original at Mk 1.40), and the few remaining examples do not warrant resorting to an Ur-Markus hypothesis. Far from some of these minor agreements arguing for an Ur-Markus, it may appear in some cases to be evidence of a less, not more, primitive text than our Mark.[25] In some cases it appears that the Q material and Mark overlap, and the First and Third Evangelists have chosen to follow Q. In others, one must reckon with the influence of the oral traditions still in circulation when the First and Third Evangelists wrote.[26] It must be remembered that the First and Third Evangelists were members of Christian communities and likely heard some of the Marcan narratives recited apart from their reading of Mark. M. Hengel urges us to bear in mind that the Synoptists are for the most part reducing and concentrating, rather than expanding, the considerable amount of source material available to them (cf. Lk 1.1).[27] Naturally, this view of supplementary oral or written sources cannot be invoked to account for every small addition or change - some are clearly theologically motivated. But such supplements or substitutes are assumed when it is argued that Q and Mark overlap, and there are other cases where sources parallel and sometimes more primitive than Mark appear to be in evidence (e.g., in Mt 19.1-9, cf. Mk 10. 1-12).[28] The reason the First and Third Evangelists are so dependent on Mark is that they consider Mark their primary and most reliable, but not necessarily their only, source for all the Marcan material.

The Q hypothesis has arisen to account for the 200-250 non-Marcan verses found in both Matthew and Luke. It is a more viable hypothesis than the view that Luke is directly dependent on Matthew because: 1) the latter view fails to explain why Luke uses some of the Sermon on the Mount in his Sermon on the Plain and scatters fragments of the rest in various other chapters; 2) the latter view fails to explain why Luke never (apart from 3.7-9, 17) places the material he shares with the First Evangelist at the same place in the Marcan framework as does Matthew, and never takes over any of Matthew's distinctive additions. The view that the First Gospel is directly dependent on the Third is no longer advanced. Because there are too many cases where the verbal resemblances between the Matthean and Lukan versions of a common passage are too inexact to posit a single common written source (whether in Greek or Aramaic), and the order in the large blocks of Q material agrees in Matthew and Luke only when they are following Mark's outline, it is best to speak of Q as a stratum of the Gospel material.[29] It is not possible to say with exactness what was not included in the Q

material besides the Birth, Passion, and Resurrection narratives. Yet these omissions are sufficient to indicate that it never consitituted a whole Gospel, though it must have included some narrative material along with numerous sayings (cf. Lk 4.2-13, 7.1-10, 7.18-23, 11.14-23, 11.29-32).[30] There seem to be enough examples to justify the view that Matthew and Luke, in addition to their common Greek sources, had at least one Aramaic source in common.[31] The strong linguistic differences between Mark and Q in the double tradition (cf. Mk 4.30-32, Lk 13.18 ff.) make the assumption of the literary dependence of Mark on Q or the converse unlikely.[32] The Q material appears to have been a multiplicity of sources, some written, perhaps some oral, that make up several short independent tracts or cycles of tradition focusing mainly on the sayings and teachings of Jesus.[33]

In addition to Mark and the Q material, the First and Third Evangelists had access to various other traditions, commonly called M and L, without implying that all uniquely Matthean or Lukan material necessarily came from one clearly defined written or oral souce. It is simply impossible to say how much material we call M or L was actually drawn from the Q material and simply omitted by the other Evangelist. With Streeter we may recognize a certain Jewish flavor to M in comparison to L,[34] but that either M or L were coherent documents or, as Streeter held, were the traditions of two specific Churches (Jerusalem for M and Caesarea for L) is now difficult to accept.[35] Also, Streeter's view of the development of the tradition from isolated and definable segments (M,L, Mark, Q) to combined traditions (Proto-Luke), to Gospels as a linear or almost evolutionary process oversimplifies what was obviously a complex situation. It is more likely that since the earliest Churches appear to have been mostly independent of one another, in some locations the Gospel form arose at an early date, and in others Churches collected Jesus' logia for a long time, each developing and using its resources as the needs arose.[36]

With the above mentioned qualifications we can accept the four source hypothesis, though it is not problem free. Part of the problem is that it is misleading to speak of a four source hypothesis when the Q, M, and L materials are likely groups of sources or documents.[37]

C. The Relation of John to the Synoptics

Since the time of Streeter when most scholars held that the Fourth Evangelist used Mark, probably Luke, and possibly Matthew, a new concensus has arisen in the wake of the works of P. Gardner-Smith, C.H. Dodd, and others, favoring the independence of John from the Synoptics. Even C.K. Barrett, who rejects the new "critical orthodoxy" on this matter, does not assert that the Fourth Evangelist actually had any of the Synoptics before him when he wrote, only that he ". . . had read Mark and was influenced both positively and negatively by its contents. . . and that a few of John's statements may be most satisfactorily ex-

plained if he was familiar with matters peculiar to Luke."[38] No reference is made here to Matthew, for it is generally conceded that the case for dependence on Matthew is weak.

The fact that Luke and John share certain personal names not found in the first two Gospels (Lazarus, Mary and Martha, 'Judas, not Iscariot', Annas) is thought to point to the Fourth Gospel's dependence on the Third. Annas was a well-known Jewish figure, mentioned by Josephus. Certainly the Fourth Evangelist could have derived his name from someone other than Luke. The name Judas was a common Jewish name, and Luke identifies him as Judas of James, not 'Judas, not Iscariot'. Possibly both writers are independently relying on traditional list(s) of the Twelve. It is conceivable that the Fourth Evangelist borrowed the names of Mary and Martha from Luke but their pericopes are so different that it is more likely that we have different traditions about the same sisters. Neither the narrative in John 11 nor 12 could reasonably be said to be dependent on Lk 10.38-42. In Luke there is an implied critique of Martha's concern with 'much serving', which is not the case in John 12. The focus in John 12 is on the anointing and the resulting reactions (cf. 11.1-2); in Luke it is on single-minded devotion and Mary having chosen the good portion. Finally, the Lazarus in Luke is a pauper in a parable; while John's Lazarus is found in a narrative which tells us he was wealthy enough to be buried in a tomb. Why would the Fourth Evangelist place Lazarus in such diametrically opposed circumstances if he was relying on Luke?

Certain details are thought to link the two Gospels. It is sufficient to say here that the coincidences are best explained by cross-fertilization at the level of oral tradition rather than any sort of dependence of one Gospel on another[39]. Both Luke and John link Judas' betrayal to his possession by Satan but Luke has Satan enter Judas before he first seeks out the High Priest (Lk 22.3), while John associates the possession with the Last Supper (Jn 13.2,27). The two traditions are not identical and both Gospels have a rather developed Satanology elsewhere (cf. Lk 10.19, 11.15, 13.16, 22.31; Jn 8.44, 12.31, 16.11); thus, it is not unlikely that these two Evangelists would independently associate Satan and Judas.[40] There is no clear evidence of dependence in the fact that Luke and John record the note of the High Priest's servant's ear being severed since this is the kind of graphic detail often remembered when a narrative is passed on over a period of time by word of mouth (e.g., the remembrance that it was pistic nard in the anointing stories of John and Mark). The mention of two angels at the tomb by both Luke and John might point to dependence, but the traditions differ so much otherwise that it may be doubted. In John angels are possibly mentioned for a theological reason: they serve as a supernatural parenthesis emphasizing where Jesus' body was laid. In Luke they do not serve this purpose and he may mention two 'men' for quite a different reason: the requirement of two witnesses (Deut. 19.15). Finally, while it is true that Jn 12.38 resembles Lk 22.34

more than Mk 14.30, it actually shows little affinity with either one.[41] The evidence used to support the view that John used or had read Luke is weak and the similarities are better explained by a variety of other means.

The case for John's dependence on Mark is more substantial and Barrett places particular emphasis on the argument from order.[42] His list includes: a) the work and witness of the Baptist (Mk. 1.4-8/Jn 1.19-36); b) departure to Galilee (Mk. 1.14f/Jn 4.3); c) feeding the multitude (Mk 6.34-44/Jn 6.1-13); d) walking on the lake (Mk 6.45-52/Jn 6.16-21); 3) Peter's confession (Mk 8.29/Jn 6.68f); f) departure to Jerusalem (Mk 9.30f, 10.1, 32, 46/Jn 7.10-14); g) the Entry and the Anointing (Mk 11.1-19, 14.3-9; transposed in John 12.12-15, 12.1-8); h) the Last Supper with predictions of betrayal and denial (Mk 14.53-16.8/Jn 18.12-20.29).

There appears to be no possibility that pericopes f-g, h-j could be in any other order than their present one: Jesus must depart for Jerusalem before he enters it; the Last Supper must precedd the arrest; the arrest must precede the Passion and Resurrection. There is no room for rearranging the order of the Entry and the Anointing and significantly Mark and John differ at this point. Further, unlike the case in John, there is a considerable amount of material that separates Mark's Entry and Anointing stories.

The first half of the list is more problematic. Pericope a logically precedes b, c, d, and e, since John is the one who 'prepares the way' by appearing before Jesus and announcing His coming. This is true even in the Fourth Gospel (cf. 1.15 and 1.27) though it is also true that John continues to play a part in the story after the inception of Jesus' ministry (cf. 3.22 ff.). Pericope b must precede c for all four Evangelists locate the Feeding of the Multitude in Galilee and Jesus must depart for Galilee before the Feeding can be recorded. Similarly, Jesus must finish His Galilean ministry before He makes His final trip to Jerusalem. Pericope f must follow a-e. The parallels in the sequence c, d, e are more impressive but even here there is room for doubt. In John's framework e must precede f. Peter's confession in John occasions a reference to Jesus' betrayal (6.70-71) and His not going up until His time had come (7.1,6) both of which set the stage for Jesus' trip to Jerusalem. The order e-f can be explained in terms of the internal framework of the Fourth Gospel. Finally, the order c-d and d-e may be explained without the dependence theory. Dodd suggested that Mark had a general narrative framework that helped him order some of the pericopes about Jesus' Galilean ministry.[43] Presumably this framework did not come down to him from the same source as the pericopes he somewhat awkwardly inserted into this framework. If so, then it becomes possible that the Fourth Evangelist had access to this narrative framework but not to Mark. If one is willing to accept Dodd's view that ". . . there is good reason to believe that in broad outlines the Marcan order does represent a genuine succession of events,"[44] then it is even possible that while Mark had access to the

framework, John, through another channel, had access to the actual sequence of events. In any case, the agreements in order in Mark and John are probably not extensive enough to require the view that John knew Mark's order.

The case for verbal dependence is also less than compelling. Of the twelve examples Barrett cites, [45] the longest is no more than 3½ lines in the Greek text - one average length sentence and one shorter (Mk 14.7-8, cf. Jn 12.7-8). We have word for word agreement in none of the examples, not even in the shortest ones (Mk 6.50/Jn 6.20, cf. Mk 8.29/Jn 6.69). Mk 6.50/Jn 6.20 can safely be set aside, for the phases "It is I" and "Fear not" are too ordinary to require literary dependence, and in Mk 8.29/Jn. 6.69 the titles ascribed are different. In Mk 11.9-10/Jn 12.13 it appears that both Evangelists are relying on Ps 118.25 for the texts differ significantly where the use of Ps 118.25 ceases. Of the remaining nine examples, seven come from material clearly associated with the Passion narrative, which most scholars think circulated widely in a rather fixed and connected form earlier than most of the rest of the Gospel material. The title "King of the Jews" (Mk 15.26/Jn 19.19) is ascribed to Jesus in all four Gospels and the Evangelists could have used it here independently of one another. It was a well-known phrase especially among zealous Jews. Apparently Jn 11.2 indicates that the anointing story circulated early and possibly widely, and 1 Cor 11.23 likely indicates that the Last Supper traditions (Mk 14.18/Jn 13.21) did as well. 1 Cor 11.23 indicates that a statement about the betrayal was included in such traditions. Thus, again these examples do not require us to posit literary dependence.

The tradition about severing the slave's ear was apparently one that interested early Christians considerably, perhaps because it revealed Jesus' view of violence. In Mark it is not clear that a disciple had done the deed, unlike the case in Luke and John, who mention that the right ear was severed. Luke and John have various other graphic details not found in Mark or Matthew. There are no common rare words or awkward grammatical constructions to indicate that John depends on Mark here; in fact, there are significant differences in the use of verbs. The similarities are not strong enough to demonstrate dependence of John on Mark here.

The final three examples are part of important narratives in all three Gospels. In regard to the sentences about John the Baptist and the prediction of Peter's denial we have to deal with short, pithy, or interesting sayings that might well be remembered by different people, be passed on through independent channels and, because of their importance, have gained a wide circulation. Acts 18 and 19 indicate that the question of the relationship of the Baptist to Jesus was a live one for a considerable amount of time. As L. Morris notes, even in a short space of words, there are a number of noteworthy differences in Mark's and John's record of the saying about the Baptist.[46] In the denial narrative and feeding of the 5000 narrative there are differences between the accounts which do

not seem to have any deep significance or theological motivations. Why should John omit Mark's reference to the cock crowning twice? Why should we have 'duo opsaria' instead of Mark's 'duo icthuas' in the feeding narrative? Gardner-Smith points out that "John's account of the miracle differs in almost every possible way from that of Mark. . . The words used are different, the speakers are different; the only point of contact is in the single phrase 'diakosion denariov artoi' and even then it is in the accusative in Mark and nominative in John."[47] These points about verbal dependence are, of course, of somewhat limited value since Barrett is not maintaining that John copied Mark; however, some weight must be given to them because they show that the verbal similarities come not so much in unusual words, graphic details, or peculiar turns of phrase but primarily in ordinary words and phrases. This is surely significant since it is reasonable to expect that the unique or striking words or phrases would be primarily what the Fourth Evangelist would remember and reproduce from Mark. We thus conclude that the case for dependence of the Fourth Gospel on any of the Synoptics is not compelling nor even necessarily the most plausible explanation of all the relevant data.

D. Source Criticism

Having partially dealt with the sources of the Synoptic Gospels, it remains here to discuss the Proto-Luke hypothesis and make some general remarks about source criticism. The Proto-Luke hypothesis as advocated by Streeter, Taylor, Caird, and others, is probably to be rejected for the following reasons: 1) when one deletes the Marcan material from Luke, one is left with an amorphous assortment of passages most of which deal with Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (556 verses out of 706). This is too lopsided an arrangement to warrant calling Proto-Luke a primitive Gospel.[48] 2) The argument that Luke inserts four blocks of Marcan material (1.21-3.6, 4.1-9.40, 10.13-52, 11.1-14, 16) into his special source does not account for the fact that Luke omits Marcan sections (Mk 3.20-22, 9.42-10.12) from the Marcan sequence he takes over at precisely the places where the small (Lk 6.17-8.3) and larger (9.51-18.14) non-Marcan blocks are included. Further, when Luke inserts 19.39-44, the parallel section in Mk 11.1-14 is omitted.[49] 3) Luke separates the third Marcan passion prediction from the first two because of his placement of the 'great interpolations'. 4) Luke's genealogy appears to be inserted between items that belong together (Mk 1.9-11, 12-13).[50] 5) It appears the non-Marcan sections of Luke presuppose the present Gospel's context and order.[51] 6) Probably, the main reason Luke edits or omits a considerable amount of Marcan material ". . . is that no one document is really the foundation of the Third Gospel. All the sources are quarries from which the Evangelist selects and adapts material to serve his own end."[52]

Several words of caution are necessary concerning some suppositions

often made about sources. The tendency in NT criticism is to suggest that Luke more often than Matthew preserves the original wording (and order?) of the Q material. There is, however, no way of objectively checking this theory and on the basis of the way Luke handles Mark, it appears he, just as much as the First Evangelist, makes his sources his own. Secondly, in regard to the matter of doublets one must reckon with four possibilities: 1) Jesus said and did similar things on various occasions, and the Evangelists may have chosen to present two similar traditions that were not variants of one original tradition; 2) the Evangelists are presenting variants of one tradition but their own redactional activity is the cause of the variation; 3) Variants of the same tradition are being presented and the variation arises through the use of different sources; 4) Similar traditions have interacted at the level of oral transmission, or one story has been assimilated into the pattern of another similar story to give it a 'conventional form'. Thirdly, redaction critics have shown that all four Evangelists were skillful editors and presenters of their material and thus one cannot be certain when stylistic change is a result of an author's deliberate purpose or the use of a different souce (e.g., in Luke 1-2?). If the scholar is unable to detect a source at various points in the Gospel narrative it may indicate no more than that the Evangelist has successfully rewritten his source in his own language and style. It need not mean that the material is the Evangelist's own creation. The implications of both the extensive agreements between the Synoptics in substance and even at times in exact wording, and the significant differences in their common material, must be allowed to have their full weight. That Matthew and Luke frequently did not make significant alterations in their Marcan source material, indicates that they agreed with it and probably ". . . that they were concerned to preserve the received tradition and that they did not feel free to write the story of Jesus just as they pleased in accordance with their own theology."[53] The differences. The Evangelists were both transmitters and presenters of the Gospel material.

E. Form Criticism

The form critical method of studying the origins of the Gospel material has been of immense value in helping scholars to focus on the oral traditions behind the Gospels and in demonstrating that many Gospel narratives came down to the Evangelists as isolated units with a specific form. There are, however, certain difficulties with the method at least as applied by Bultmann and to a lesser degree Dibelius that must be pointed out. As is well-known Bultmann claimed that the early Church did not perceive (or at least did not make) a distinction between the pre-Easter sayings of Jesus and the post-Easter inspired utterances of (anonymous?) Christian prophets which, it is claimed, were accepted as the words of the ascended Jesus, and were sometimes accidentally, sometimes deliberately, retrojected into settings in Jesus' ministry.[54] While

Bultmann thinks that the tradition moved from general fluidity to general fixation, nonetheless, he posits about this sayings material that it was more freely handled in the middle (when a saying of a prophet was accepted as a saying of the ascended Lord) or near the end of the fixation process (when the saying of a prophet or the ascended Lord became a saying of the historical Jesus). As the Book of Revelation indicates, there were utterances of the ascended Christ spoken through prophets in the early Church, but this does not prove either that such utterances were not distinguished from other utterances of Christian prophets, or that sayings of the exalted Lord became sayings of the historical Jesus. Indeed, the evidence from Revelation points in the opposite direction for there the sayings of the exalted Lord spoken through a Christian prophet (who is named) are identified precisely as that. If the Book of Revelation tells us anything, it indicates that such sayings were distinguished from the sayings of the historical Jesus.[55]

Even more doubtful is Bultmann's appeal to Odes of Solomon 42.6 for it is still widely held that the Odes are to be dated after the Gospel material.[56] When one examines the non-Gospel material relevant to our subject (because it is methodologically improper to use any of the Gospel material as evidence of Christian prophets' activity when that is what must be proved) we find that Paul distinguished between his own authoritative utterances and the Lord's (1 Cor 7.10, 12, 25, 40) and 1 Corinthians 14 indicates that the utterances of Christian prophets were to be weighed and tested (v 29), not to be accepted as of unquestionable authority as the Lord's words were to be (7.10, 12). Even when such utterances were approved, it is still not clear from this material that they were accorded the same status as (or were thought to be indistinguishable from) the words of the earthly Jesus. As Dunn has shown, in both the NT and other early Christian literature (the Didache, *et al.*), there is evidence that Christians, like their Jewish forbears, had a healthy suspicion about prophetic oracles and subjected them to close scrutiny, inquiring about their source. Note that Luke carefully mentions the prophet's name when he sites an oracle (Ac 11.27, 28, 13.1, 2, 21.10-11).[57] If the utterances of Christian prophets were valued as highly as sayings of the earthly Jesus, the rationale for retrojecting such utterances back into Jesus' ministry is lacking.[58] Further, how has it happened, if the early Chuch retrojected prophetic material into a ministry setting, that we have little or no material dealing with some of the major crises of the early Church over circumcision, baptism, and the relation of Jews to Gentiles (including table fellowship, and the basis of acceptance among Jesus' people)? Can we legitimately assume that all these matters were settled when the Gospels were written?[59] While it is possible that the sayings of Christian prophets and/or exalted Lord were at the same point (accidentally?) attributed to the earthly Jesus, the evidence used to support this view is not convincing and cannot be used to argue that the original *Sitz im Leben* of much of the Gospel sayings material is the

post-Easter Christian community.

The contention that the Gospel tradition developed in a manner analogous to the growth of folk literature has rightly been subjected to close scrutiny. While comparisons of this kind are natural and needful, there is always the danger that similarities in form or content will be thought to prove that the origin and/or development of the two sets of material are the same. This is an especially dangerous assumption when comparison is made strictly on a selective basis, as is the case in Dibelius' and Bultmann's studies. As E.P. Sanders has shown, there was no systematic attempt to see how various sorts of folk stories developed over a period of time, perhaps because of the difficulties of finding, dating, and relating various versions of a story. It appears that the form critics derived their laws of transmission by assuming that purity of form indicates relative antiquity and by examining how Matthew and Luke use Mark and Q, and later Christian literature uses the canonical Gospels. Sanders notes, ". . . the form critics did not show, outside of the Synoptic Gospels, that there was a body of tradition which had at first existed in pure forms, but whose purity of form had been corrupted by the passage of time."[60] In fact, Dibelius derives his laws of development by analyzing the needs and activities of the Christian communities and positing that a certain need required a certain form of material. Any differences from that form indicated development. In practice then Dibelius denied that comparisons with folk literature revealed how Christian material developed, since folk literature did not grow out of the same kind of community with the same needs.[61] More consistently, Bultmann distinguishes between laws of formation and laws of transmission. The former he discovers by analyzing comparative literature, the latter almost exclusively by studying the Gospels and their inter-relationships. In the work of both Bultmann and Dibelius, ". . . the laws of transmission have not been established outside of the Christian material itself."[62]

The problem of selective use of examples arises again, even when Bultmann draws conclusions from his study of the Gospel's inter-relationships about how the Gospel material developed. For instance, Bultmann argues that details (names, places, etc.) tended to be added to the tradition as it developed. He does not explain why there are so many cases where Mark includes, and the parallels omit, such details. When he does suggest (infrequently) an explanation for such examples, it is usually by way of appeal to an Ur-Markus hypothesis that has its own special difficulties. In fact, while the evidence is mixed, Sanders shows that Mark usually is more detailed than the parallels.[63]

The appropriateness of appealing to the 'laws of formation' of folk literature to explain the formation of the Gospel material is questionable for several reasons: 1)usually the material used as a basis of comparison developed over a much longer period of time than the Gospels' 40-70 year gestation period; 2) the folk literature appealed to is seldom dealing with historical events to the same degree (if at all) that the Gospels

are; 3) various factors (eyewitnesses, reverence for the historical figure being written about) likely acted as a restraint on the embellishment of the Gospel material, unlike the case with much of folk literature; 4) even in the rabbinic literature that provides the closest parallels there is nothing comparable to the Gospel's focus on, proclamation of, and belief in one man;[64] 5) it is more probable that the first disciples of Jesus and the earliest post-Easter community would have passed on His words and deeds in a way that showed as much respect for the tradition as Jewish students showed their teachers' words and deeds in the first century, than that they would allow the tradition to undergo radical transformations in the way the analogy of folk literature suggests.[65] It is plausible what Jesus' first disciples would have used the techniques of transmission common in their milieu — memorization, repetition, and even brief note-taking. There are certainly indications that Jesus used various mnemonic devices to help His listeners learn, which suggests that He sought to make his teaching not merely memorable but memorizable.[66] Yet, as H. Schurmann has pointed out, Jesus was more than a rabbi for it appears He intended His words to be seen as a revelation of God's eschatological plans. If so, then "Heir wird von Anfang an der Inhalt wichtiger gewesen sein als die Konservierung der Form."[67] The disciples were concerned to conserve, pass on, and apply to new situations that Jesus said and meant, more than the exact form of words He used (i.e., the material is dependent on the *Sitz im Leben* for its specific formulation). This factor, along with the Evangelists' theological purposes, may account for many, if not most, of the divergences in wording in parallel Gospel traditions.

At this point a few words about determining the *Sitz im Leben* of a pericope by an analysis of its Gospel and pre-Gospel form(s) is in order. Often the form of a saying or pericope will give only a *clue* of its original *Sitz im Leben*, and in some cases the same form was used in different situations and for different purposes. The very variety of views about the original *Sitz im Leben* of most pericopes demonstrates that only in a minority of cases does form clearly indicated the *Sitz im Leben*. Form criticism has primarily been useful in the study of the pronouncement and miracle stories, but in the case of the rest of the Gospel material most of the form categories suggested (i.e., legends) tell us little if anything about a narrative's form, but rather deal with content and imply a judgement on the material's historical value.[68]

As Bultmann recognized, Dibelius' statement, "in the beginning was the sermon" was unduly restrictive as an attempt to encapsulate the situation and impetus that gave rise to various Gospel forms. A variety of activities led to a variety of forms of tradition. As Schurman has shown, it is also unwarranted to restrict the potential *Sitz im Leben* of a Gospel pericope to the post-Easter community. The inner life of Jesus' community, as well as its outer life of going forth to proclaim the Kingdom message, provided the sociological conditions in which Jesus' words and

deeds could have begun to take on a fixed form prior to Easter.[69] It is necessary to distinguish between the situation or event that gave rise to a tradition and the conditions in which a tradition was 'actualized', i.e., collected and given (or passed on in) a fixed form by Jesus' disciples.[70] In the case of a saying it is possible that Jesus Himself originated and formed 'the tradition', while in the case of a narrative (with the possible exception of some of the Passion events which Jesus may have foretold) *Sitz im Leben Jesu* means that the tradition arose out of the pre-Easter situation in which the disciples discussed and related Jesus' deeds, not that it came from Jesus' lips. Even if a narrative was not 'actualized' until after Easter, it does not follow that the early Church created the tradition out of non-historical material. To 'form' a tradition about certain events is not the same as inventing the circumstances narrated.

At this point a brief statement of our own view of the origins of the Gospel tradition is in order — a view based not on analogies with folk literature but on some of the earliest NT documents (Paul's letters to Thessalonica and Corinth). At various places in his letters, Paul uses the technical language used when the transmission and reception of authoritative traditions was being referred to in rabbinic Judaism (cf. 1 Cor 11.2, 23, 15.1, 3;1 Thess 2.13, 4.1; 2 Thess 3.6). Paul also speaks of Christian traditions as 'paradosis' (cf. 1 Cor 11.2; 2 Thess 2.15, 3.6). These facts do not allow us to assume that Christian material was passed on in exactly the same manner as the Jewish material but it does establish one key point: ". . . early Christianity is conscious of the fact that it has a tradition of its own including many traditions which the Church teachers hand on to the congregations, which the congregtions receive and which they then are to guard and to live after. In Paul's times there existed a conscious, deliberate, and programmatic transmision in the early Church."71 What sort of traditions were being passed on in Paul's day? 1 Cor 11.2 would seem to indicate that several kinds of tradition were passed on. 1 Cor 11.23 ff. indicates that this included some narrative and sayings material involving the Last Supper (which would give support to the view that the Passion narrative was fixed relatively early). 1 Cor 15.1, 3-4 indicates that these traditions included some credal statements and lists of witnesses to Jesus' appearances. 1 Cor 7.10-11 indicates that important sayings of Jesus were also being passed on in a relatively fixed form from an early date. 1 Thess 2.13, 4.1, 2 Thess 2.15, 3.6, and Gal 1.9 indicate that certain ethical exhortations were also involved (not teachings of Jesus but exhortations to follow Jesus' example, Paul's example, or the Church's ethical teaching). What this shows is that not merely the sayings of Jesus but all sorts of other traditions — some ethical, some credal, some narrative — were being passed on by Paul and others to the early Church.

Another crucial point is that first century Palestine was a mixed language milieu. As long as it was assumed that translation of the Gospel

material into Greek was something not undertaken for a considerable period of time after its proclamation in Aramaic, it was possible to assume that considerable changes and corruption took place in the material before it was ever rendered into Greek. This view and a related one (i.e., that we can readily distinguish between a Palestinian and Hellenistic milieu), have both been severely criticized by M. Hengel and others.[72] J.N. Sevenster and R.H. Gundry have shown that Greek was widely known and used in both Judea and Galilee in the first century. Galilee in particular was a frontier area with a great deal of contact with Greek-speaking people and Hellenistic culture, and had been for centuries. The archaeological evidence indicates Greek was used by both literate and illiterate Jews (both scribes and fisherman) because Greek had become the official language of commerce and communication, and was even used in Jewish graveyards and synagogues.[73] We find evidence of both good and clumsy Greek in various diverse settings indicating that: "No matter how very superficial and sketchy that knowledge was, many from all layers of society understood it and were able to speak and write it."[74] While this does not lead us to the conclusion that Jesus mainly spoke Greek to His disciples and audiences, it does mean that it is quite plausible that Jesus spoke Greek on some occasions (e.g., perhaps when He was in the Decapolis or when He spoke with the Syro-phonecian woman). One must also reckon with the possibility that Jesus' disciples were translating even before Jesus' death some of His sayings for the benefit of all sorts of people who lived in Palestine and whose language of public communication was Greek. It is still probable, however, that Jesus mainly spoke in Aramaic, thus retranslation back into Aramaic may show a saying's original form. What can no longer be claimed with assurance is that either the time factor or the langauge factor is necessarily as significant a barrier between the NT critic and the earliest stages of the tradition as was once thought. If translation took place while a significant number of (Greek-speaking?) eye-witnesses were still alive who may have even begun the translation process or at least lessened the margin for error by being sources or guarantors and correctors of the tradition, then the Greek translation of Jesus' sayings found in the Gospels may be in the main a faithful rendering of the original. But what of the Aramaic original?

The work of such scholars as Jeremias, M. Black, and M. Wilcox on the Aramaic background to the traditions embedded in the Gospel material and Acts has argued forcefully for the view that there was a substantial and fixed Aramaic tradition lying behind much of the sayings and teachings of Jesus, and that Luke had before him traditions of the words and deeds of many major figures in early Christianity when he wrote Acts. Consider Black's conclusions after pursuing the matter for many years:

> For the sayings and teaching of Jesus, however, there is little doubt that the bulk of Semitisms are translation phenomena, and have

arisen in the process of translating and paraphrasing the *verba ipsissima* of Jesus. . . I have seen no reason to change the conclusions which I reached in my *Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* that an Aramaic tradition (oral or written) lies behind the sayings of Jesus (in the Fourth Gospel as well as the Synoptics). (75)

When one combines the above considerations with the results of Schurmann's work on the pre-Easter *Sitz im Leben* of much of the Gospel material, and Dunn's argument about the use of criteria to test and sift early Christian prophecy, a general picture emerges of a tradition that was relatively fixed at an early date, especially in the case of Jesus' sayings. Even in the case of the narrative tradition two factors may have led to a rather conservative handling of the material: 1) the use of and interest in Jesus' deeds in early Christian preaching as shown by Dodd and Stanton; and 2) the concern on Luke's part and manifested by some Hellenistic Christians to convey historical information accurately.[76] While it is probably true that Riesenfield and Gerhardsson have gone too far in stressing the fixing process (and the fixed result) in early Christian transmission, W.D. Davies is right to stress that the Jewish milieu of the earliest tradition and a respect in the community for Jesus and His words and deeds probably exercised a considerable conserving influence on the tradition.

F. Redaction Criticism

N. Perrin defines the work of redaction criticism as follows: "It is concerned with studying the theological motivation of an author as this is revealed in the collection, arrangement, editing and modification of traditional material, and in the composition of new material or the creation of new forms within the traditions of early Christianity."[77] This definition while it is correct in what it asserts, does not say enough, for it wrongly implies that the redaction critic's task is simply to study the Evangelists' theologies. Not every placement, modification, or use of material evidenced in the Gospels bears witness to an Evangelist's theological purpose; sometimes the placement or modification is a matter of necessity or pragmatism. It is possible to over-theologize small modifications or additions to the traditions, as for instance in the case of H. Conzelmann's study of Lukan geographical details.[78] Redaction critics also fall prey to equating 'redaction' with 'unhistorical theologizing' but, as S.S. Smalley points out, [79] it is possible to use a tradition with little modification or with modification that merely brings out something inherent in the source. It is possible to draw out the theological implications of an historical event by a certain amount of editing, shaping, and placing of a piece of tradition without significantly distorting the facts. It is also possible to deduce something about an Evangelist's views by noting what he preserves of the material he takes over. That the First and Third Evangelists preserve so much of their Marcan source without

major alterations should tell us that they were not simply interested in theologizing about Jesus but also wished to pass on historical tradition about Him. Indeed, it requires considerable attention to redactional summaries, certain details, and arrangement to get any clear hints about how the Evangelist's views differ from his source. This should warn us against assuming that the Gospels mainly reflect the history of early Christian experience rather than Jesus' history or that ". . . the evangelists and the tradition they represent are indifferent as to whether this experience is ultimately related to anything said or done in Galilee or Judea before the crucifixion."[80] Perrin claims that the experience of the living Christ made Christians indifferent about what actually happened during Jesus' ministry and further that people in antiquity did not have the historical judgement or at least the concern to distinguish between history and various myths, legends, or later embellishments of a tradition however erroneous. [81] An examiniation of ancient historiography does not bear out the latter claim, as A.W. Moseley has shown. [82] The former contention has also been seriously challenged by C.F.D. Moule among others. Moule notes how Luke demonstrates his concern for accuracy about the past as well as recognition of Christ's present work and presence by not having Jesus' contemporaries speak of Him during His ministry with lofty titles (with one or two minor exceptions),[83] in contrast to what we find in Luke's redactional comments (cf. 7.13) and in the post-Resurrection preaching in Acts. In Luke-Acts we have both sequence and development (Jesus is endowed with the Spirit in the Gospel, but does not bestow it until Ac 2.23), thus making it unlikely that he had no concern about whether present Christian experience related to anything said or done in Jesus' earthly ministry.

Redaction criticism has rightly rehabilitated a view of the Evangelists as theologians and skillful writers but this should not cause us to overlook that they had a concern for history since it was Jesus of Nazareth who was confessed as Lord. For them history and theology belonged together, for they believed that in Jesus the Divine had broken into human history — a history which thus became salvation — history. While it is probably going too far to see the Evangelists as creators of the Gospel tradition to any significant degree, they are certainly shapers and interpreters of the tradition whose different viewpoints on the Christ-event the redaction critic can discern and study by a careful reading between the lines.

G. History and the Gospels and Acts — General Considerations

1. History and the Historical Critical Method

The historical - critical method, with all its limitations and capabilities, is used by the vast majority of N.T. scholars — including Evangelicals. It must be stressed that this method is incapable of producing absolutely certain results. The most one can reasonably expect is that it may demonstrate that there is a good probability that something did or did not happen. When the method is unable to accomplish even this, it does

not necessarily mean that the events under scrutiny are of doubtful historicity. The evidence may be too scant or complex to come to a proper conclusion. Sometimes the methodology and its limitations may be the source of the difficulty. Methodology is not an indifferent net — it catches what it is designed to catch.[84] In such cases the historicity of the event(s) under scrutiny simply cannot be established by the method however real they may have been. Thus, the Jesus established by this method will necessarily be a figure with a less full portrait than the Jesus proclaimed in the Gospels.

Further, this method cannot and should not be used to pass judgement on the theological interpretations NT authors place on events, unless it can be shown that the event being interpreted did not likely happen. For instance, while the historian is capable of establishing beyond reasonable doubt that Jesus died on the cross, he is not capable of proving or refuting that Jesus' death was for the forgiveness of sins. It is also not the historian's task to pre-judge what can or cannot happen in history; rather, he is called to analyze the evidence for or against the historicity of the event and judge accordingly even if that event appears to be produced by supernatural causes. Moule rightly remarks; "Recent theological writing has tended to dismiss the importance of history in favor of the transcendental call to decision; or alternatively to dismiss the transcendent in favor of such history as can be confined within the categories of purely human comprehension. But I cannot see how a serious student of Christian origins can concur with either."[85] What the historian ought to do is seek out an adequate cause to explain the historical event he is studying. If the historian is convinced that only a supernatural event like the Resurrection can adequately explain the formation of the Church after Jesus' ignominious death, then he may go beyond saying that the disciples believed Jesus rose, to an affirmation that something beyond the realm of natural causes must have happened to Jesus and His body after He did. He cannot, however, go on to say God raised Him from the dead for that is a theological interpretation of the event. He can only posit some unknown and possibly supernatural cause to explain the phenomenon.[86]

2. History and Ancient Historiography

Earlier in this essay it was pointed out that some of the main concerns of modern historians were not the urgencies of writers dealing with historical material in antiquity. The crucial questions are, however, Could ancient historians distinguish between the clearly legendary and the factual? Were they able or concerned to sift their sources critically? R.P.C. Hanson has rightly pointed out that anyone who has read Lucian's essay on writing history must admit that some ancient historians knew what was entailed in good critical writing, however far short their efforts may have fallen from the ideal.[87] In fact, one can find writers both before and after NT times who had real concern for accuracy and

the seeking out and sifting of sources whether one examines the works of Thucydides, Herodotus, Polybius, Lucian of Samosata, or Tacitus.[88] Even Josephus, despite his biases, was concerned for accuracy and impartiality, for he criticizes other historians for showing no concern about such matters.[89] Thucydides is often quoted to show that even he felt at liberty to create speeches for his subjects but what he in fact says is: "It has been difficult to recall with strict accuracy the words actually spoken. . . Therefore the speeches are given in the language in which, as it seemed to me, the several speakers would express, on the subjects under consideration, the sentiments most befitting the occasion, though at the same time I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said."[90] Thus, Thucydidean speeches may in some sense be 'typical' of the man or a general summary, but they are not the unrestrained inventions of the historian. What the evidence tends to show is that there were good and bad historians in antiquity as in modern times, and the good ones were both able and concerned to sift their sources with care. There was not in antiquity as much concern for details and chronological exactitude as in modern times, but this is a difference of degree not kind. The portrait of ancient historians as men who did not distinguish between legend and fact, between good and bad sources, between reliable and unreliable witnesses is in many cases a misrepresentation. It is thus possible that the Evangelists even though their motives for writing were theological or apologetical could have followed in the footsteps of Thucydides in historical matters. Whether they in fact did so is only to be discovered by an examination of the contents of the Gospels and Acts.

3. History and Myth

The problem of Myth in the NT is complex and cannot be reduced to the set of problems involved in assessing the NT miracles.[91] In our discussion of the Gospels' genre we noted that the Evangelists may have used a mythical pattern to order their presentation of the Gospel events in order to imply certain things about Jesus, e.g., that he was a Divine figure. But, as Dunn argues, "By applying the same sort of (mythical) language to a historical individual the NT writers in effect demythologize it."[92] Myth in this case is a narrative or narrative pattern, involving supernatural beings or events, which has religious significance for a group of people. This definition does not pre-judge the question whether or not we are dealing with historical or purely fictional phenomena — that must be decided on a case by case basis.

Bultmann, however, appears to define myth as a pre-scientific conceptual form or mode of expression which modern science has rendered meaningless, thus the need to demythologize the NT. On one level, this definition of myth is acceptable. The attempt to express divine transcendence in terms of spatial distance is one which modern persons can accept only as a metaphorical way of speaking. God and heaven are not located just outside the earth's atmosphere.[93] Observational

language about the sun rising and setting should be seen as a description by pre-Copernican writers of things as they appeared to be. Again, the Book of Revelation and other apocalyptic sections of the NT are full of mythical elements which are used in a fashion that indicates they are intended as symbols. Demythologizing in such cases is both helpful and needful. The difficulty arises when Bultmann and others attempt to classify various miraculous occurrences as nothing more than the product of pre-scientific thinking. While it is true that sometimes first century man explained natural diseases and other phenomena wrongly in terms of supernatural causes, one should probably not dismiss all the explanations of various infirmities and their miraculous cures as simply a product of pre-scientific thinking. There are various miracles (such as raising the dead) that are not adequately explained in the terms of purely natural causes. To demythologize this sort of event requires one to dismiss the miraculous content of the story as well as the supernatural explanation of the source of the problem. Only if one argues that miracle (or myth) and history are mutually exclusive will one accept this sort of demythologizing in every case. The problem in part is that when one defines a miracle as a transgression of the laws of nature it sets God as a cause over against nature in a dualistic way and thus an 'act of God' is seen as a violation of the natural order which God established. This is unsatisfactory. Perhaps it is better to speak of that which goes beyond natural causes rather than that which goes against them.

In the NT there appear to be attempts (cf. 1 Tim 1.4, 4.7, 2 Tim 4.4, Titus 1.14, 2 Pet 1.16) to distinguish between 'myths' (in the sense of untrue supernatural stories) and salvation history (supernatural events that occured in space and time). At times the NT writers will use mythical terms and symbols (e.g., in Colossians where it appears the author as part of his apologetic tactics uses the terms of his opponents infusing them with Christian content in order to refute the attempt to turn the Gospel into a Gnostic type of myth).[95] But the concept of divine intervention in history is a matter of supernatural content which is different from the use of mythical forms to explain that content, and it is this supernatural intervention in history that is at the very heart of the Gospel. Both the contingent facts of history and the supernatural are involved in the core of the kerygma.[95] This is why historical study is so crucial for the Christian faith and why also the historian, if he is to give Christianity a fair hearing on its own terms, must not exclude *a priori* the possibility of miracles or the presence of a genuine supernatural event or person in the midst of human history.

4. History and the Criteria for Authenticity

The criteria for authenticity as promulgated by Perrin, R.H. Fuller, and others have caused more than a little controversy among NT scholars. On the one hand there are those who agree with Jeremias' dictum, "In the synoptic tradition it is the inauthenticity, not the authenticity, of the

sayings of Jesus that must be demonstrated."[96] Others reject this judgement claiming that ". . . a Gospel does not portray the history of the ministry of Jesus from A.D. 27-30 but the history of Christian experience in any and every age. It is in other words, a strange mixture of history, legend, and myth."[97]

I do not quarrel with the use of these principles, but rather with how they are sometimes used. It may be questioned, for instance, whether or not the criterion of dissimilarity should be used as the main, much less the sole, basis of one's approach to the Gospel material. When one has isolated the 'unique Jesus' it is not at all certain that one has discovered the characteristic Jesus, much less the true Jesus in any real sense of the word. This criterion serves to magnify one portion of the Gospel portrait at the expense of other elements and this magnification often leads to distortion rather than clarification. To use it as virtually a sole arbiter of authenticity also involves making the questionable assumption that we have an extensive enough knowledge about early first century Judaism, and the early Christian community, to be able to say that this or thay saying of Jesus did not come from either of these sources. It is true that other criteria have been brought in to help clarify the matter and alleviate the problem. But too often the problem is simply magnified further because by accepting that which 'cohered' with the unique material we simply have a somewhat larger version of the unique Jesus. This is why Dunn has advocated that the criterion of dissimilarity be set aside as the primary critical tool in favor of a tradition criticism approach that accepts that there were various points at which Jesus was in agreement with either His Jewish background or His Christian followers or both.[98] The real value of the criterion of dissimilarity is that it allows the scholar to say that it *is* possible to know something from the Gospel tradition about Jesus' actual words and deeds, and thus it is appropriate to raise the question of the historical worth of the rest of the material that has not passed this most stringent test.[99] When used alongside the criteria of multiple attestation (which is more helpful in showing certain characteristic elements in Jesus' thoughts than the authenticity of a particular saying), of multiple forms, of Aramaic linguistic or Palestinian environmental phenomena, it is a helpful tool.[100] Obviously the criterion of coherence must only be applied at the end of the process so that there will be as much material as possible with which to assess the consistency and coherence of any remaining pieces of tradition with the material already accepted on the basis of the other criteria.

The real unanswered question is, What is the character of the Gospels? Few would question the sincerity of the Evangelists and we have already seen in this study reasons to question the assumption that men in antiquity were incapable of or uninterested in separating fact from fiction, historical material from legend, or bad reporting from good reporting.[101] If the Evangelists were in the main unconcerned about the historical Jesus

and what He actually said and did, how has it happened that we have so many sayings of Jesus that were likely difficult for the Evangelists' audiences to accept or understand (cf. Mk 9.1, 10.18, 13.32)? Surely a writer mainly concerned to meet the needs of early Christians through proclaiming or theologizing Jesus would not have created so many difficulties for himself by including such material and failing to add any sayings about circumcision, baptism, and the charismatic gifts within the narratives about the earthy ministry of Jesus.[102] Why did the First and Third Evangelists both follow Mark as closely as they did if it was not part of their purpose to convey some reliable traditions about Jesus' words and deeds? The obstacles to the view that the Gospel writers were not or not very interested in conveying historical material are such that if another view could be advanced that better answers these difficulties it would probably be preferable even if it was not a problem-free view. That view would seem to entail a recognition that the Evangelists had as one of their main concerns, though by no means their only concern, conveying historical information about Jesus and what He said and did. If this is accepted, then it will be worthwhile here to outline in brief the approach to history found in the Synoptics, John, and Acts.

5. History and Synoptics

To a large extent, one's assessment of the historical value of the material in the Synoptics will be determined by one's view of the intentions of the Evangelists. Those who view the Synoptics as merely kerygmatic in nature will argue that the authors did not intend for the most part to give us historical information and what fragments we do find are there as a by-product. This view, however, errs in mistaking the part for the whole. To be sure, any book which starts, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God. . ." is self-evidently not trying to present a bare bones report about an historical figure named Jesus. But if our discussion of the genre of the Gospels has taught us anything about how the Synoptics would have appeared and have been judged by first century readers, it seems that apologetic or theological, or philosophical purposes would not have precluded an author from being viewed as attempting to present a character sketch about an historical person using historical information. Classics scholar A.N. Sherwin-White argues, "Taking the Synoptic writers quite generally as primitive historians, there is a remarkable parallel between their technique and that of Herodotus, the Father of History, in their anecdotal conception of a narrative."[103] Proclomation and information are not incompatible and it appears that in the Gospels the latter is used in the service of the former. This is why Moule argues of the Synoptics: ". . .even in the context of Christian worship or of the instruction and edification of Christians, they represent little more than the element of historical formulation — the explanation of 'how it all started'."[104] Moule conjectures there was a need for rehearsing for Christians an 'Acts of Jesus' in similar fashion to the Acts

of the Apostles. This would explain why Luke definitely sees his second volume as part two of one work, the difference between the two volumes being content, not in kind. But if we allow that the author of Luke-Acts has as part of his purpose conveying historical information, how is it that it appears Matthew and Mark are making the same sort of use of some of the same traditions, unless they too were interested in conveying some historical information? Certainly there would have been opportunities and situations where it would have been helpful and necessary to convey such material. Manson argues:

> To rebut Jewish and pagan criticisms and to establish Christian claims it was necessary to describe the ministry. It was not sufficient to do this in general terms, merely asserting that Jesus taught as one having authority, or that he went about doing good; it was imperative to produce specimens of those oracles which had drawn men and women to him and fastened their hopes upon him. To convince or convert the outsider detailed evidence in support of Christian claims was urgently required.(105)

Putting these points together along with the earlier reconstruction of how the Gospel traditions began to be collected and developed (in groups of sayings, miracle stories, testimonia, a Passion narrative, list of witnesses to appearances, and credal statements), we see that the Synoptists had the material, the necessary situation and, if the Gospels' genre and the Synoptists' technique are any clue, the intention to convey historical information. How well they fulfilled their intention can only be decided after examining the texts themselves.

6. History and the Gospel of John

The problem of the relationship of the Fourth Gospel to history is an acute one precisely because John is so different from the Synoptics. The problem becomes less complicated if, as we argued earlier, the Fourth Evangelist did not know the Synoptics. It helps if we recognize that like the Synoptists:

> . . . John is not attempting to set forth an objective unbiased account of certain historical events. He is a convinced believer and he wants his readers to see the saving significance of what he narrates. He is not recording facts for facts' sake. We completely miss his purpose if we assess his work on narrowly historical lines. There is no question then as to whether John is giving us interpretation. . . The question is whether his interpretation is a good one and soundly based, or whether he allows his presuppositions to dominate the facts in the interests of buttressing up a dogmatic position. (106)

But the fact remains that though the Fourth Evangelist shares a Christian perspective and motivation with the Synoptists, his Gospel has turned out very differently from the Synoptics.

The explanation for these differences is not found in the suggestion that John is a 'theological Gospel' while the Synoptics are historical,

since redaction critics have demonstrated how thoroughly theological are the Synoptics, and Dodd (and others) have shown that a considerable amount of historical material can be derived from John. This is why, despite disclaimers about John's interest in precise chronology or 'scientific' history, Barrett still affirms: "Yet at every point history underlies what John wrote."[107] But does John only have a substratum of history overlaid by a thick veneer of interpretation? John wrote that we might believe something about Jesus and he presents an interpretive character sketch by indicating some of Jesus' words and deeds. It appears that he is attempting to refute various docetic and proto-Gnostic arguments about Jesus' nature and life, and he seems to make his case both on the level of facts and on the level of their interpretation. While he is primarily concerned to bring out the important meaning of this or that saying or event in Jesus' life, he does not neglect to narrate the factual foundation of that meaning lest he himself be accused of docetism or a sort of mysticism for which historical contingencies are of little or no importance.

If we allow then that conveying some historical information is part of the Fourth Evangelist's purpose, the question of why John is so unlike the Synoptics becomes even more critical. As a tentative hypotheses to explain these differences I would make two suggestions: 1) the Fourth Evangelist's purposes and intentions differ in certain significant ways from the Synoptists' and 2) because of his purposes, the Fourth Evangelist in the main drew on certain discourse traditions that the Synoptists either did not know or did not feel suited their purposes. In regard to the first suggestion, John seems to be writing to Christians (cf. 11.2), but has at least one eye on the non-believer. He intends to give Christians discourse material which they can use to foster belief in non- Christians. In the Fourth Gospel we find a veritable parade of non-Christians (the Baptist, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, various groups of Jews, the 'Greeks' in Jn 12.20), who come to speak to Jesus, and the Evangelist goes out of his way to demonstrate that Jesus has the answers and is the 'way' for all these varied sorts of people.[108] Possibly, as Moule suggests, John's evangelistic intentions are indicated at Jn 20.31, "which may be translated 'so that you may here and now begin to believe'",[109] but one should not build too much on this conjecture in view of the textual difficulties. Further, the stress on witness and testimony, and especially eye-witness testimony (19.35), fits into an attempt to equip the believer with material to use to convince the non-believer. This would also explain the stress on Jesus' right to various titles, His oneness with the Father, and His powers to perform stupendous miracles. The main point of including discussions about being born again, about the source of living water, about the nature of true worship, about Jesus' testimony being greater than John's, about Jesus as the bread of life, the true vine, the way, the truth, and the life, seems to be to give believers material to lead those in the position of Nicodemus, or the Samaritans, or the Greeks, to Jesus. It could be concluded from this that there is little

historical kernel and a great deal of theological expansion in these discourses, but another suggestion, made by Riesenfeld, is perhaps a better explanation. He argues that the original *Sitz im Leben* in which these discourses first took a definite shape as tradition was ". . .in the discussions and 'meditations' of Jesus in the circle of his disciples such as certainly took place side by side with the instruction of the disciples proper, with its more rigid forms."[110] John has taken this authentic material over, making it his own, expressing things in his own words and style, expanding and shaping the material somewhat to suit his purposes.

As we have implied, the Synoptics were written primarily to confirm and inform an already existing faith (or a faith already on the way to being fully formed if any of the Synoptists were addressing proselytes). They used the shorter, more formed and fixed, and more easily remembered (or memorized) sorts of traditions because they were better suited to the purpose of confirmation in the faith than conversion to it. The tantalizing short answers to various questions we find in the Synoptics are sufficient to remind believers of a faith already known, but insufficient to be used in a reasoned apologetic directed toward the unbeliever. The Johannine material is more suited to such purposes. It is more of a propoganda or missionary document than the Synoptics.[111] This in part appears to mean that the Fourth Evangelist exercised more freedom in arranging his material (e.g., the Book of Signs), and adapting and expanding his material than did the Synoptists who were somewhat constrained by the formal and concise nature of their sources. He likely departed more from the actual course of events than did the Synoptists. Undoubtedly, the arguments presented above are insufficient to account for all the various differences between the Synoptics and John, some of which may be put down to differences in personal interests and preferences. Some of the fundamental differences seem to be a result of the fact that John had significantly different purposes and used significantly different source material from the Synoptics. All the Evangelists, however, use historical information as a means to their theological ends. One cannot completely separate *Historie* from *Geschichte* in any of the Gospels.[112] But one can distinguish at various points between probably authentic material and probably redactional expansion.

7. History and the Acts of the Apostles

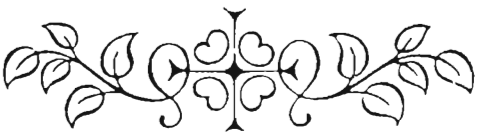
Many scholars, both Biblical and classical (e.g., F.F. Bruce, W.M. Ramsay, Hengel, Sherwin-White), in spite of the various problems Acts raises, have argued repeatedly that "For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming. Yet Acts is, in simple terms and judged externally, no less a propaganda narrative than the Gospels. . ."[113] What this means is that one must take into account the tendentious nature of the narrative resulting from the theological perspective and purposes of the author

when one considers the historical value of the material in Acts, but it does not mean that Acts is nothing more than a *Tendenzschrift,* or that Luke's theological purposes caused him to desert or significantly distort history replacing it with free invention. As J. Munck argues: "As Luke had at his disposal an abundance of material both about Jesus and about apostolic times, the conception of Luke as an edifying author maintained by Haenchen, must be dropped. . . When Luke's work is compared with Aristeas, the difference between an account of events and an edifying story can be clearly seen."[114]

Further it appears that the 'we' sections reflect the eyewitness testimony of the author,not a literary convention. When Luke uses sources he casts them into the third person (e.g., Paul's journey to Macedonia and Greece after departing from Philippi, which the author must have heard about second hand), and it is reasonable to expect him to continue to do so even if he was taking over a diary or travel narrative from one of Paul's companions. The use of 'we' is simply not a stylistic feature of Luke's work in general, and it is hard to see why, if the 'we' is a literary convention, he would limit its use to the trips from Troas to Philippi, Philipi to Jerusalem, and Caesara to Rome.[115] If, as Hengel suggests, Acts was written for a real individual, Theophilus, then ". . . the only way in which readers — and first of all Theophilus. . . could have understood the 'we' passages [is if]. . . the remarks in the first person plural refer to the author himself."[116] The most natural and satisfying explanation of all the data is that the 'we' passages indicate Luke's personal and eyewitness testimony to various events. If this is accepted, then one must also reckon with the fact that Luke had access to first hand testimony about many important matters that took place at the beginning of the Christian community and before from Paul, Philip, and various others in Jerusalem, Caesarea, Rome and elsewhere. In his Gospel, Luke was heavily dependent on Mark and probably the Q material, and it is implausible to expect him to have treated his sources for volume two in a radically different fashion if he had comparable sources.[117] We have two clues to Luke's intentions in the material itself: 1) his preface, Lk 1.1-4, which probably indicates that Luke is consciously casting himself in the mold of Hellenistic histiographers; and 2) Luke's Septugintal style seems to indicate his desire to follow in the footsteps not only of good Hellenistic historiographers but more importantly Jewish-Hellenistic historiographers (such as the author of II Maccabees) and before them the OT writers of history (both the original authors, and translators of the LXX). That he shares with these writers a religious view of history and a concern for religious history accounts for a good deal of his approach and of his differences from ancient secular historians.[118]

How then are we to evaluate this sort of kerygmatic history writing in terms of its historical value? Hengel cautions: "New Testament scholars were therefore ill advised when they allowed themselves to be persuaded that history and kerygma were exclusive alternatives. The consequence

was the suggestion that the earliest Christian authors as a rule did not mean to narrate history proper but simply to preach. . . In reality, the writers in the New Testament make their proclamation by narrating the action of God within a quite specific period of history, at a particular place, and through real men, as a historical report."[119] If this assessment is correct, the Acts cannot be reduced to the level of theology 'historicized' for the sake of conveying spiritual truth in the form of a historical narrative, nor as if the theology were added to and did not arise out of the history. Theological or kerygamtic history would be a better term to use. With his theological purposes acting as the controlling factor, Luke uses information for the sake of proclamation. Since this particular kind of theology involved historical persons and events and not simply timeless ideas or ideals, then the theological purpose can only be served by conveying a certain amount of information. To be sure, like other ancient historical works we have in Acts highly selective reporting, episodic in nature, that focuses on crucial events or persons, and is not particularly concerned with character development or precise chronology. As Lk 1.4 indicates, Luke was interested in informing his reader about "the truth concerning these things", not in satisfying his pious curiosity, or entertaining him, or simply edifying him. He intends to set the record straight and write an authoritative account from and for a posture of faith. He attempts ". . . to proclaim these events as a saving message in narrative form and to narrate them in the form of a proclomation."[120] Only a view that gives full weight to both the historical information and theological proclamation will do justice to the material found in Acts or in the Gospels, and to the Evangelists' intentions as they select, shape, and present their material.



Endnotes

[1] Cf. the typical remark in Kummel, *Introduction,* 78-9.

[2] R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. J. Marsh; Oxford, 1963): ". . . the Gospels lack any interest of a scientific historical kind." (p. 372) They ". . . belong to the history of dogma and worship.' (p. 374).

[3] Cf. G.N. Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth in New Testament Preaching (SNTS* Monograph 27; Cambridge, 1974) 116-35; C.W. Votaw, *The Gospels and Contemporary Biographies in the Graeco-Roman World (FBBS* No. 27; Philadelphia, 1970 repr.); A.W. Moseley, "Historical Reporting in the Ancient World", *NTS* 12 (1965-66) 8-26.

[4] Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth,* 121

[5] Kummel, *Introduction,* 37.

[6] Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth,* 123, notes, "Even when a writer such as Suetonius writes a series of lives of the Roman emperors, he does not weave closely his historical material into his account of the life and character of the emperors concerned. Suetonius does not attempt to set the emperors against the background of their own times; the fact that historical and biographical material is found side by side arises from the general interest in everything concerned with the Caesars."

[7] Cf. Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth,* 124.

[8] Cf. Votaw, *Gospels,* 17.

[9] Bultmann, *History,* 372.

[10] Cf. C.H. Talbert, *What is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (London, 1978). On the effect of the eschatological outlook on the production of the Gospel, cf. M. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (trans, B.L. Woolf; 2nd ed.; London, 1934) 9.

[11]Talbert, *What is a Gospel?* 115-31.

[12]Talbert, 31, cf. pp. 25-89.

[13] In particular it is hard to find this 'myth' in Mark, though he may apply the 'theios aner' concept to Jesus.

[14] Cf. the discussion in Talbert, *What is a Gospel?* 53-89.

[15] Cf. Talbert, 91-113. The point here is not to suggest that the Gospels are romances like the work of Pseudo-Callisthenes, but that they both have cultic functions.

[16] Talbert, 103.

[17] Votaw, *Gospels,* 6-7.

[18] B.H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels. A Study of Origins* (London, 1930) 365; cf. C.K. Barrett, *Jesus and the Gospel Tradition* (London, 1967) 4-6, and n. 10.

[19] Streeter, *Four Gospels,* 158; cf. N.B. Stonehouse, *Origins of the Synoptic Gospels, Some Basic Questions* (London, 1963) 58-71; Kummel, *Introduction,* 52-80.

[21] Kummel, 60.

[22] Cf. Stonehouse, *Origins,* 63-4; G.M. Styler, "The Priority of Mark", in C.F.D. Moule, *The Birth of the New Testament* (London, 1966) 223-32.

[23]Cf. D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downer's Grove, 1970) 122, 133-5.

[24] For a detailed statistical analysis of all these factors, cf. A.M. Honore, "A Statistical Study of the Synoptic Problem," *NovT* 10 (1968) 95-147.

[25] Cf. Streeter, *Four Gospels,* 180-81; F.C. Burkitt, *The Gospel History and Its Transmission* (Edinburgh, 1906) 40-58.

[26] Kummel, *Introduction,* 63, cites Mt 26.68- Lk 22.64 as an example; cf. Streeter, *Four Gospels,* 160-81; J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London, 1976) 94.

[27] Hengel, *Acts,* 11. That Mark's account is frequently longer than the Synoptic parallels points in this direction.

[28] Cf. Streeter, *Four Gospels,* 259. The 'apostle' of Marcan priority cites this very text as pointing to another and sometimes more primitive source used by the First Evangelist instead of Mark.

[29] Cf. C.K. Barrett, "Q: A Re-examination", *ET* 54 (1942-43) 320-3; D.H. Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Greenwood, 1972) 25; E.E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (Greenwood, 1974 rvsd.) 22-4.

[30] Thus, it is closer to Pirke Aboth than the Gospel of Thomas in its *Gattung*. Cf. Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 128-9; W.D. Davies, "Reflexions on Tradition: The Aboth Revisited", in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox (ed. W.R. Farmer, et al.;* Cambridge, 1967) 127-59. The Q material comports in its form with what we would expect to arise out of a Jewish milieu in contrast to the Gospel form.

[31] Cf. the list in Barrett, "Q", 322.

[32] Kummel, *Introduction*, 70.

[33] G. Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth* (trans. I and F. McLuskey with J.M. Robinson; New York, 1960) 217: ". . . Q is still relatively close to the oral tradition and remained exposed to its continuing influence." Cf. Ellis, *Luke*, 23-4; Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 234-5.

[34] Streeter, *Four Gospels*, 254-61.

[35] Cf. J. Drane, *Jesus and the Four Gospels* (Tring, 1979) 148-9.

[36] Cf. Drane, 149-50.

[37] On the proto-Luke hypothesis, doublets, means of distinquishing sources, cf. pp. 57-9 of my doctoral thesis.

[38] C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John (London, 1955) 34; cf. The Gospel According to St. John* (1978) 45.

[39] Cf. pp. 278-81 of my thesis.

40 Cf. L. Morris, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids, 1969) 18.

[41] *Ibid*

[42] Barrett, *John* (1978) 42-54.

[43] Cf. C.H. Dodd, "The Framework of the Gospel Narratives", in *New Testament Studies* (Manchester, 1953) 1-11.

[44] Dodd, 11.

[45] Barrett, *John* (1978) 44-5. These are probably the best examples that can be cited.

[46] Cf. Morris, *Studies,* 24-5.

[47] Cf. P. Gardner-Smith, *Saint John and the Synoptics* (Cambridge, 1938) 29-30; D.M. Smith, "John and the Synoptics: Some Dimensions of the Problem", *NTS* 26 (1980) 425-44.

[48] Contrast, Guthrie, *NT Introduction,* 180-1; to Streeter, *Four Gospels,* 201-17; V. Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition* (London, 1933) 192.

[49] Kummel, *Introduction,* 132-3.

[50] Kummel, 134-5.

[51] Cf. Ellis, *Luke,* 26.

[52] Ellis, 27.

[53] D. Wenham, "Source Criticism", in *New Testament Interpretation - Essays in Principles and Methods* (ed. I.H. Marshall; Exeter, 1977) 139-49, here 146.

[54]Bultmann, *History,* 122-8. We are focusing on the work of Bultmann and Dibelius because their work has been the most influential.

[55] Cf. J.D.G. Dunn, "Prophetic 'I' - Sayings and the Jesus Tradition: The Importance of Testing Prophetic Utterances within Early Christianity", *NTS* 24 (1977-78) 175-98; W. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Ph.D. Thesis; Cambridge, 1978) 229-35; D.H. Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (London, 1979) 160-85.

[56] Cf. Hill, *NT Prophecy,* 11 ff.

[57] Dunn, "Prophetic 'I' - Sayings", 179.

[58] Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy,* 230, points out that there is no evidence outside the Gospels of inspired prophetic speech being transformed into a historical narrative whether we examine the other NT documents or extant Jewish writings.

[59] Cf. C.F.D. Moule, *The Phenomenon of the New Testament* (London, 1967) 43-81; T.W. Manson, *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles* (Philadelphia, 1962) 7, points out: "The Pauline letters abound in utterances which could easily be transferred to Jesus and presented to the world as oracles of the Lord. How many are? None. It seems a little odd that if the story of Jesus was the creation of the Christian community no use should have been made of the. . . Pauline material."

[60] E.P. Sanders, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition (SNTS* Monograph 9; Cambridge, 1969) 22-6.

[61] Cf. Dibelius, *From Tradition,* 288-9; Sanders, *Tendencies,* 14-15.

[62] Sanders, 19, who adds (21-2): "To my knowledge this has never been done."

[62] Sanders, 151-83.

[64] Cf. R.E. Brown, "After Bultmann, What? An Introduction to the Post-Bultmannians", *CBQ* 26 (1964) 1-30; P. Beniot, "Reflexions sur la Formgeschichteliche Methode", *RB* 53 (1946) 481-512; G.E. Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids, 1967) 141-69; E.E. Ellis, "New Directions in Form Criticism", in *Jesu Christus in Historie und Theologie, Neutestamentliche Festschrift fur Hans Conzelmann zum 60. Geburtstag* (ed. G. Strecker; Tubingen, 1975) 299-315.

[65]The Gerhardsson theory has various difficulties not the least of which is that it is unsatisfactory to study the technique of transmission in isolation from a study of the actual changes the tradition underwent, but its attempt to see the earliest Christian community and its traditions in light of its Jewish background is of real value. Cf. H. Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition and Its Beginnings. A Study in the Limits of 'Formgeschichte'* (London, 1957). B. Gerhardson, *Memory and Manuscript - Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Uppsala, 1961); and B. Gerhardsson, *Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (Lund, 1964); and for a particularly valuable critique, cf. W.D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge, 1976) 464-80; and his "Reflexions on Tradition", 158, n.1

[66]Cf. for instance, C.F. Burney, *The Poetry of Our Lord - An Examination of the Formal Elements of Hebrew Poetry in the Discourses of Jesus Christ* (Oxford, 1925).

[67] H. Schurmann, "Die Vorosterlichen Anfange der Logientradition - Versuch eines Formgeschichtlichen Zugangs zum Leben Jesu", in *Traditions - geschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den Synoptischen Evangelien* (Dusseldorf, 1968) 39-65, here 65.

[68] So Taylor, *Formation,* 32; cf. Guthrie, *NT Introduction,* 188-219. Even in the miracle stories, it is hard to see how certain elements (such as a statement of the illness, the fact and nature of the cure, the proof or results of the healing) could be omitted and have a miracle story. If miracles did take place through Jesus, then one must be open to the

possibility that the course of events necessitated that certain elements be included in the narrative.

[69] Cf. Schurmann, "Die Vorosterlichen", 39-65.

[70] The term 'actualized' is Gerhardsson's in *Memory and Manuscript*, 331-2.

[71] B. Gerhardsson, *The Origins of the Gospel Tradition* (Philadelphia, 1979) 28.

[72] The most thorough treatment is Hengel's two volume work, *Judaism and Hellenism* (Philadelphia, 1974).

[73] Cf. J.N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* (Leiden, 1968) 176-91; R.H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthews Gospel - with Special Reference to the Messianic Hope* (Leiden, 1967) 178-204.

[74] Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek?* 185-6.

[75]Black, "Second Thoughts IX. The Semitic Element in the New Testament", *ET* 77 (1965) 20-23, here 21.

[76] Cf. pp. 69-70, 73-74, 77-80 of my thesis.

[77] N. Perrin, *"What is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia, 1969) 1; S.S. Smalley, "Redaction Criticism", in *NT Interpretation,* 181.

[78] Cf. H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (trans. G. Buswell; New York, 1957) 18-94. Even if some of the geographical details are not straightforward attempts to place a certain event in its proper location, it does not follow that the details of this sort are all theologically motivated. Some are likely part of the story teller's efforts to make the narrative more concrete and realistic and need not reflect even unconsciously the Evangelist's theological purposes.

[79] Smalley, "Redaction Criticism", 187-92.

[80] Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* 74-5.

[81] Perrin, 72

[82] Cf. endnote 88 below.

[83] Cf. Moule, *Phenomenon,* 57-61. Notice that even in John there are narrative references to Jesus as Lord (4.1, 6.23, 11.2), but none by the *dramatis personae* until after the Resurrection (cf. 20.13, 18).

[84] Cf. R.W. Funk, "Beyond Criticism in Quest of Literacy: The Parable of the Leaven", *Int* 25 (1971) 149-70, here 151.

[85] Moule, *Phenomenon,* 80.

[86] Cf. G.N. Stanton, "Presuppositions in New Testament Criticism", in *NT Interpretation,* 60-71; I.H. Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids, 1977).

[87] Cf. R.P.C. Hanson, "The Enterprise of Emancipating Christian Belief from History", in *Vindications: Essays on the the Historical Basis of Christianity* (ed. A.T. Hanson; London, 1966) 29-73, here 35-6.

[88] Cf. A.W. Moseley, "Historical Reporting in the Ancient World", *NTS* 12 (1965-66) 10-26.

[89] Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.8.3 (LCL IX; trans. L.H. Feldman; London, 1965) 472-3; Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.9 (LCL I; trans. H. St. J. Thackeray; London, 1962) 180-1.

[90] Thucydides 1.22.1-2 (LCL I) 38-9. Obviously he could only adhere to the degree that he or his informants could remember what was actually said.

[91] Cf. J.D.G. Dunn, "Demythologizing - The Problem of Myth in the New Testament", in *NT Interpretation,* 285-307.

[92] Dunn, 294

[93] Cf. F.F. Bruce, "Myth and History", in *History, Criticism and Faith* (ed. C. Brown; Downer's Grove, 1976) 94-5.

[94] *Ibid.;* cf. C.F.D. Moule, *The Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Cambridge, 1968) 30 ff., and 164 ff, on 'pleroma' (1.19 etc.), 'gnosis' (2.3), and other possible examples.

[95] Cf. Hanson, "Enterprise", [70]: "Christian belief cannot avoid the contingent facts of history, and should not struggle to do so."

[96] J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology, the Proclamation of Jesus Christ* (trans. J. Bowden; New York, 1971) 37.

[97] Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* 75.

[98] Cf. Dunn, "Prophetic 'I' - Sayings", 198.

[99] Cf. R.H. Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity", in *Gospel Perspectives - Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels* I (ed. R.T. France and D. Wenham, 1980) 225-63; R.T. France, "The Authenticity of the Sayings of Jesus", in *History, Criticism, and Faith,* 101-41; this author is in basic agreement with Hengel's methodological guidelines in *Acts,* 129-36.

[100] Some of these criteria are more useful than others and some of the remarks made earlier in this chapter reduce the historical significance of finding signs of Aramaic in a pericope.

[101] As F.F. Bruce, "History and the Gospel", in *Jesus of Nazareth Saviour and Lord* (ed. Carl F. H. Henry; Grand Rapids, 1966) 98, points out, there were many situations besides those in Jewish and Roman courts in which eyewitness testimony was highly valued.

[102] C.F.D. Moule, "The Intention of the Evangelists", in *New Testament Essays in Memory of T.W. Manson* (ed. A.J.B. Higgins; Manchester, 1959) 165-79, here 171, asks why Mark only alludes twice to Jesus' death as redemptive (10.45, 14.24) and seldom mentions the Holy Spirit in any characteristically Christian sense if he intended his Gospel to be mainly a tool for worship or a vehicle for later Christian theology. It is hard to believe such topics were not important in Mark's environment.

[103] A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford, 1963) 193.

[104] Moule, "Intention", 167.

[105] Manson, *Studies,* 28.

[106] Morris, *Studies,* 70.

[107] Barrett, *John* (1978) 142.

[108] Cf. W.H. Brownlee, "Whence the Gospel According to John?" in *John and Qumran* (ed. J.H. Charleworth; London, 1972) 166-94, here 174. That there is no specific mention of the Church in John may also favor our interpretation. Cf. D. Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downer's Grove, 1981) 720 ff.

[109] Moule, "Intention", 168.

[110] Riesenfeld, "Gospel Tradition", 63.

[111] So Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge, 1953) 9; cf. Bruce, "History and the Gospel", 89-107.

[112] Cf. H. Weiss, "History and a Gospel", *NovT* 10 (1968) 81-94.

[113] Sherwin-White, *Roman Society,* 189.

[114] J. Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Anchor Bible; Garden City, 1967) xii.

[115] Munck, xlii-xliii.

[116] Hengel, *Acts.* 66.

[117] Hengel, 61.

[118] Hengel, 51-2, Luke appears to treat Jesus' sayings as he does Scripture (cf. Ac 20.35 and Hengel, 62).

[119] Hengel, 43; cf. p. 34 where we have the term "kerygmatic historiography".

[120] Hengel, 34.