

GOSPEL CRITICISM AND CHRISTOLOGY

By the same Author

FROM TRADITION TO GOSPEL

GOSPEL CRITICISM
AND
CHRISTOLOGY

By

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1935

IVOR NICHOLSON & WATSON
LIMITED LONDON

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First Published in 1935

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY STEPHEN AUSTIN AND SONS, LTD., HERTFORD

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PREFACE

This book offers to a wider circle the contents of a series of lectures delivered in King's College in October, 1934, by invitation of the University of London. Some stylistic improvements have been effected, but otherwise the matter is presented in its original form. I wish to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Kendrick Grobel, Hartford Theological Seminary, and Herr Mattis, English Lector in the University of Heidelberg, and to all who have helped me in any way. My friends, Drs. W. F. Howard and T. W. Taylor, of Handsworth College, Birmingham, have by their thorough revision of the whole text for publication earned my heartfelt gratitude.

The reader's interest will perhaps be attracted primarily by the method of form-criticism (*Formgeschichte*) which is evident in these lectures. It has been my desire, however, not so much to give a new statement of a scientific method at present familiar in Germany, as to apply that method to the solution of a problem which vitally concerns the Church in this, as in every age. This problem consists in relating the portrayal of Jesus which is presented in the Gospels to the Christian faith.

MARTIN DIBELIUS.

CHAPTER I

THE DILEMMA : JESUS OR CHRIST ?

In the library of the University of Heidelberg there hangs in a prominent place a painting which depicts the Sermon on the Mount. It was painted by Fritz Mackensen, a German artist of the Worpswede school, which takes its name from a small village in the North-German lowlands. The painter does not show Jesus seated on a hill in Palestine, but puts him into the surroundings in which he was himself painting. Jesus stands leaning against a tree in the middle of a field, and before and behind him are to be seen peasants of the Worpswede region. In them all sorts of human types are embodied : those who accept the Word with childlike simplicity, and those who ponder over it reflectively, old and young, men, women, and children—but all of them people of the present day. The conviction which underlies this picture is obvious. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus speaks to us of to-day ; the warnings and promises of the Sermon on the Mount concern *us*, not simply that generation of long ago in a distant land. In this way a scene from the life of Jesus is brought into relationship with belief in Christ the Saviour : he who utters the Sermon on the Mount is the Lord who is the object of Christian faith.

The aim of this picture, in this case reached by giving a modern appearance to the audience, is by

no means unusual in the graphic arts. Whenever a pictorial representation of a scene from the life of Jesus has been intended to serve the needs of worship in a church, this purpose has always been evident. In such a case the painter always wanted to represent an historical incident in relation to the faith. And the Master of Nazareth was always looked upon as the Lord of the Christian Church.

But what seems so much a matter of course in the realm of art has not always been so much a matter of course in theology. Christology has indeed concentrated its attention upon the death and resurrection of Jesus, as also upon his birth, but in the main—we might almost say, as a rule—it has refrained from making any use of the records of his ministry. The Apostles' Creed may be cited in evidence. It passes straight from the birth from the Virgin Mary to the suffering under Pontius Pilate, leaping over the life and ministry of the Saviour. The same is true of the Nicene Creed. Immediately after "incarnatus" and "homo factus est" follows "crucifixus". It is probable that in the earliest times there existed in the Eastern Church richer Christological formulations in which at least the baptism of Jesus was mentioned, and perhaps his ministry of preaching and healing. But the Apostles' Creed, that Christian symbol which became normative as a rule of faith, and the Nicene Creed used in the Roman mass—that is to say, the two most important Christological formulas of the Western Church—omit the life of Jesus and give it no place within the framework of the story of salvation.

The ultimate explanation of this phenomenon is to be found in the New Testament. The doctrine of the Christian Church arose out of the second half of the New Testament, from the formulations of the apostolic letters, not from the records of the words and deeds of Jesus. We read in the Epistles about the significance of the death of Jesus, but not about the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount or the parables. And though the letters of Paul often speak of the death of Jesus, still they do not speak of the manner in which he died, do not speak of the incidents which took place on Golgotha. When Paul writes to the Galatians that Jesus Christ has been placarded before their eyes as the Crucified, he is not thinking of any edifying or touching description of his last hour ; he has in mind rather the thoughts which he, the apostle, connects with this death. He means this : that God showed in the monstrous paradox of the death of Jesus what sort of condition the world is in, and that the standards of the world are not sufficient in the presence of the cross. God let the Word of the cross appear as foolishness in the world—so preached Paul—to annihilate all human sagacity ; in the impotence of this death He brought judgment against all human power, in the disgrace of this death He called human righteousness to repentance. Therefore the Word of the cross is a stumbling-block and foolishness to the world. And though Paul indeed speaks of the resurrection of Jesus from this point of view, still he does not mention those acts in which Jesus imparted life ; he does not speak of his cures and raisings from the dead.

Paul's Christology—and this is the Christology which determined the Church's Christological formulations—seems to get along without the life of Jesus. The *fact* that Jesus was a man is decisive for faith; *how* this earthly life was lived seems to be of no importance.

The Gospels, on the contrary, bear witness to a completely different interest. They appear to find the significance of Jesus precisely in the events of his life. The stories about the words and deeds of Jesus testify, according to Luke's preface, to the certainty of the things which had become known through the preaching. In the Gospels stories are told about Jesus in order to support, explain, and accredit the message about Jesus in the sermon. One of the Gospels sets out with the very purpose of winning a Christology out of the events of Jesus' life. It is scarcely necessary to say that this is the Gospel according to John. In it the events of the life of Jesus are really interpreted as revelations of the Father in the Son. The other Gospels, the Synoptics, appear to do nothing more than hand down the traditional words and deeds of Jesus. But all four Gospels were written in order to strengthen faith and to corroborate the preaching. In them historical information becomes a means for the preaching of the message.

Thus the New Testament appears at a casual glance to fall into two halves, one which is interested in the events of the life of Jesus, and another which says a great deal about the heavenly origin of Christ but almost nothing about his earthly origin. This dilemma has always been recognized; it already played a role

in the Christological controversies of the ancient Church, and in modern times it has frequently come sharply into the foreground. In Germany it has led to a certain *radical idealism*, a *radical Paulinism*, and what we call a *radical historicism*. Each of these radical "isms" is based upon one part of the New Testament and thrusts the other part into the background.

What I have called radical idealism denies the historicity of Jesus and clings to the idea of the incarnation, the God-man—as *idea*. It is the line of thought which is represented in Germany among others by the philosopher Arthur Drews, of Karlsruhe. For him the decisive idea of the New Testament is the contact of God with man through Christ, but this "idea" was for Drews never an historical actuality. "Jesus never lived," say the representatives of this line of thought. The Gospels, then, are a later transformation of the idea into history. Those who hold this position look for proof of their opinion—apart from certain critical observations made on the Gospels themselves—to the difference between the centres of interest in the two halves of the New Testament. The fact that Paul, our oldest witness, is practically silent about the life of Jesus is regarded as disproving the historicity of that life! Out of the Hegelian philosophy of the idea a very one-sided but consistent critical opinion is thus won. This opinion is historically wrong because it is unable to explain the existence of the Gospels: they did not develop, as Drews supposes, from myth to history, but rather vice versa. Nevertheless this opinion should open our eyes to a problem which is presented by the New Testament itself.

In the second place I will now speak of what I have called radical Paulinism. One may with a large degree of truth characterize the dialectical theology of Karl Barth and his friends by this title. Faith is directed toward the Word of God, which strikes man, the man of to-day in his concrete situation. And this Word is not the narrative that tells about Jesus, but the message of God's will which judges and pardons us. This message, one understands, is to be found in the letters of Paul. What is known or might be known about the events in the life of Jesus scarcely comes into consideration in comparison with the fact of the revelation itself. Now the dialectical theology certainly did not arise simply out of the recognition of this dilemma, but rather from grappling with other problems, namely the recognition of the primitive Christian eschatology, a new understanding of the Reformation, and religious socialism. But it is not to be denied that the dialectical theology is founded upon Paul. The dialectical theology is based directly upon Paul's gospel of man's sinfulness and God's grace. In the discussions within the German Church which have been directed against the use which this theology makes of the New Testament, the reproach has been made that we constantly hear from this theology that we know nothing certain about Jesus and that, at any rate, his life does not matter. The accusation, I should say, is unjust; moreover it shows a misconception of the dialectical theology—but for all that it gives expression to an actual need which this theology does not satisfy, or at least does not sufficiently satisfy.

Finally, radical historicism. With that term I wish to indicate the school of thought which we call in Germany "Leben-Jesu-Theologie"—life-of-Jesus theology. It is much less in vogue in Germany to-day than in other countries, although it was in Germany that it had its most prominent representatives, for instance H. J. Holtzmann, Johannes Weiss, and Heinrich Weinel, who are also known in this country. This theology seeks to derive its definition of the essential nature of the Christian message precisely from the life of Jesus, that is to say, from a critically expurgated life of Jesus, out of such events at any rate as the critical historian may deduce from the accounts in the Gospels. The big question which presents itself in regard to this theological position is this : Is that which the historian is able to say about the life and preaching of Jesus really the Christian faith ? Is that the content of Christian preaching in the days of old and in the present ? The dialectical theology of Barth, Gogarten, Brunner, and Bultman owes the great effect which it has produced in Germany in no small degree to the fact that it has in very truth once more set forth what the object of faith, what the revelation, what the content of Christian preaching, was and is. It answers the questions which the theology of the "historical" Jesus left unanswered. At the same time, of course, it must not be forgotten that the life-of-Jesus theology also had its own task, a task which presents itself in fresh forms over and over again, and will come up for discussion in these lectures.

The question is therefore whether in our understand-

ing of the Gospels we can get beyond the position which was held by the life-of-Jesus theology. To do so we should have to answer the questions which that theology left unsolved, but we should have no right to ignore the Gospels in the way that the dialectical theology does in practice.

It seems to me that an historical consideration may help us along. The first Christians had no interest in reporting the life and passion of Jesus objectively to mankind, *sine ira et studio*. They wanted nothing else than to win as many as possible to salvation in the last hour just before the end of the world, which they believed to be at hand. This salvation had been revealed in Jesus, and any morsel of information about Jesus was full of meaning for them only when it pertained to salvation. Therefore it is not as if they had first a more or less historical life of Jesus, and that this was dogmatically transformed at a later stage, either by Paul or by someone else. This is a rationalistic conception. It commits the error of the old eighteenth-century rationalism of attributing the thoughts and wishes of us men of to-day to the men of old. Those early Christians were not interested in history. But that means also that they were not interested in biography; in other words, they did not ask primarily what Jesus looked like, how old he was, what journeys he made, or how long his ministry lasted. These are questions which *we* ask, and we take it for granted that they should be asked. But it was not so with the first Christians, for all these questions have nothing to do with the preaching of the coming salvation. We have

therefore no right to expect that they or their accounts of Jesus should answer our questions.

Rather we must assume from the outset that everything spoken or recorded about Jesus, every tradition about his words and deeds, had some connection originally with the coming salvation. This is probable when we picture to ourselves the historical situation of the first Christians. To ascertain such conditioning factors is the duty of the historian ; in itself it has nothing to do with faith or theology. But I believe that the recognition of this simple factor can also carry us further on in the theological treatment of the Gospels.

From what has already been said we recognize the strong probability that Christology played a role in every tradition about Jesus. For it was as an outcome of faith and with a view to faith that men spoke about Jesus. Those first Christians spoke of him because they saw in him the decisive revelation of God and because they wanted to win others for the faith. Both the letters they wrote and the accounts they drew up of the life of Jesus served this purpose. Here then is to be discovered the foundation upon which both halves of the New Testament rest, the Gospels as well as the Epistles. Here, in the first generation after the death of Jesus, a synthesis of historical tradition with theology has already come into being. The only question is whether we can recognize this synthesis, for herein lies our task. A method must be found which will show us the motives which underlie the traditions about the life of Jesus. The method of *form-criticism*, as a representative of which I am speaking here,

seeks to bring these motives to light. At the same time it hopes thereby to solve the problem from which we started. It tries to bridge the gap in the New Testament by setting forth the common basis upon which both the doctrine of Jesus Christ and the narrative of Jesus of Nazareth rest. In order to do that we must start with the Epistles and the Gospels, the material which the New Testament gives us. Not until later may we speak of the preliminary stages through which our Gospels passed, of their sources and of the very first beginnings of the tradition.

There is one part of the life of Jesus in which both the Epistles and the Gospels are interested ; that is the Passion. This is the one part of his life which is equally decisive for the account of Jesus and for the faith in Jesus. Whoever has heard anything at all about Jesus has heard about his suffering. But that which makes a Christian a Christian is the position which he takes up with regard to the suffering of Jesus. He who sees in this only the earthly factors—nothing more, that is, than a tragic eclipse, nothing but defeat and shame—is no Christian. But he who sees in the suffering of Jesus an occurrence willed by God is a Christian. His faith is in the resurrection. For the resurrection faith is the belief that God acknowledged the Crucified as His own, that He did not forsake him in death, but exalted him to Himself. That is the meaning of the Easter faith, and that is what Paul means when he says : “ If Christ be not risen, then are you still in your sins.” For in that case, Paul means to say, the new age, the new world, has not yet begun to dawn.

We must not let ourselves be deceived on this point by the tradition of the Church. Neither in the letters of Paul nor in the Gospel of Mark is any emphasis laid upon the manner in which the resurrection took place. Paul says nothing about the empty tomb, in spite of the fact that it would have been perfectly natural for him to speak of it in 1 Corinthians xv. Probably he did not even know of the story of the women and the angel at the tomb. But neither do the Gospels report anything about the *event* of Easter Sunday. Matthew only hints at it in describing the descent of an angel from heaven. Not before the apocryphal Gospel of Peter does a Gospel really tell the story of the resurrection itself. And there Jesus is led out of the sepulchre by two angels. What the earliest Christian communities mean when they speak of the Easter message is that the resurrection is the divine affirmation of the suffering of Jesus. Here is the key both to the Passion and to the theology of the Passion.

For Paul the new era has begun with the resurrection. It is not just by chance that in 2 Corinthians he compares conversion to the faith with the creation of light in the creation story. Here is indeed a new creation and Christ is the second Adam, the originator of a new humanity, the eschatological humanity which is embodied in the Christian Church. "For he is the firstfruits of them that are asleep." The resurrection is the first event of the new age, and therefore the Passion and resurrection of Jesus is a cosmic event like the creation.

At first sight Mark seems to have quite a different conception of the suffering of Jesus, for he, in contrast to Paul, relates particulars out of the Passion story. But the way in which he describes these particulars shows that he too sees the Passion in the light of the resurrection : he wants to make it evident that it is an event willed by God. In the first place the prophecies of the Passion in Mark viii, ix, x, serve this purpose, likewise the predictions of the betrayal and the denial. Here, too, we must free ourselves from the traditional prejudice which takes for granted that the narrator only wanted to testify by this means that the course of events did not take Jesus by surprise. But that is not the thing that is emphasized ; what *is* emphasized is rather this : that the Son of Man goes indeed his way, “ as it is written,” but that this does not alter the guilt of the betrayer. Furthermore the disciples will find occasion for stumbling in him as it is written in the prophet Zechariah, that is, as it is ordained by God—and Peter’s denial is only one instance of the general faithlessness. Therefore this, too, is ordained of God. And single narratives tell the same tale. In Gethsemane the Passion is revealed as a dispensation of God, and before the bar of the high priest Jesus acknowledges himself to be the One whom God has sent, who is to come on the clouds of heaven. But the several incidents on Golgotha are told in the words of the Old Testament ; the parting of the garments, the attitude of the passers-by who wag their heads, and the last prayer which Jesus cried out from the cross—these are all details which could awaken sadness and shame in

Christian hearts. But when they are represented as events in which the Old Testament is fulfilled we are clearly meant to understand that the will of God is realized in them. It is not a matter of the history of man, but rather of the history of salvation.

In spite of the great difference in their methods it is not hard to see the inner unity between Mark and Paul ; for both of them the Passion of Jesus is a central, cosmic event, which from the beginning points toward the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus as Lord. It was God himself, both Mark and Paul want to say, who sent His Son to death. Jesus' suffering, therefore, is not regarded as the brave deed of a man—in that case Jesus' death would be treated in the manner of a martyrdom. Single traits of the story, especially in Luke, do point in that direction, but that is not the real, basic understanding of the Passion—particularly not for Mark. The representation of Jesus as one whose virtues prove themselves in suffering recedes completely into the background before the thought that here the guidance of God was operative. And for Paul one should not appeal to the fact that he spoke of "obedience unto death" in the letter to the Philippians. For the context shows quite clearly that it is not a matter of the virtuous obedience of a man, but rather the obedience of the Son of God, who voluntarily places himself at the disposal of the Father's plan of salvation. Accordingly the Passion of Jesus is for Paul, as for Mark, a part of his Christology.

A much greater difference between the Gospels and the Epistles becomes evident, however, when we

direct our attention to the *deeds* of Jesus. For, so far as we can see, Paul is silent about them in his letters, whereas the Gospels tell about them. Or, to express it more exactly, Paul sees in the whole earthly life of Jesus only the humiliation of the Son of God, only the obedience that did not scorn the form of a "servant"—that is, the form of a man who is a "servant" before God, not that of a slave in contrast to some earthly master. But the Gospels would not have been written if they had not perceived something other than disgrace in the earthly life of Jesus. In fact they want precisely to show how much light came with him into the world's darkness, light which emanated from his words and also from his deeds.

But the earliest tradition, which existed before Mark, had already set itself this task. We shall come to speak of it later. Mark sees still another problem and solves it in his own way. Telling the story of the life of Jesus connectedly, he is confronted by the problem why the Jews in spite of these words and deeds persecuted Jesus and finally brought him to the cross. Actually they should have been overwhelmed by word and deed and won over to Jesus! Mark replies to this question with a theory. He reports that Jesus forbade both demons and men to bear witness to his power and majesty. Again and again he makes Jesus utter the command not to speak of his true dignity. In this way Mark explains the fact that Jesus was rejected by his own people. He contemplates the ministry of Jesus in the light of his Passion, thus giving the life of Jesus a meaning for Christology. And this meaning is not

far from what Paul has in mind when he speaks of the Jews' hardness of heart. For only this obduracy of the Jews, this hardness of heart, explains the circumstance that salvation passed them by.

But at the same time the great differences between Paul and Mark must not be overlooked. Paul thinks only of the total phenomenon of the appearance of Jesus upon earth ; and in this appearance he sees humiliation, disgrace, and shame. The Messiah, the Son of God, leads on earth an existence unworthy of his rank—an existence which does not even betray any trace of this rank. If it had been otherwise the Jews would not have failed to recognize him. How much Paul knew of the single events in the life and ministry of Jesus, of his work and preaching, we cannot say. In any case his life becomes for Paul a proof not of his majesty but of his lowliness. Paul never speaks of a divine light which, even though only for single moments, illuminated his life ; he speaks rather of the renunciation of this light ; he calls this renunciation *kenosis*, an emptying, a self-impoverishment. He sees only the paradox, that the Son of God should have descended to the likeness of men, in which sin holds sway—he characterizes this existence by the word "flesh". Not the specific things which Jesus said and did are the revelation of God, but the total fact that the Redeemer lived this life in lowliness—and what a lowliness ! The important thing for Paul, the erstwhile Pharisee, is the thought not that Jesus was a social outcast but that he was a religious outcast. The Messiah came not to the guardians of the Torah,

but to the Galilean laity, to "publicans and sinners" who paid little or no heed to the Law.

Here we see clearly what sort of impression had already been made upon Paul as a Jew by Jesus and the Christian movement. It was not the impression of a movement erroneous in the main but still worthy of human approval ; for such relative approval there was no place in the thinking of the Pharisee ! No, it was rather the impression that here an awful apostasy from God was taking place, for the God who had given the Law could not possibly have sent the Messiah to the Lawless. That experience of Paul which we call his conversion convinced him that God stood, in spite of everything, on the side of those without the Law. Overwhelmed by the recognition of this truth he had to affirm the monstrous paradox of Jesus' earthly existence. In the face of this paradox single episodes in which God's revelation was to be recognized never even came into consideration. This Christological conception was then taken over by the Church (but not understood by it) when Paul's letters became the Christological textbook of the Church. It was taken over, although the men of the Greek Church had not gone through the terrible disillusionment which Paul had suffered when he saw God standing on the side of those without the Law. This conception became normative in the Church, although the paradox which existed for Paul could no longer be plumbed to its full depth—and in spite of the fact that the Church also possessed the Gospels.

For the Gospels profess to be witnesses not of the

disgrace but of the glory of the life of Jesus. This glory could not be blotted out even by suffering and the cross. The way in which suffering and glory were seen together is best shown by the treatment of Peter's confession in Mark, a section which offers perhaps the best picture of Mark's Christology. Peter, as spokesman of the disciples, confesses Jesus as the coming Messiah. But even before we can learn how Jesus received this witness to his glory, he is already solemnly warning his disciples not to betray this glory to anyone ! The predictions of the Passion now set in, told not as gloomy forebodings of Jesus over a tragic end to his career, but as teaching that the Son of Man *must* suffer. If we take seriously the idea of the Son of Man who is to come from heaven, as we find it in Daniel and Enoch, then such a prophecy means that Jesus cannot be exalted to God, cannot return as Son of Man in splendour and glory on the clouds of heaven, until he has trodden to the end the path that leads through suffering and death. And as a divine attestation of this belief there follows at once in Mark the story of the Transfiguration. It shows Jesus as the One he really is, in the midst of the heavenly world which is his home. For a moment he is encircled with heavenly light, for a moment there stand beside him those heavenly figures who, as the Jew believes, went straight to heaven without having tasted the death of mortals, Moses and Elijah. But this all takes place only for a moment and only before the eyes of the three intimate disciples, and it is scarcely over before Jesus enjoins silence about all that they have seen. This succession

of events and words constitutes a Christological confession: Jesus is the Messiah, but his path leads through suffering and death. Despite all human doubt God acknowledges him in the very hour in which the disciples for the first time learn of his approaching Passion.

All this testifies to a very different appraisal of the life of Jesus from that found in the letters of Paul. Here, in the Gospel of Mark, the earthly existence of the Messiah is seen not only in its remoteness from God but also in its nearness to God. And it is quite easy to see how the evangelist came to this conception. Both he and the churches for which he wrote his book were deeply impressed by the tradition of the words and deeds of Jesus. There was too much still being told about Jesus for it to be possible to describe his life and ministry as *kenosis*. The Christian community had a treasure of memories which could not simply be set aside. And Paul either did not possess this treasure or else he did not make use of it.

It should now be evident that the dilemma from which we started is founded in the New Testament itself. And the history of the Church, at least the Christological controversy of the fifth century—the one that led to the definition of the two natures in Christ—indicates how deeply the tension between the two extremes was felt. If we want to trace this tension to its ultimate causes we are forced to leave the Gospels and to turn our attention to the history of what lies behind them, to leave the representations of the whole ministry and to seek the traces of the first formation of the separate pieces of tradition.

CHAPTER II
THE FORMATION OF THE GOSPEL
TRADITION

We turn our attention now to the formation of the Gospel tradition and investigate the origin of this tradition. This question cannot be decided fully by the theories which literary criticism offers regarding the sources of our Synoptic Gospels. Whether we consider the two sources usually accepted, the Gospel of Mark and the Sayings (the source commonly known as Q), or whether we consider the four sources of Dr. B. H. Streeter's theory, in either case we have to do with a connected narrative in which a general view of the words and deeds of Jesus is to be presented. When, however, we trace the tradition back to its initial stage we find no descriptions of the life of Jesus, but short, separate paragraphs or pericopæ. This is the fundamental hypothesis of the method of form-criticism (*formgeschichtliche Methode*), as a representative of which I am speaking here.

Several facts point to this theory. First, the oldest Gospel, Mark, shows quite clearly that it is really a composition of different small units. The stories can be taken without difficulty from the biographical contexts in which the Evangelist has put them. This is also true of the sayings handed down likewise

without historical connection. It has often been urged that the Sermon on the Mount was not really a sermon, but a collection of sayings. It is known neither to whom these sayings were originally addressed nor on what occasions they were uttered. They have probably been bound together by some special interests of the Christian community, such as the validity of the Law.

Another consideration leads to the same conclusion. We have to ask ourselves seriously, and without modern preconceptions, why the oldest communities were interested in preserving some records of the life of Jesus Christ. It seems quite natural to the modern man that information should have been collected about the sayings and actions of Jesus. We are in fact concerned that the events of our own time should be preserved for the benefit of posterity, that glory and honour should have their abiding record, that examples should be set up, that exhortations and warnings should be passed on. Above all, the coming generations must know how things have actually happened and what events have moved the minds of our contemporaries. All this seems to us natural. But these considerations are of no use in explaining how the primitive Christian tradition came to be preserved.

These oldest Christian communities did not think of generations to come, for this world was indeed to pass away ; therefore there was no need to preserve a record, however glorious and honourable, for a Church which had no future. The one important

thing to occupy the thoughts and hopes of these Christians was the coming salvation which was promised to them and had already been revealed in the historical life of Jesus Christ. These people stood between a past which was the beginning of a new era, and a future which was to be its consummation. If they were eager to know about that past or to describe it, they had only to think of the salvation which it had guaranteed to them. That is what I mean when I say that all that ancient tradition tells about Jesus is closely connected with preaching. This is the second hypothesis of form-criticism. Preaching means in this connection, (*a*) missionary preaching to the unconverted, (*b*) edification of believers, and (*c*) the instruction of catechumens. But neither biography nor chronological presentation is a necessary part of preaching. What was needed was rather a knowledge of what Jesus had said and done and suffered. The peculiarly fragmentary form of our tradition was determined by the style of preaching.

A third consideration strengthens the probability of our conclusion. The communities consisted of simple folk. So far as we know they had no share in the literary education of that time and felt under no constraint to write books—a task which was indeed almost certainly beyond their power. The first Christians who to our knowledge wrote books in a literary style were the author of Acts, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the author of the First Epistle of Clement. But it is just the difference between these books and all the other Christian writings

of that time, which shows that during the whole of that first century there was little literary culture among the Christians. I do not think that the members of these communities carried on theological discussions with their adversaries, and so I do not think that the polemical discourses of Jesus with his opponents recorded in the Gospels are imaginary scenes read back into the life of Jesus from the later controversies of the Church. What was presented to missionaries and preachers, either by word of mouth or on papyrus, was a tradition such as could support, illustrate, and establish their preaching.

All these considerations confirm this judgment: the oldest traditions of Jesus came into existence because the community was in need of them—a community which had no thought of biography or of world-history but of salvation—a community which had no desire to write books but only to preserve all that was necessary for preaching. That must be made absolutely clear unless we are to approach the Christian tradition with the wrong questions.

Let us now look at the traditions themselves as they are gathered together in the Gospels. If we ask what they themselves tell us about their formation, there is only one passage which gives us a direct answer to our question. The preface to Luke's Gospel is written in the contemporary style of literary dedications. For that reason we must not lay too much stress in our exegesis upon every expression in this preface, especially if it is found in other writings of that style and is manifestly conventional. This applies to the

mention of "many" predecessors; there is no need to presume more than a few. It applies also to the prominence given to the claim that Luke had traced things "accurately" from the first, and that he had written down everything "in order". Both expressions are conventional; they only show the effort which Luke made to write in the historical style thus described. Such assertions are no evidence against the theory that the Gospel of Luke in its chronological arrangement of material is for the most part dependent upon Mark.

There are two things, however, which Luke's preface does tell us about the growth of the tradition. (*a*) Luke is writing to give Theophilus and all his other readers assurance about what they have heard, that is to say in the preaching. In other words, the aim of the Gospels is to furnish proof of the message of salvation which has been preached. (*b*) That which has been written down by the Evangelists, Luke and his predecessors, had been passed on to them by those who "from the beginning were eye-witnesses and preachers of the Word". If this be so we can form certain conclusions. The first stories of Jesus came from the circle of witnesses who afterwards themselves became preachers. Then there followed other preachers, who had not been eye-witnesses. These again passed on the stories in their sermons. In any case, the preface to the Gospel of Luke confirms that close connection between the preaching and the formation of the Gospel tradition which we have already established on other grounds.

As we have seen, we owe to the preface of Luke our direct knowledge about the formation of the tradition ; but in other parts of the Gospels we find indirect information. Let us speak first of the *Stories* found in the Synoptic Gospels. As every reader can see, these can be taken conveniently from their context and can be examined as self-contained portions. We retain in this way the old stories which were circulated in the churches, and indeed they seem to have suffered but the slightest change. Only at the beginning and end are the stories sometimes connected with the context, or else editorial comments due to the Evangelists have been inserted between them. We can, however, often recognize such remarks as embellishments.

I will give you two examples. (a) One is from the beginning of a narrative. "And they came to Jericho : and as he went out from Jericho, with his disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timæus, Bartimæus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the way side." (Mark x, 46.) It is superfluous to name the place twice. Obviously the first sentence forms the connection between the previous story and the healing of the blind man. This connection comes from the Evangelist ; the story begins with the words, "And as he went out from Jericho . . ."

(b) Here is a second example of the editorial work of the Evangelist, this time from the end of a narrative. The story of Jairus's daughter, who was awakened from death, ends with the words, "And they were amazed straightway with a great amazement. And

he charged them straitly that no man should know this : and he commanded that something should be given her to eat." (Mark v, 42-43.) It is quite clear that the second sentence, the injunction of silence, is an insertion by the Evangelist, for it is difficult to understand it in this connection. The death of the girl is already well known, the funeral ceremonies have already begun. They could not hide the fact that she has been restored to life. The sentence, however, is explained by the mechanical addition of the demand for silence, which is usual in Mark's Gospel. This Evangelist means to solve the enigma of the cross, as we have seen already, through the theory of the messianic secret ; Jesus himself is anxious to prevent his mighty acts from being made public.

If the demand for silence is taken out of the closing verses of the story it is easier to understand the connection. The two sentences now stand together in which the working of the miracle is described, just as is usual in the non-Christian stories of miracles : the impression made upon the onlookers, " they were amazed with a great amazement " ; and the certainty that the miracle had really happened, " and he commanded that something should be given her to eat." This confirmation of the successful result is found over and over again in the style of the miracle-stories, as well as in the inscriptions of Epidaurus and in the works of such writers as Josephus and Philostratus. I realized to what an extent this style is typical of miracle-stories when I read a modern story of a miracle. A reporter of the paper *L'Echo de Paris*,

who was certainly not influenced by Mark v, wrote in August, 1932, about the healing of a nurse, which happened during the sixtieth pilgrimage to Lourdes : “ elle est guérie et de retour à l’hôpital, elle demande à manger.”

Here I have illustrated a peculiarity of style, common to pagan and Jewish stories as well as to many narratives in the New Testament. But it is not characteristic of all the Gospel stories. With that I come to a distinction of fundamental importance ; and that is the third hypothesis of form-criticism.

Before our time some scholars had already devoted special attention to the manner in which the acts of Jesus are described in the Gospel of Mark. They were struck by the marked difference in the style of narration. Sometimes the deeds of Jesus were recorded in a remarkably simple way for which there is not a better example than the story of the little children in Mark x. All we have to do is to see for ourselves how much is *not* reported here. Where was Jesus? In a house or in the street? Who brought the children? Why did the disciples want to prevent the children from coming to Jesus? Did Jesus seem to them too exalted or too tired to take an interest in the children? We have no answer to any of these questions. But what does the report tell us? What Jesus did, and what he said. And what he said is reported in such a way that it not only fits its own context but appeals to every listener or reader. In the story of the little children it is the saying of Jesus which attracts our attention : “ Verily I say unto you,

Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child (i.e. who will not receive it as a gift), he shall in no wise enter therein." This is the main point of the whole story ; every listener to the sermon is to receive this saying and apply it to himself as a word of God.

That is an example of one type of story, told briefly, but for general edification ; without answering all the questions which a curious biographer has in his mind, but emphasizing the one essential question to which the message of Jesus points. Next to that stands another type of story which we are going to illustrate by the story already mentioned of the raising of Jairus's daughter in Mark v. In this we learn everything which curiosity demands. What was the father's name ? In what circumstances did he meet Jesus to bring him to the bed of his sick daughter (not dead) ? We are told. Why was it that Jesus could not come at once, with the result that the girl died before his arrival ? We hear that Jesus was delayed by the crowd, and by the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, and on that account came to the girl when she was not merely ill but dead. We are also told how Jesus performed the miracle. First it was necessary to dismiss the crowd : " But he, having put them all forth, taketh the father of the child and her mother and them that were with him, and goeth in where the child was." Then we are told of his gesture, and of the Aramaic formula with which he awakened the dead : "*Talitha kourm.*" Finally, as we have already seen, the reality of the success is certified. But we do not

hear that Jesus made a lesson of his deed, as, for example, that he has broken the conventional rule of the sabbath by his act of love. Or again, it is not said that any sin was taken away with return to life, or that Jesus is the giver of eternal life. The story does not tell anything about any such religious lessons to be drawn, though they might naturally have been expected. It is the same in the story of the demons which entered into the swine, in that of the feeding of the five thousand, in that of the walking on the sea, in that of the healing of the leper or of the deaf and dumb man; the facts only are told, the edifying applications are missing. Again the facts are told in the same way as outside Christianity miracles of prophets, teachers, and magicians are narrated. The illness is described (not, of course, in a scientific way, but in popular language), the technique of healing is described, the words which effect the miracle are quoted, the healing gesture is mentioned, the successful result is established.

I am not here concerned with the æsthetic impression left upon us by the style of both longer and shorter stories. I only wish to emphasize one thing: the narrators' real purpose which we can infer from their method of telling a story.

But it is quite different with the stories of the other type. The healing of the withered hand and of the man with dropsy are recorded for another purpose. These are texts for sermons against opposing Jewish teachers, sermons against the conventional observance of the sabbath which even forbids a person to be healed on

that day. In the story of the lame man the stress is laid on the relation between the forgiveness of sins and the cure. Forgiveness is awarded to faith, and this faith shows itself in the manner in which the sick man is brought to Jesus, by way of the roof. This introduction, therefore, is part of the story, it is germane to the subject "Faith and Forgiveness", and is not a fictitious addition.

The really essential thing in these short stories is the direct religious relationship which gives them an edifying character. And here we touch the truly fundamental understanding of the method of *Formgeschichte*. This enables us to recognize the purpose of the stories from their style. That is specially clear in the case of those short stories. They were not intended to satisfy curiosity but to aid devotion; they are directly related to the sermon. The sermon, as we can see from the Acts of the Apostles, pointed to Jesus' life on earth as a manifestation of divine power; it spoke of the "man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you" (Acts ii, 22). The sermon, then, must give examples of such works of God wrought through Jesus, and the form of such a story necessary for the preaching could only be this short and edifying form which we know so well.

For this reason I have called the short stories *Paradigms*. We ought, I think, to avoid using a name which already has a fixed meaning in the history of literature, such as Bultmann's term *Apophthegma*. Dr. Vincent Taylor has proposed the term *Pronounce-*

ment Stories, but this title is not concise enough. For the other narratives, however, written in the style characteristic of non-Christian stories, we may take a literary expression. I therefore call them "Tales" (*Novellen*). And now, before we pass from the stories to the sayings, I should like to express my opinion that the whole question of terms is of secondary importance so long as the principle is accepted: that is, that there are two different styles, and that they help us to recognize the purposes of the narrators.

I have now to speak about the tradition of the *Sayings of Jesus*. Critical inquiry into the sources seems to show that they were collected from the earliest times. For the source postulated behind the Synoptic texts, and known as Q, is obviously such a collection of sayings, answers, and parables of Jesus. But here again we must not suppose that there was any intention of preserving the words of Jesus as the utterances of a famous man, that is, from the standpoint of biographical interest. His sayings were collected for a much more practical reason. People wanted to order their lives according to them. They were to be a kind of code for the Church, a new Law. The systematic arrangement of the Sermon on the Mount reveals this interest most clearly.

But there is a difference between the interest which led to the composition of that collection, and the interest of the Master himself when he spoke those words. Jesus did indeed speak in the form of *commands*. Everyone knows the introductory formula, "Verily I say unto you," by which in the Sermon on the Mount

a new demand of Jesus is set in opposition to an ancient Jewish requirement, "You have heard that it was said to them of old time." Particularly in the words of the Sermon on the Mount do we see that the old and the new requirement do not stand on the same level; for Jesus does not prescribe what is to be done on every occasion and in every situation. Otherwise he would have been encouraging hypocrisy by saying that those who fast should wash and anoint themselves, as though they were going to a meal. And he did not as a general rule forbid the burial of a father by his son when he forbade it to the man who by filial duty was prevented from becoming a disciple. Rather would Jesus bring to repentance the people to whom he was speaking. Therefore all his demands were shaped by the circumstances of the immediate occasion. His listeners were to understand the demand as a sign of the coming kingdom of God. "Fool! what will you do if God Himself appears before you?"

We now turn our attention again to the leading interests which determined the collection of the Sayings. The words of Jesus were not collected as a sign of the *coming* kingdom, but as the rules of the kingdom of God already existing within the community. This can be seen from frequent adaptations and exceptions added to the commandments. Though divorce is forbidden there is one well-known exception: in the case of unchastity divorce is allowed. With regard to the taking of oaths, the meaning is not (though that form is found in James v, 12) "Let

your Yes be Yes, and your No be No". A different form of affirmation is allowed, "Let your word be Yes, Yes, No, No" (Matthew v, 37). In the Lucan Beatitudes the persecuted and the reviled are blessed as the true inheritors of the kingdom of God, but in the Matthaean Beatitudes a condition is added: if the reviling is false (Matthew v, 11).

The same thing is to be noticed in the tradition of the *Parables*. Exegesis has established, by careful and on the whole successful examination, that the parables can be understood by themselves, and not only from the appended sayings, nor from the interpretations, nor from the introductions which Luke, particularly, has added to them. If without any preconceptions we simply allow the stories to make their own impression, we can easily imagine the thoughts and feelings to be roused by stories which were at first merely tales of everyday life. Then we are in a position to understand what such thoughts and feelings meant to people in the time of Jesus and his disciples.

But for our purpose the frame in which these parables were put by the Evangelists, or even by earlier collectors, is particularly important. For this frame enables us to detect the purpose that led to their being collected and kept. Primarily this purpose was the exhortation of the Church. The story of the Unjust Steward, for example, tells how a rogue in the moment of his dismissal carried out a plan to secure his future livelihood; that is clear enough for people who are confronted with the eschatological

decision. But this story in our text, Luke xvi, closes with sayings about the right treatment of Mammon. The story of the rich farmer, in Luke xii, whose plans are all upset by sudden death, was originally a prophecy of the eschatological crisis, but it ends in Luke's Gospel with a warning against worldly wealth. The exhortation, in Luke xiv, not to choose the best seat at a meal is described in the Gospel as a parable. It has to do, in fact, with a parable addressed to those who dare to claim rank and title even in the sight of God. But the contest in Luke concerns people who "chose out the chief seats". The parable was thus interpreted as a command. What was intended to be a picture of the right attitude toward God was taken for a rule of brotherly behaviour in life.

Now we can see what was the main purpose when the sayings and parables of Jesus were first collected; it was the desire to fashion out of the words of Jesus the rules by which the Church was to live. The arrangement according to subject-matter, the modifications in the sayings of Jesus to adapt them to the requirements of a legal code, the framework of the parables, all these things show what was the predominating interest of the collection.

We saw further that even the oldest narratives, which I have called Paradigms, were preserved and collected with a definite object. They were to serve the purpose of the preaching of Christ. That is proved by their form; that is to say, not only by their brief, edifying style, so characteristic of that class of story, but also by what is absent from these narratives, the

ornamental touches of description and the biographical element.

Sayings, Parables, and Paradigms are therefore directly connected with the life of the Church. Their tradition is not dependent on the personal recollections of the eye-witnesses. Where could we read of such experiences in the New Testament? Further, it is not dependent on the wish to record events for historical purposes, for in that case the tradition would have included more biographical and chronological material. The tradition was born of the desire to illustrate with examples the preaching of Jesus Christ, and to reinforce the exhortations to the Church, and to those who were becoming Christians, with the words of the Lord. The origin and preservation of the tradition has throughout some connection with Christology, provided that by Christology we do not mean a doctrine of the person of Christ, but the preaching of the Saviour and faith in the salvation which is revealed in him.

The Passion Narrative has also some connection with Christology. That is clear from the beginning. The death and the resurrection of Christ are vitally important in the preaching about Jesus. This cannot be illustrated with examples; the whole course of events must be presented. For it is in the interest of faith, and not merely of a desire for knowledge, to know how, and by whom, Jesus was put to death. We shall see later on how this purpose was carried out by relating details. But I want to show how the Passion Narrative furnishes clear evidence of the original

connection between tradition and preaching. Only in the Passion Narrative are preaching and faith interested in the connection of events, for the enigma of the cross can only be understood from its context. Tradition has maintained its historical sequence only in the history of the Passion. The recital, with the exception of the Anointing and the Last Supper, cannot be broken up into pericopæ, but goes on continuously from the plot of the Betrayal to the Last Supper, and from the Supper to Gethsemane, to Caiaphas, to Pilate, and to Golgotha. And this coherence is so firm that even the Fourth Evangelist cannot escape from it, although he generally goes his own way.

The stories which I call " Tales " are not so obviously related to Christology. For that which gives them their character is derived from sources too various for one and the same explanation to be available in every case. But we shall hear later on how Mark at any rate related these stories to the Christian faith.

Anyhow, this can be taken as the result of our examination. We must first understand the formation of the tradition, and then only are we in a position to recognize the main factors which have determined the whole process under consideration. Then we also learn not to come to tradition with questions which it is neither able nor willing to answer.

CHAPTER III

THE CHRISTOLOGICAL TENDENCY OF THE TRADITION

We have seen that the tradition concerning Jesus took shape in close connection with the preaching of Salvation that Jesus had proclaimed. We have now to consider how far Christology became explicit in the earliest tradition. But before I take up that question, let me make two preliminary remarks. They are directed against views that have become so widely current in the criticism of the Gospels as almost to appear self-evident, but I must first of all dispose of them.

In the first place, there is a prejudice that Christology is present in the later elements of the Gospels, but absent in the earlier ones. Those who hold this view argue in some such way as this. Granted that the stories of the Baptism, the Transfiguration, perhaps also of the Empty Tomb and of the Ascension, represent a particular aspect of Christ's person ; but the other stories are free, or almost free, from such miraculous elements, and are for that very reason to be deemed historical, and free from all Christology ; they are "purely historical accounts", objective in their character.

I will here leave aside the question whether a valid

concept of history is the basis of such a view, and whether there is any such thing as a "pure objective historical account". Suffice it to say that to the earliest Christianity no such mode of thinking can be attributed. As has already been shown, there would have been no tradition concerning Jesus had there been no preaching about Jesus Christ. The interests of such preaching must somehow appear in the tradition, and our question is therefore justified. But that does not of course mean that the interests of the preaching are to be seen specifically in the miraculous.

In the second place, there is the view that research should inquire, first and foremost, what is historical in the accounts of Jesus. Undeniably that inquiry must be made, and I shall speak of it in my next lecture. What I deny is that the historical question should, as a matter of course, dominate the criticism of the Gospels. What has to be investigated primarily is that which directs and determines the Gospels themselves, namely the endeavour to give expression, by means of story and report, to the Salvation which came in Christ. The Gospels are not chronicles which have a story to tell and nothing more. To pronounce upon their value as historical sources is therefore impossible until we have seen how far they realize their original purposes. In point of method, this principle certainly holds good not only in the criticism of the Gospels, but in the investigation of any source whatever; first, the particular intentions of a piece of writing must be ascertained and understood; then only can the reliability of its information be judged.

That the intention of the Evangelists is to relate a piece of history is certain ; but that is not all ; they want to relate it in such a way that the reader may comprehend what God wanted to say to the world through the events in question. The first question, therefore, must be, how far does this intention find expression in the earliest tradition.

Whereas we were previously concerned with the theological standpoint of Mark, we now have to deal with the earliest transmitters of tradition—those nameless people who gave form to the stories and sayings of Jesus. To imagine the thoughts and feelings by which they were actuated, we must be mindful of this : for these story-writers Jesus is He who rose from the dead, the Lord of the community. This is what distinguishes their ideas about Jesus from those of the disciples during the lifetime of Jesus. Then there was vague presentiment and hope ; now there is faith and certainty. Then men hoped that Jesus would somehow open the gate to a new world ; now they know that the first act of the new world is already accomplished—that Jesus has broken the power of Death. For this is the essence of the faith in the Resurrection : that God, in exalting Jesus to Himself, has ushered in the new age. The story of the Empty Tomb is not essential, but only the certainty that the cause of Jesus did not come to an end with his death, that he dwells with the Father, and that he will return to finish his work.

This certainty is the foundation of the faith of those who created the tradition about Jesus. At the time,

however, when the events recorded in the tradition were happening, this faith did not yet exist. When people at the time said : Jesus is the Messiah, they meant that he was the chosen of God, that he was, as it were, the Messiah designate, whose reign was to come. For the creators of the tradition, on the other hand, Messiah implied fulfilment already : as Messiah Jesus went to his death, his messiahship was confirmed by the fact that God did not forsake him in his death, and he will come again to inaugurate his reign. What we must therefore realize is this : the life of Jesus runs its course before Easter, whereas the tradition of his life was formed after Easter and conditioned by the events of Easter.

The correctness of this view is evidenced by the use of the title Son of Man in the earliest tradition. Wherever the title may come from, it undoubtedly meant for the contemporaries of Jesus, Man from heaven—he that comes upon the clouds of heaven. I should not be prepared to go so far as some of the Gospel critics who deny that Jesus could have used the title. Jesus may have spoken of the coming Man in the eschatological sense, perhaps without immediate reference to himself rather in the sense expressed in Mark viii, 38 : “ Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words . . . , of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed.” It is also possible that Jesus had already used the phrase by way of contrast : “ The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.” For the creators of the tradition, however, “ Son of Man ” assumes a profounder significance. For them the

phrase is expressive of the belief that he who led a life of poverty among men and was condemned to die a painful death, will return on the clouds of heaven. That is why "Son of Man" becomes an appellation for Jesus while still on earth : the Son of Man has power to forgive sins, the Son of Man is lord of the sabbath, the Son of Man came eating and drinking. That Jesus should have spoken these words may seem unlikely, to judge by their contents, but the tradition formed them thus from the beginning, with the intention not of reproducing what Jesus had said, but of showing what Jesus means. The phrase "Son of Man" serves this purpose best. When the congregation hears that the Son of Man has power to forgive sins on earth, just as God in heaven, this signifies much more than the mere statement that Jesus forgave sins by the grace of God ; it signifies that this Jesus is God's representative on earth. In other words, it expresses a Christological idea.

Once we have entered into the spirit of this Christological attitude of the tradition, we understand that the judgments of Jesus in cases of conflict were not related as isolated decisions, but as precepts for the community. According to Mark ii, Jesus gave his disciples dispensation from all fasting. The community, however, cannot report it without justifying the reintroduction of fasting. "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day." That is a Christological utterance, for the bridegroom is no other than the Lord Jesus who has been torn away from them.

What Jesus actually said to them in this instance, whether he meant the dispensation from fasting to be temporary, it is impossible to say ; we only see that for the Church the dispensation was as a matter of fact temporary. Any attempt to reconstruct an original form of the story, however, must fail. It is probable that this story was used very early to justify the practice of fasting observed by the communities, so that to-day it is impossible to separate with certainty the elements which testify to the life of Jesus from those other elements which already show the characteristics of the instruction given in the church. Of the same type, probably, is the passage previously quoted (Mark ii, 28) in which the Son of Man is called the lord of the sabbath. Jesus is understood here also as a new law-giver.

A good illustration of the nature of the early tradition is the anointing at Bethany. Apparently its import is that Jesus protects the woman who anoints him from the pious zeal of the disciples who demand that the money be used for good deeds. Jesus answers : " The good work asked of her has already been done to me." But this significance of the story does not suffice the narrators ; it is not Christological enough. They see in the woman's action an event in the history of salvation ; this anointing is for them a prophecy of the other anointing which is to take place when Jesus lies in the grave. It is this significance of the story that weighs with the narrators. It secures for it a place in the Passion. It justifies the pathetic conclusion of the whole story : " Wheresoever this

Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." This, however, is not meant to refer to her act of love, but to the prophecy of Jesus' death made in performing a funeral rite upon him.

It may seem strange at first sight that the name of the woman is not given ; it is in fact very significant, because it shows that there is no wish to emphasize the personal aspect of the story, the sentiment of the woman towards the Master whom she adores. Otherwise her name would have been given, just as in other stories the names of Zacchaeus and Mary and Martha are given. What is to be emphasized in this account is its bearing on the history of salvation ; here is one of the testimonies announcing the death of Jesus. In the prophecy of the Passion of Jesus, as in all other prophecies, lies a very essential element of preaching : what can be foretold must have been determined long ago. If, therefore, certain men, or Jesus himself, had the power to announce the Passion, this is a proof that it was decreed by God. That it was willed by God is, however, the main purpose of all preaching on the Passion of Jesus. And when in the instance of the fasting the early tradition represents Jesus as saying : " The Bridegroom shall be taken away," his foreseeing of the Passion carries with it the consoling assurance that this is all willed and ordained by God.

We have not yet come to discuss what all this may mean for the historian. My concern at the moment is to show that all those pericopæ which undoubtedly rest upon the early tradition, the pericopæ which

without exception I count among the paradigms, already contain Christology : they seek to show that this Jesus is the risen Lord of the Church.

In support of this conclusion let me adduce a negative observation often overlooked, which seems to me to throw light upon the nature of the whole narrative of the Gospels. The critical approach to the life of Jesus, called in my first lecture the Life-of-Jesus theology of the radical historicism, claims to recognize in the New Testament picture of Jesus the traits of a most exemplary human character. The right to this mode of approach cannot be denied if all that has been handed down to us about the life of Jesus is borne in mind, but it must be pointed out that the tradition itself is quite differently orientated. Nowhere in the Gospels is it said : such was Jesus, and you, his disciples, shall be like him. Nor does Paul employ details of the life of Jesus for the purpose of exhortation ; for the humility of Christ, represented as exemplary in Philippians ii, is the humility of the pre-existing Son of God, whereas the earthly life of Jesus is quite generally referred to in the words, "obedient unto death." The first reference in early Christianity to the exemplary nature of particular traits of Jesus is probably the exhortation addressed to slaves (1 Peter ii, 21), which seeks through remembrance of the Passion to fortify the patience of those suffering wrong. The subsequent chapter of the same epistle refers all Christians suffering wrong to the example of their Master while he was suffering. Beside this might be set the story of the feet-washing. Though

in the Gospel of John it has its special mystical meaning, it possibly has an older foundation, an older form in which the significance of the event was characterized by the saying: "For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you" (John xiii, 15). But in the Synoptic account both of the Life and the Passion of Jesus, there is no mention of any such human exemplary significance. Precedents are sought in the Old Testament, and even the Epistle of James cites the prophets and Job as the great examples of patience in suffering, whereas it is silent about the sublime example of the Master, which would at once occur to us, were endurance in suffering to come under discussion.

It becomes evident that to-day we approach the tradition in a spirit that is alien to the old communities. They did not want to hear about a pious Jesus, nor about a patient, valiant, or truly human Jesus; they wanted to learn from the tradition about the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. What they wanted to have described was not an example of faith, but the object of their faith. For this reason that which God had done through Jesus was alone important, and not the excellence of his character.

I should like to make this view clearer still by reference to a theme often emphasized by theologians, not so much, it seems to me, on adequate traditional grounds, but in order to stimulate the feeling of piety in men of to-day; I mean the theme of Jesus at prayer. Apart from the story of Gethsemane, there is only one instance of Jesus at prayer in the Gospel of Matthew,

and only two in the Gospel of Mark, one in Mark i, 35, when he retires into solitude from the first onset of the crowd, the other in Mark vi, 46, when after the feeding of the multitude and before the walking on the sea, he takes leave of his disciples and retires to a mountain. The first passage is to be found in a connecting link between two healings (that of Peter's mother-in-law, and that of the leper), and therefore does not belong to an old pericope, but originates from the Evangelist who has linked these two stories. In the second passage it is open to doubt whether the story of the walking on the sea does not begin at a later point. We thus see that the oldest tradition reports practically nothing about Jesus praying. Let me repeat that here I am not concerned with the historical question whether Jesus prayed—of course, the creator of the Lord's Prayer prayed—but the question is whether the old narrators considered Jesus' praying essential from the standpoint of preaching.

They did not consider it essential. That Jesus himself prayed does not pertain to the history of salvation. Man is not to emulate him, but to receive from him ; he is not example, but instrument of God's revelation. For this reason he is not shown in converse with God. This was considered very proper by the Fourth Evangelist : at Lazarus's tomb Jesus is made to say expressly that he clothed his thought in the form of prayer because of the people, in order that they might perceive the connection between the Son and the Father. This connection, however, does not

require Prayer for its expression. Thus the so-called High-priestly Prayer (John xvii) is not the expression of a heart stirred by desires, but the proclamation of the revelation before God's countenance, the presentation of the Church before God's throne.

Quite different is the picture in Luke. In the Gospel of Luke there are five passages—apart from Gethsemane—in which Jesus is shown at prayer: and in three of these five passages the mention of Jesus at prayer is simply introduced into the reproduction of the Marcan pericope, namely, at the baptism of Jesus, before the choice of the Apostles, and before Peter's confession. Luke is therefore the first to attach real importance to Jesus' praying. And this is not accidental, for, as the story of the Passion shows, Luke is the first Evangelist to interest himself in the human qualities of Jesus. This interest, however, is not in its origin Christian. It is explained by the literary attitude of Luke who endeavours to present a picture of Jesus in a biographical sense, and that, among other essentials, requires proof of piety, even in the presentation of the Son of God and Lord of the Church. Thus, the reference to prayer and the express correction of the early tradition becomes comprehensible.

Luke thinks in terms of biography, John in terms of Christology. When a man believes in the revelation of God in Christ, he needs no proof that at certain moments Jesus was in communication with God: the permanent close connection between Jesus and God naturally presupposes him to be the Christ. That is why faith is not interested in Jesus' piety as

a human quality, however much an insight into Jesus' inner life may seem of interest to us. And that is why the earliest tradition is silent about Jesus at prayer, and why, in general, it refrains from saying anything about the way in which Jesus took a personal share in his people's piety. Jesus' censure of the legal practice is a different matter ; having been passed in the name of God, it pertains to the revelation not to the psychology of Jesus, and mention must therefore be made of it in the tradition. Neither the religious psychology of Jesus nor any other circumstance of his inner life is a subject of the preaching.

The most important observation of this kind is to be made, however, in respect of the story of the Passion. As we have already seen, in the Passion of Jesus faith and preaching are interested in the interrelation of events. Consequently, the story of the Passion is the earliest portion of the tradition that has been preserved for us as a continuous narrative and the intention in its formulation must therefore be easily recognizable. The form itself shows no trace of the spirit in which modern man would handle the story of Jesus' innocent suffering and death. Nothing is reported about the heroism of his long suffering, nothing about the exceptional torment of his death, nothing about such details as distinguish the stories of the martyrs. Here again Luke's position is unique ; his construction of the story bears a close resemblance to that of a martyr legend. On the other hand, the earliest accounts of the Passion of Jesus set themselves quite different aims, aims essentially pertaining to the history of salvation, Christological aims.

Let us first make this manner of presentation clear in a negative way by noting what is not contained in the story of the Passion. If this story were psychologically orientated, interested in the emotions of the actors, an unequivocal answer would be expected above all to the question of the motives of the betrayal. What did Judas want when he entered into negotiations with Jesus' adversaries? We learn so little about it that historians even now vie with poets in construing motives that might account for the traitor's act. From a psychologically orientated account we might further expect an insight into the feelings of Jesus during the night of agony and during Good Friday. We learn nothing about them. Some may point to the scene in Gethsemane and to Jesus' last words on the cross: but these instances require another interpretation; we shall speak of this problem later. The first to treat both cases psychologically was Luke, and by doing so he considerably influenced the exegesis of these passages.

Some historians have assumed, as a matter of course, that the trial of Jesus must have been debated between the first Christians and the Jews, and from such debates the account of the judicial proceedings in the story of the Passion is supposed to have resulted. This view also cannot be maintained. In the eyes of the Jewish authorities the Christians were so obviously in the wrong that all debates about the trial would probably have been declined with scorn. A member of the Sanhedrin had no call to enter into any discussion with these people. In the story of the Passion, at any

rate, there is no trace of any such, let us say, juristic element. However much opinions about the proceedings instituted against Jesus may differ, it is certain that the rules of procedure of the Mishna were disregarded. Recently, Lietzmann has disputed altogether that Jesus was brought before a Jewish court of law. Again, the execution of Jesus has been by no means correctly described. We know nothing about the shape of the cross—the Greek word designates only the pole—and nothing about the physiological cause of the death, nor are the particular torments of this punishment described in order to arouse compassion, as in the martyr legends. For instance, we are not told in the earliest reports whether Christ was tied or nailed to the pole; only John mentions the nail-marks of the risen Jesus, and perhaps Luke also. Thus all that might be expected in an historical account, in a legal defence of Jesus, or in a martyr legend, is absent from the story of the Passion of Jesus.

What then is its real content? A feature long since observed by critical theology is the marked dependence of the story upon the Old Testament. Why should the people who mock the Crucified shake their heads? Gestures of the kind are not mentioned elsewhere in the story, certainly not in the case of indifferent persons. The answer is: because Psalm xxii, the great Psalm of suffering in the Old Testament, says: "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him." Why in the dividing of the clothes of the delinquent

is use made in all reports of two expressions : parting of the garments and casting of lots ? Because the same Psalm uses these expressions in the nature of a parallelism. Likewise where the dying Jesus is given vinegar to drink, where the captive is spat upon and beaten, perhaps also in the case of the two thieves crucified with Jesus, allusions to passages of the Old Testament can be recognized. That the disciples would forsake him is foretold in a passage of Zechariah : “. . . smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.”

This particular instance points to the significance of the relationship with the Old Testament. Later generations have used passages of the Old Testament in order to verify stories of the New Testament. This practice begins already with Matthew, continues in the Epistle to the Hebrews with regard to a certain theme, and is largely employed by Barnabas and Justin. Such practices are unknown in the early tradition, which is rather concerned with demonstrating that even the most shameful, painful, and degrading moments of Jesus' life are in accordance with Old Testament prophecy, and therefore foreordained by God. The truly Christian understanding of the story of the Passion, the knowledge that even the ignominious was willed by God, becomes comprehensible for the Christians of that time only by reference to their Bible, the Old Testament, which predicts these happenings. The conviction “ this was done by the will of God ”, soon converted itself into the conviction “ this came to pass according to the scriptures ”. Here also

the connection between the earliest tradition and the preaching becomes evident. The old form of the preaching handed down to the Apostle Paul adds to the account of the death and also of the resurrection, the words : “ according to the scriptures.” The aim of such preaching is to present the story of the Passion as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies, as the execution of the divine will revealed already in the Old Testament.

These observations lead to an understanding of Jesus’ last words : “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ” It is the beginning of Psalm xxii previously mentioned, from which the Christians derived their understanding of the Passion. As to the historical aspect opinions may differ. It may be that Jesus actually prayed the words of this Psalm, or it may be that they were used as an interpretation of the last moment of his life. It is certain that they were not meant to signify that Jesus had lost faith in his mission and had succumbed to despair. It is certain that the words of this Psalm on the lips of the dying Jesus signified that he was resigned to God’s will. These words conceal no psychological fact ; and here again the view taken of them is the expression of an understanding of the story of the Passion based on faith. This view holds good whether the words are Christ’s own, or have only been attributed to him.

The way in which the story of the Passion was regarded apart from its relationship with the Old Testament is clearly shown by the brief interest in the technical aspect of the occurrences. We are told

the bare facts about the betrayal, the discovery of the place where Jesus passed the night, the surrender to the Romans, and the actual execution. But stress is laid on the scene in Gethsemane, and on the judicial examination before the High Priest. Here again historical questions are not under consideration ; for neither scene were there any reliable witnesses, nor can the sleeping disciples be regarded as such. The content of the scene in Gethsemane is the contrast between the Lord who, knowing his destiny, is resigned to God's will, and the sleeping disciples. Not the torment suffered by Jesus, but his conquest of the torment, is of importance : " Not what I will, but what thou wilt." Otherwise, the contrast between him and the ignorant, sleeping disciples would not be complete. And in the scene before the High Priest the important thing is not the examination itself, but the messianic avowal that Jesus makes before him : " Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Further, the death of Jesus is not approached from the point of view of world history, nor is it invested with the elements of martyrdom. The first thing to be reported after Jesus' death is the rending of the veil of the temple. This event must not be understood in the sense attributed to it in the Gospel according to Matthew, where it is one sign among several that the world of God participated in the death of Jesus. In the Gospel according to Mark this incident stands quite isolated. It obviously announces that the holy

place of the Jews announces the death of the Messiah. This interpretation finds confirmation in the subsequent words of the Centurion, which, as a pagan's acknowledgment of the divinity of Jesus, are recorded with special emphasis. Thus Jew and gentile acknowledge him ; already in the hour of death, at the moment of apparently deepest ignominy, the victory of Jesus becomes manifest.

If we compare these accounts with that given by Luke, it becomes clearer still how small a part is played by consideration for historical thinking and human feeling, how much the whole event is approached from the point of view of the revelation of God. Luke tries to turn the story of the tradition into something like a martyr-legend, emphasizing high human qualities. In the death scene this becomes very apparent, the words of Psalm xxii being replaced by the milder words taken from another Psalm : "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." And the Roman centurion, instead of avowing the divinity of Jesus, merely expresses what might be expected from a pagan by way of tribute to him : "Certainly this was a righteous man." In Gethsemane Jesus, in his agony, is strengthened by an angel. That is the main point, the reproach addressed to the sleeping disciples, repeated in the text of Mark, is secondary. This is characteristic of an attitude which gives the chief place to the experiences of the sufferer, as is usual in martyr-legends. Finally, the scene of the arrest is dominated in the Gospel of Mark by the words : "the scriptures must be fulfilled." Here the betrayal

of the Master by a kiss, the wounding of an adversary by a disciple, are only casually reported. In Luke, however, these incidents become prominent features, viewed from the standpoint of piety. As Judas draws near to kiss Jesus, it is as though the whole world were crying out to the traitor: "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" And the wound inflicted by the zealous disciple is healed by the forgiving Master.

Luke, then, relates in the Passion story a stirring human event, the several incidents of which are presented in the style of martyr-legends: the martyred hero radiates the nobility of his character, even upon his adversaries. Sinful Peter, the penitent thief, the amazed centurion: they all experienced his power. And not only is the reader's compassion aroused by numerous traits; by the exemplary behaviour of the martyr, and by God's visible protection, his mind becomes convinced of the righteousness of the cause. All this is quite alien to the earliest accounts of the Passion of Jesus; the oldest story seeks neither to be interesting nor to arouse emotions. What it seeks to show is that the events were foreordained by God, and that just in the most outrageous and ignominious incidents of the story there was accomplished what the Christian preachers proclaimed: the salvation of the world.

So far I have spoken only of the earliest tradition—of the oldest stories and sayings, and of the story of the Passion. I have tried to show how closely these portions of the tradition are connected with the ideas of faith; that they also seek to "proclaim"; that they

do not want to report about an interesting and stirring life, but about the realization of salvation according to God's will. My reason for dealing with these particular passages was to refute the widespread prejudice that sees in them not testimonies of faith but mere reports. That part of the tradition which, from the standpoint of historical form, must be considered as later is, of course, not free from the features characteristic of the preaching; but there they manifest themselves in a different way.

I am going to deal first with the narratives of the great miracles performed by Jesus. These narratives are presented in much the same way as the non-Christian miracle-stories, and I therefore call them Tales. The intention common to them all is that they seek to hold up Jesus as the great wonder-worker. In addition, they describe the act of healing and how it was performed, or the astounding, incomprehensible success. It is somewhat surprising that such stories should be told of Jesus, seeing that in the story of the Temptation he refused certain great miracles as diabolical: the changing of stones into bread, the casting of himself from the pinnacle of the temple. Indeed, such miracles set Jesus very near the Oriental magicians of the time. Thus Lucian in his *Talk* entitled "Philopseudes" says that he had seen a stranger in broad daylight fly through the air, walk on the water, and with easy step pass through the fire. In this connection he also speaks of the power over demons. For the historical critic the relationship of the Tales in the Gospels with non-Christian materials presents,

of course, a difficult problem ; I shall deal with it in my next lecture. For the present let us inquire what such tales meant to the Christians who gave them a place among the stories of Jesus and thereby secured for them importance in divine worship and instruction.

The answer to this question is suggested by the Greek word Epiphany, which signifies that a god otherwise concealed becomes perceptible through the manifestation of his power. In the times when gods and religions wrestled with each other, such evidence of might and divine power came more and more to play the part that had formerly been played by myths. The knowledge sought was not so much what the god had created and ordained in the beginning of time, but rather what assistance he could afford his worshippers in the present. An instance in support of this conclusion is the Egyptian god Serapis, one of the most modern gods of the time. No myths were at all current about him, but there were epiphanies, evidences of miraculous boon and benefaction. It is as easy to understand what such tales meant to the Christians in which their Lord and Master was clearly depicted as the Saviour and the helper of all the care-laden, as the holder of power over demons as well as over the waves of the sea—and even over death itself.

The Christological picture that resulted after the reception of these tales into the tradition was that the life of Jesus was not yet the appearance of the Messiah, but only preparatory to it. The life of Jesus had run its course without divine splendour, though

abounding in divine powers recognizable by faith. Yet the Lord, even in his humble appearance on earth, had been known by the demons ;—thus Mark presents it in his theory of the secret Messiahship. And already at the transfiguration the most intimate friends of Jesus had seen him as the Lord that he was to become—the Lord that dwells in heaven. Later in the Tales the community saw him whom they worshipped as their Master ; already during his life on earth, so these narratives related, he had revealed himself as the helper and Saviour—as Lord over nature and death. The Christological significance of these tales, then, rests on their showing to the Church how their risen Lord had lived while he was still on earth. We have thus reached a point which leads straight on to the Gospel according to John. The question to be dealt with now is the relation of all this to actual events—the historical question.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEM OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS

The historical question with which I am here concerned is the question about the value of the tradition of Jesus for the knowledge of the actual events. I have already pointed out why I delayed raising this question until the character of the tradition, regardless of its historical value, had been established. The earliest Christians must not be supposed to have had that degree of historic interest that we take as a matter of course. We must completely abandon the view generally taken of their attitude towards the historical question, and must content ourselves with answers which often enough are opposed to our modern historic sense, and sometimes are in themselves paradoxical.

I tried to show in my previous lectures that the Gospels, and the tradition which they preserve, have the character of a confession and a proclamation. Of course they have also an historical character. They want to demonstrate that God himself acted and spoke through Jesus of Nazareth. Consequently Jesus must have acted historically and must have spoken to historical people. We are therefore justified in asking with regard to the texts of the Gospels: What do they disclose about historical events, about things which actually happened?

For an answer to this question our first approach is not to the Gospels, but to the old separate units which form their foundation, more especially the pericopæ that I call Paradigms. To these the Evangelists have added a good deal of biographical material, since without such material a comprehensive picture of the work of Jesus would be impossible. Most of these additions, as might be expected, come from him who is the author *par excellence* among the Evangelists—Luke. What the Evangelists have created in this way as a framework for the tradition deserves our consideration also, from the historical point of view. But what is contained in the various units of the tradition itself naturally takes precedence, because they constitute the original tradition of the early communities.

In thus approaching the early tradition we must try to imagine for ourselves all that an account of the life of Jesus might have contained, and what, in our opinion, might be expected from such an account. If we then compare what might be expected with what the tradition actually contains, we must first aim at establishing the negative side of such a comparison. The negative side, however, has a positive significance of the highest value. The negative impression made upon us is that the earliest portions of the tradition contain practically no biographical material, properly so-called. They say nothing about the personal appearance of Jesus, his bearing, or his mode of life. Nothing is reported about his family except a few names ; his brothers, James, Joses, Judas, and Simon

are mentioned in the story of Jesus' appearance in his native town (Mark vi, 3). But even in this story the name of the town itself is not recorded ; it is introduced by Luke in his elaboration of the story, and was known, moreover, from the story of the Baptism (Mark i, 9). Probably Nazareth is the correct name of the town, but its omission in the early tradition proves what little interest such details evoked.

Besides, absolutely nothing reliable can be learned about the sequence of events, nor about the duration of the ministry of Jesus. The events are undoubtedly recorded by Mark in a certain order of time, but no one will accept this as the actual order of events. If that were the case, the conflicts with his opponents must have been crowded into the opening and closing stages of the ministry of Jesus, while disappearing entirely in the middle. In Mark's grouping of events these conflicts are confined to chapters ii and xii. This arrangement is, of course, according to subject matter, and is not chronological. Papias of Hierapolis was aware of this when he charged Mark, and at the same time defended him, because his account was not written "in order". The attitude of both Matthew and Luke likewise testifies that they do not attach any historical value to Mark's order, for whenever they find that it serves their purpose they group the incidents differently.

No suggestion at all is to be found in the Synoptic tradition regarding the duration of the ministry of Jesus. This follows quite naturally from the circumstance that the tradition originally consisted of

individual pericopæ. Anyone who holds a different opinion, assuming that right from the beginning the tradition took the form of a short, comprehensive narrative of the ministry of Jesus, will have to account for the absence of any allusion to the whole problem of its duration. The usual assumption of a period of three years, or a little less, for the public ministry goes back, as is generally known, to the mention of three passover feasts in the Gospel according to John. I think, however, that even that Gospel is wanting in any chronological intention. This Evangelist mentions two passover feasts besides the passover at which Jesus died. One is connected with the story of the cleansing of the Temple. He places this story at the beginning of the ministry on account of its programmatic character, and the feast of the passover is therefore mentioned in the same place. The other instance is the passover feast in John vi, 4. The feeding of the five thousand is said to have taken place when the passover was at hand. This statement, apparently quite unimportant, is probably intended to relate the story of the feeding of the multitude to the passover and to the Last Supper. I am inclined in this case also to deny all chronological significance. But anyone who comes to a different conclusion must recognize that not even in the Fourth Gospel is there any express indication of the period during which Jesus exercised his ministry. As yet this problem seems to have had no interest for the transmitters of the original tradition, or even for the Evangelists.

The problem of absolute chronology—now discussed

again more frequently in view of plans for calendar reform—finds no answer in the earliest tradition beyond the naming of Caiaphas and Pilate in the story of the Passion. And this solution leaves a margin of ten years within which to fix the ministry of Jesus, if for Pilate's term of office we accept the decade A.D. 26—36. What we know beyond this margin is based on particulars supplied in Luke iii, 1, when John the Baptist is brought on the scene. According to this passage John the Baptist made his appearance in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, which is either the year 27/28 or 28/29, according to the method of reckoning. It is quite possible that Luke had made careful inquiries, and that the date of the Baptist's appearance is given correctly ; but that is his construction. The early tradition of the Christian communities knew nothing about it, and very likely did not care very much.

All these negative observations show that the method of form-criticism is fundamentally correct in its determination of the starting-point of the tradition. The old tradition of the life of Jesus that has come to us is not chronicle, is not biography, is not literature, but is testimony to Jesus the Lord, and is therefore most closely connected with the preaching. The positive value of these negative observations is that now they form a guarantee of the antiquity and value of the earliest tradition. This may sound paradoxical, but it is a deduction which the facts warrant. For it is the apparent shortcomings of the tradition which actually show that it originated in circles wholly

uninterested in such questions as we have raised. The non-literary and non-biographical nature of the tradition proves that it was shaped by men who had neither biographical intention nor literary ambition. The old tradition, limited to what is of service to faith and preaching, is therefore without question to be traced back to those first communities whose interests were remote from the world and its literature. And the absence of the very things which we miss in the tradition confirms our judgment.

A number of inferences may be drawn from this, important for the historical appraisal of the life of Jesus in general. To begin with, let us look at the totality of his recorded life. The school which I characterized in my first lecture as radical idealism views this totality as a myth, as a repeated passage of the sun through the zodiac, or something of that kind. If the life of Jesus had first been conceived as a myth and had gradually been transformed into history, the essential element in such a presentation would have been the sequence of the several events. Only from their succession could the mythical inter-connection result. We have seen, on the contrary, that the sequence of the separate pericopæ is wholly unessential in the account of the ministry of Jesus. The several Evangelists have changed the sequence at their discretion. Such accounts as have been preserved of the life of Jesus, apart from the story of the Passion, were detached pictures, to be used in the preaching as desired, always related to faith, but quite unlike that appearance of entirety that

characterizes a myth. Thus it is the method of form-criticism that enables us to recognize that the beginnings of the story of Jesus are not embedded in myth, but have their foundation in actual events.

But as these events were taken hold of by the faithful and recounted again to others, there ensued, on the one hand, the establishment of historic reliability ; on the other, certain limitations.

We may speak of an establishment of historic reliability in so far as the stories have a form that was the only possible one for the Christians of that time. The distinction of the type that I called Paradigm from the type which I called Tale is here particularly important for the perception of historical truth. It may be observed that the Tale was formed by men who were in touch with the non-Christian world. The Paradigm reveals no such contact, no desire to bring what is told home to men's understanding through the media of that age. Consequently, whereas the Paradigm originated in the circles of the unworldly first communities, and goes back to a time when such unworldliness was still possible, the Tale was shaped in a period when it was already quite usual for Christians to tell stories about their Saviour in a style that corresponded to conventional narratives of the world. When I say "world" I do not mean the culture of the world, nor its great literature, but the folk-lore which tells about gods, heroes, and wonder-workers of the time. The influence of these conventions is, of course, to obscure the original. Of such influence there is no trace in the Paradigm.

The Paradigm is therefore the more reliable form of narrative.

This enables us to lay down the following rule with regard to the stories about Jesus. The less a story points to the manner and technique of the usual story current in the world, then the more pristine its form, the safer the assumption that it originated in the circles of the primitive communities ; accordingly it is more historical. For these circles were connected with the earliest missionaries, and through them with the eye-witnesses of the life of Jesus. In those circles, then, a wholly erroneous picture of the ministry of Jesus was impossible.

It is at this point, of course, that the limitations come in. One arises from the question of language, the other from the style of story required to illustrate the preaching.

The preservation of all genuine sayings of Jesus depends on translation. Jesus spoke Aramaic, whilst the tradition has come down to us in Greek. With regard to the sayings of Jesus, the question of language is therefore easily answered. It is not so easy when we turn to the oldest narratives. The assumption that they were translated from Aramaic is not so self-evident as it may seem. If the stories were really formed in connection with missionary preaching then they must, of course, have been conceived in the language spoken in the course of that mission. This language, however, was Greek, at least in those missionary regions that became important for the development of Christianity, and in which the Church

counted for much in the course of general history. Missionary work may have been carried on where Aramaic was spoken, but it was not an important factor in world-history, for the language of the world was Greek, and those events which were of decisive importance took place in lands where Greek predominated. There may possibly have been a tradition handed down in Aramaic, but if so it was as unimportant a factor in general history as any mission that may have been carried on in that language. Possibly the tradition in lands where Aramaic was spoken had a development quite different from that of the Greek tradition. At any rate, in the second century there was no longer any Aramaic tradition worth speaking of, for when the Christians in Syria required an Aramaic Gospel they translated and commented upon our Greek Gospel according to Matthew, from which resulted the Syriac Gospel of the Nazarenes ; which is proof of the contention that those Christians had no longer at their disposal any noteworthy tradition in Aramaic.

We must therefore assume that a large part of the narrative material in the Gospels was formed immediately in Greek. The fact that this Greek contains various so-called Semitisms is not due to defective translation, but to the semitizing character of this particular kind of Greek : to characteristic idioms carried over from Semitic languages ; to dependence on Jewish Greek and the language of the Septuagint (a common practice of these Christian communities) ; and to certain peculiarities of later

Greek in general. In this field every phenomenon calls for special investigation, and we have learnt, from English and Scottish colleagues in particular, to distinguish linguistic phenomena with increasing care. The works of James Hope Moulton, George Milligan, and Wilbert Francis Howard make us again and again acknowledge our gratitude.

How this tradition originated we have to imagine in some such way as this. Preachers of the Gospel, able to speak both Greek and Aramaic, knew events in the life of Jesus from eye-witnesses' reports or from personal experience. They formulated this knowledge in the way best suited to their preaching, that is to say, in Greek and in the style that I characterized as the style of the Paradigms. There is nothing improbable in this notion, for there were at that time men of all classes in Jerusalem, Antioch, and Damascus, who could speak both languages.

This view, of course, limits the historical value of these stories. They take shape in Greek, but the men on whose experiences they are based spoke Aramaic. Every language has its own laws of thought which do not admit of simple translation. Translation possibly entails a certain alteration of the contents. On the other hand there is an instance of a primitive tradition continuing to live in another language. The hermits of the Scetic Desert in North Africa themselves spoke Coptic, but the tradition of their acts and words lives on in a very simple and by no means literary composition written in Greek, in the so-called *Apophthegmata Patrum*. The fact that the

tradition of Jesus is not preserved in the language of Jesus justifies no historical scepticism, but confirms the assumption that this tradition was created in connection with the mission.

A further limitation of the historicity of the tradition is entailed by this concentration of interest on its missionary application. The stories are couched in a certain style, that is to say, they are told in a way calculated to edify believers and to win over unbelievers. They are not objective accounts of events. We cannot imagine how it could be otherwise. Any such fragment of the tradition must therefore be regarded as the presentation of an event through the faith which sees in the event more than an isolated occurrence—rather an occasion for the revelation of God.

He who finds this view too sceptical should consider how many events there are in history of which we have only individually coloured accounts, something, indeed, a good deal less certain than what is contained in the Gospels. Above all, however, it should be evident to him that the earliest stories about Jesus could not have come about in any other way. To bring home to you what I have in mind, let me make an assumption. If in the present day a papyrus were discovered containing biographical information about Jesus—particulars of chronology, mode of life, journeys, and finally of his trial—I should assume at once, and until evidence was forthcoming to the contrary, that such information was furnished by a writer of the second century, made up in his time. For the earliest communities had no need of such particulars, but those of the

second century, in which Christianity made its way into the educated classes, might very well have wished to hear such detailed information about Jesus, and have been inclined to regard the story of his life as they would the biography of any other famous man. The earliest stories are quite alien to any such desires of an educated Christianity. They have their origin in communities which were eager to proclaim the life of Jesus, not to enjoy it as literature.

With the miracle-stories—the Tales—the matter is different, as I pointed out before, and with regard to them our judgment wavers. Frequently it is uncertain whether these narratives are amplifications of older and simpler stories, or whether alien motives and wholly alien matters have found their way into the Christian stories. Historically little is to be said about these tales. When the healing of the demoniac is related with all the circumstances of his disease, with the question addressed to the demon, with the permission finally given to the demon to enter into the swine, it may be said that all these features are found, at any rate in a similar form, elsewhere. The outline of this description is based in a certain measure, of course, on historical truth. It does indeed show the way in which doctors who wrought miraculous cures treated cases of this kind. The only question is whether Jesus availed himself of such a technique. If he did, then the stories give the right impression. But it is equally possible that the method of such healings was transferred to Jesus, the Christian miracle-worker, at a later stage. It is even possible that entire stories

about Jewish or pagan miracle-mongers were simply transferred to Jesus.

Historical criticism must therefore not lose sight of the aim for which these tales were formulated. Above all, we must not be guided by a primitive feeling with respect to what is historically possible, for this feeling often fails to distinguish between a good presentment and a reliable and historical manner of narration. I might illustrate this from the two stories which are told of blind men whom Jesus healed : the blind man of Jericho (Mark x) and the blind man of Bethsaida (Mark viii). The former is a Paradigm. Nothing is told about the healing beyond the word of Jesus : " Thy faith hath made thee whole," and the remark : " And immediately he received his sight." The whole emphasis rests on the preliminary account : the blind man calls after Jesus, is told to be silent, but cries out the more until Jesus hears him. The moment that Jesus gives word for him to be called, reader and listener know that he is saved. And so it comes to pass. His faith, actually his faith, has helped him. That is why the story is told ; it is not in order to show what Jesus had power to do. This power is a pre-condition of the story.

The story of the blind man of Bethsaida follows an entirely different line. Here nothing is said about faith, nor is there any account leading up to the healing. The blind man is brought to Jesus, and the process of healing, one might almost say the cure, begins. Jesus leads him out of the village, then it is said that Jesus spits on his eyes and lays hands on him. The

result sets in, but is only half-successful, and the blind man when questioned says that he sees men as trees, walking. It is only when Jesus lays hands upon him again that he is completely healed. With this the story is at an end. We can detect no reference to faith or to salvation, as a theme for preaching.

The modern man's feeling would probably lead him to prefer the story of the blind man of Bethsaida, on the ground that it is better told, in the sense that it is truer to life and therefore more reliable. The fact that the healing was described in all its stages would make the description the more plausible. In reply to this argument it must be pointed out that the story of Bethsaida describes the healing as even non-Christians might describe it, whereas the other story can only be grasped by the understanding of faith. Believers are not concerned with the means which Jesus employed, nor do they ask whether the cure took place gradually. All they want to know is whether on this occasion he proved to men that his authority was from God. The Bethsaida story savours of worldly interests, but the Jericho story breathes the atmosphere of the first communities, still unmindful of the world, which proclaim with simplicity and candour what Jesus means to them. For this reason more reliance can be placed on the Jericho story than on the story of the blind man of Bethsaida. The actual problem of the miracle is here passed over intentionally. Miracles are told about in both cases. I shall deal with this problem elsewhere.

Other standards of criticism again must be applied

to the story of the Passion. Two circumstances testify to its authenticity. One is that here, and only here, was the Church interested in the sequence of events, since in the sequence lay also the explanation and the defence of what had happened. The other is that in the tradition of the Passion narrative eye-witnesses seem to have played a part. Two indications at least seem to me to point this way: the mention of the young man who fled, leaving his garment in the hands of the temple-police (Mark xiv, 51); and the mention of the sons of Simon of Cyrene, Alexander and Rufus (Mark xv, 21). That young man is of no significance whatever in the events of the night on which Jesus was arrested; yet he is not treated after the fashion of a legendary figure, nor is he represented as a specially devout follower of Jesus. What happens to him is neither tragic nor heroic. Why then is he mentioned? Obviously because the earliest readers knew who the young man was. The narrator wants to tell them of his connection with an eye-witness. Similarly in the case of Simon of Cyrene. He has come into the story of the Passion without being characterized in any way, and it cannot be said whether it was only under compulsion that he carried the cross of a condemned stranger, or in eagerness to render his Master a service. The readers of the Passion narrative would therefore have been entirely without interest in his sons unless they were personally known to them. Alexander and Rufus, accordingly, must be regarded as persons who were well-known to the earliest readers of the story of the Passion. Certain descriptive touches

in the Passion narrative may therefore claim the confidence that is due to reports which are certified by eye-witnesses.

This favourable historical judgment cannot be extended without qualification to the whole story of the Passion, which is closely related to the Church's faith. In spite of the mention of eye-witnesses this story was not written as a record of what happened to those people who were present, but as a testimony to the divine guidance in these events. As this testimony is established with the help of the Old Testament, and as the Passion is accordingly represented as the fulfilment of prophecy, the thought cannot be dismissed that the relationship with the Old Testament might occasionally lead even to the production of a "fact". Nevertheless, the whole conception of the Passion narrative would still substantially hold good, since faith was specially interested in the Passion of Jesus, and attached importance to this series of events as to no other sequence. Here and there, of course, historical criticism may be able to give these generalizations a more specific form; on the whole, however, we shall have to content ourselves with the impression of a relative trustworthiness.

Still, we must not fail to realize that in these circumstances this relative trustworthiness means very much. For the story of Jesus took place in circles, speaking generally, unvisited by the historian. Jesus is neither official hero nor canonized saint. His life and ministry therefore are not in the focus of public interest. It is most significant that on this point also the author

of Luke-Acts is of a different opinion. He makes the Apostle Paul say to King Agrippa that nothing pertaining to the beginnings of Christianity could be hidden from him, for these things had "not been done in a corner". This already implies a standpoint which we meet with later on in the Apologists, dictated by a desire to make the history of primitive Christianity fit into the great history of the world. Any such desire overlooks the peculiar nature of these beginnings. They did actually take place in a corner, both geographically and socially. They happened in a country which is of little account in universal history; they belong to a social stratum of no political or literary importance. But the second century Christian of literary culture is no longer aware of these limitations that beset the first beginnings of his religion, because in his time they have already been overcome.

This standpoint is also held by the first Christian author from whom we have information about the Gospels, Papias of Hierapolis. He regards those Evangelists who were not Apostles as secretaries of the Apostles, and in this way tries to arrive at an understanding of their characteristics. The picture which he draws must be fundamentally wrong, for he represents the first age of Christianity far too much after the style of a later, more educated and more literary Christianity. Yet he made some sound observations, as when he remarked that Mark had not made his narrative conform to chronological sequence, attributing this defect quite rightly to the peculiar nature of the mission, which adapted its

lessons to the needs of the occasion, regardless of historical order. But in saying so he confines himself to the preaching of Peter and its connection with Mark, instead of speaking quite generally of the mission and the many preachers who have remained nameless. This individualistic treatment is explained by the estimate formed by Papias of the social status of primitive Christianity. He sees the first Christians already in a world of culture, the Apostles as great orators, and the Evangelists as their secretaries.

Our opinion regarding the historical value of the Gospels requires no such individualistic ratification. The tradition contained in the Gospels may be regarded as relatively good, not because it is connected with Peter or any other Apostle, but because of its still vital connection with the mission. That tradition is evidently not yet literary, not yet intent on competition with writings and writers of the world. This unworldly character supplies the best guarantee for the originality of the tradition. That it leaves unanswered some questions which our contemporaries may ask is evident, but this follows naturally from its non-literary character. That it views things in a fundamentally different way from that of a modern historian is conditioned by its connection with faith. It views events merely as a divine revelation. What it wants to express is not what men have thought, planned, and carried out ; it is only concerned with the knowledge that men have performed God's will, even when they were unaware of it. This also explains why miracles play an important part in the tradition. The ancient conception of miracle

is not that of a phenomenon violating a law of nature. A miracle, for those who lived in the ancient world, is that event in which the hand of God could be clearly traced. The question how far such an occurrence is "possible", as we are accustomed to phrase it, occupied the ancient spectator less than we suppose, when once he was convinced of its divine origin. We can only discuss the place of miracle in the life of Jesus with due regard to fundamental principles when Christology and Gospel literature are considered in their interrelation, as will be done in the last lecture of this series.

In conclusion, let me point out that in the light of the medical experience of our generation the healings effected by Jesus are, on the whole, regarded with much less scepticism than was formerly the case. We know that many complaints which seem to be external are psychological in their origin, and that many such complaints are susceptible to psychic treatment. To say more about the healings wrought by Jesus one would need to have exact diagnoses of the maladies of which the Gospels mention only the popular names. Such a diagnosis is, of course, impossible. This reflection also serves to support the result of our argument. We gain confidence in the tradition just when we realize its limitations, and these limitations are rooted in the interrelation with the preaching, and this interrelation is evidence of the antiquity and originality of the tradition. It actually arose in the generation when eye-witnesses were still alive. If the

tradition were of a later origin, it would have been shaped differently ; presumably—and herein lies the paradox—in a form much nearer to our expectations, one outwardly far more “ historical ” in the general sense of the term.

CHAPTER V

GOSPEL CRITICISM AND CHRISTOLOGY

In the previous lectures I dealt with Gospel criticism and Christology. I attempted to solve two problems : a theological and a historical ; and I tried to show that between them there exists a most intimate relationship. Gospel criticism, I pointed out, can only be fruitful where there is the recognition that in the whole process of their formation the tradition and the books were largely influenced by Christology. Christology, on the other hand, is not the same in all the Gospels, and therefore requires the aid of the critical method in order to reduce the tradition to its elements ; by this method alone can the diverse Christological motives be comprehended. In this concluding lecture I intend to deal with the problem of Gospel criticism and Christology as a whole.

First, let us try to ascertain what meaning Christology may have had for the early Christians—and, I venture to add, what particular meaning it should have for us. The faith of the early Christians was centred not in what Christ was, but rather in what he had done for mankind. The New Testament contains practically nothing about the person of Jesus Christ in his ontological significance, nothing apart from his relations with mankind. There occur passages such as “ God sent forth his son,” “ God sent his own son . . . for sin,”

or "For our sakes he became poor that ye . . . might become rich" ;—all emphatic references to Salvation. Apart from some more or less liturgical expressions, only two famous passages appear to form an exception : Philippians ii and John i, but the appearance is merely superficial. In the former passage, Paul speaks of the humility of Christ who disdained to be equal with God and humbled himself. This was said in order to admonish the Christians to be humble. The words therefore do not constitute a description of Christ's nature, but an injunction to Christians to follow Christ's example. In the latter passage—in the prologue of the Gospel according to John—the transcendental significance of Christ is described by means of the terms "word" and "light". "Light" brings to mind the former darkness in which it shines ; "word" implies that it is uttered, or nearer the sense it had for the Evangelist, "is sent," "is made flesh," and "dwells among us". Both passages were interpreted by the Church in the spirit of its philosophical culture, derived not from the New Testament but from Greek science. The Church applied to John's prologue the Logos philosophy of the Stoics, whose teaching is certainly not that of the Evangelist, even if the word Logos used by him were connected with it ; and the Church explained the passages in the Epistle to the Philippians with the Stoic philosophy of the interpenetration or pervasion of bodies, the *κρᾶσις δι' ὄλων*, with which Paul evidently was quite unfamiliar. In this way the Church teaching procured statements concerning the nature of Christ. The early Christians,

however, were interested in something quite different ; all they wanted was to show what Christ means to Christians, what God has done for mankind through him, what God in giving Christ has given to the world.

The New Testament, then, is concerned not with the nature of Christ, but with the work of Christ, with the fact of the revelation. Many disputes in the Christian Church would have been avoided had theology observed the same limitation. Throughout the whole of early Christian theology there is no speculation about God's purposes, but only interpretation of what has already happened. The event of the revelation is in every way paradoxical, amazing, and quite contrary to all human expectation. But this paradox constitutes a feature that distinguishes Paul from those who created the tradition about the life of Jesus—the earliest preachers.

These preachers dealt with single occurrences related by those who had witnessed them ; they had an impression that these occurrences had had results, that the life of Jesus had won followers, but that the people as a whole had kept aloof and remained hostile to him. In the worldly sense, this life that had ended on the cross had been a failure. Now they had to show that nevertheless the Christian faith was right in regarding this life as a revelation of God. The question that presented itself was therefore not "Cur Deus homo?"—why did God become man?—but, as one might put it, "Cur homo Deus?"—how far after all does this life show the characteristics of revelation?

If we turn our attention to the Apostle Paul, we must give another statement. Paul may have known little or much about the life of Jesus ; at any rate he was certainly not impressed by individual events. He is a theologian ; as a Jewish theologian he has certain preconceptions concerning God's dispensations on earth, and the life of Jesus in its entirety falls short of these preconceptions. Therefore, he must needs be an adversary of the Christians. When, as he clearly says in Philippians iii, his conversion comes by divine intervention and shatters all his preconceptions, Paul the Christian is faced with the task of comprehending the ungodlike existence of Jesus on earth as a revelation of God. The whole of this existence appears paradoxical to him ; the details are only the expression of this great paradox. The Incarnation, the lowly Birth, and the Passion, the lowest point of his lowliness ; these are the momentous and paradoxical facts which he has to comprehend in their paradoxy. Whether the interval between them shows a little more splendour or a little more lowliness is unimportant for him. Details of the life of Jesus therefore play no part in his theology.

In trying to comprehend the paradoxy of the existence of Jesus both halves of the New Testament engage in Christology. Both, however, differ in their conception of the paradoxy ; hence the dilemma from which I started in my first lecture. Both the tradition and Paul deal with a matter of history ; both interpret it in the Christological sense. They do not start from doctrines of Incarnation and then proceed

to demonstrate that their doctrines have been realized in history. Both start from highly paradoxical facts and then argue : thus it came to pass, consequently it must be assumed that it was willed by God.

This is the way in which the creators of the tradition regarded the details of the life of Jesus, and on the whole the authors of the Gospels have followed them. They wished to show that these events, the appearance of Jesus, his words and deeds, manifested God in action. This and this only is the purpose of the narrative.

How this purpose enters into the formation of the earliest tradition has already been demonstrated in my third lecture. I now propose to consider the Gospels as a whole, particularly the Synoptic Gospels. Here miracles are given a special significance. In this connection I have in mind not so much the healings as those miracles which God works upon Jesus, to which the very earliest tradition makes reference, and which later tradition amplifies. I have in mind the Birth, the miracle at the Baptism, the Temptation, the Transfiguration, and the Resurrection.

The oldest of these stories is the account of the Baptism. This illustrates particularly clearly what the miracle is intended to express, and that the miracle does not invalidate the historicity of the account. That the ministry of Jesus had its origin in the movement of John the Baptist was evidently well known among the early Christians. Possibly the disciples of Jesus had previously been disciples of the Baptist, as is suggested in the Gospel according to John. At all events they had the word of Jesus referring to the

Baptist as “the greatest among them that are born of women”. Certainly no Christian would have invented the account of Jesus’ Baptism by John, for this account was bound to lead to misunderstanding—as it actually did—because the Baptist’s disciples would naturally conclude that their master was Jesus’ superior. What may be safely presumed is that through the Baptist’s preaching Jesus was led to realize that he himself had a mission ; hence the importance which Jesus attached to the Baptist’s preaching. This historic baptismal act the Christians would not and could not mention without at the same time affirming that from that very moment Jesus knew himself to be the Messiah. In Christian terms he was from this moment the instrument of the Spirit of God ; he was the Son of God, the Chosen of God. This is the meaning of the words : “ My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased ” ; and other phrases imply as much, namely, that God reveals himself through Jesus.

All this finds uncritical expression in the story of the miraculous Baptism. Jesus sees the Spirit of God descending from heaven like a dove. In Mark’s account this means neither that other men witnessed it nor that they did not ;—this is simply not considered. That a divine manifestation should be made explicable through a heavenly voice—a Bath Qol, as the Jews say—is taken for granted in such Jewish stories, and no one would inquire whether the sounds were those of human speech or were audible to others. It is enough that Jesus knows through God that he is His Chosen Son. That is all that matters ; it is sufficient

for the understanding of the faith, and therefore for the preaching.

It is wrong then to ask whether Jesus told his disciples about his inward conviction. This would mean introducing into the story a psychological interest which, as we have seen, is alien to early tradition. Though this story is wholly in the style of a legend, the Baptism of Jesus and its significance for him is nevertheless historical. People of to-day must begin to realize that certain historical events can continue to be preserved only in the form of a legend, in a form which has room for phenomena defying historic analysis, such as heavenly voices. A further example is the conversion of Paul as related in the Acts of the Apostles. The miracle consists in the intervention of the heavenly powers. How this is to be imagined as an historical fact does not interest the narrators, for they regard the event with the eye of faith. Such legends must neither be made to appear psychologically possible, nor must they be criticized analytically. Their basis is historical, but the purpose of the narrative is not to record an historical event but to preserve its super-historical significance for the faith. In the view of the narrators, this purpose can be fulfilled only by a form of miracle-story.

We are now in a position to understand the Temptation and the Transfiguration. An historical analysis is in both instances impossible, for we know even less about these occasions than we know about the Baptism. But in both instances the significance of the legend is clear. In the Temptation story Jesus declined certain

means of impressing the multitude as diabolical. In the Transfiguration we have the experience of the most intimate of the disciples that Jesus was the Messiah, in spite of all the humiliation and the sufferings which were to come ; and the first prophecy of the Passion immediately precedes.

In this connection I may mention once more that in antiquity man regarded the miracle as a sign of God's presence, of His revelation in the occurrences of daily life. As previously stated, the Greek used the word "epiphany" with that meaning, and it is from the standpoint of "epiphany" that the Evangelists view the whole ministry of Jesus. In all the words and works of Jesus God's presence is manifest, is "epiphanous". As a result, great nature-miracles are ascribed to Jesus, possibly not without some historical foundation ; but it is also possible that they were merely transferred to him from other traditions. Jesus reveals God's power by showing himself Lord over the powers of nature—as Lord over water, storm, and demons—as miraculous provider of food. In all these instances he is to be regarded not as a magician able to do this or that—things which other people cannot do—but as the man in whom God becomes "epiphanous"—revealed. At the same time, they express a warning against other wonder-workers. What the Christians gather from these stories is : "Neither is there salvation in any other."

As regards the accounts about other miracle-workers of antiquity, a point must be emphasized which distinguishes the Gospels from these secular

narratives, namely, a noteworthy reserve in the phantasy which creates the miracles. The most distinctive feature of innumerable legends and tales about saints and martyrs is the miraculous protection of the individual. When the saint falls into difficulties, God shows Himself as his protector by miraculously intervening in the world-process to rescue His protégé from danger and distress. There is no trace of any such element in the earliest tradition. The story of the cursing of the fig-tree, for instance, is no tale of miraculous "self-help", for Jesus did not get the fruit for which he longed. Besides, the story may be merely a parable converted into a tale about the life of Jesus. Nor is the story of the walking on the water such a tale. Jesus does not want to take a short cut by walking on the water; he wants to show himself to his disciples as God's revelation. As Mark expressly says: "He would have passed by them." The story of the coin in the mouth of the fish intended to be used by Peter to pay the Temple-tax is not presented as a story of fact but as a command; it belongs, however, to the latest elements in the Gospels; it is absent from Mark and Luke. Though indeed a miraculous self-help is hinted at in this instance, the reader instinctively feels that it is an alien element.

It is different in the scene of the Temptation where Jesus refuses to procure bread miraculously in order to appease his hunger. On Golgotha he is mocked with the words: "Save thyself and come down from the cross!"—without God giving an answer to the challenge. In both these instances the temptation

to self-help is decisively rejected. A great number of such miraculous features, however, are already present in the apocryphal tales about the childhood of Jesus, contained in the so-called Gospel of Thomas. Evidently foreign material creeps in here with motives alien to the early tradition.

A reserve similar to that already mentioned is noticeable in the miracles surrounding the beginning and the end of Jesus' ministry. If the Christian faith is founded on the knowledge that Jesus was not vanquished and lost, but raised to God, one might expect the elevation to be depicted as a miracle. Nowhere, however, is it described how Jesus leaves the tomb or takes his seat at the right hand of God. The story of the Ascension finds no place in any of the Gospels, but is related in the Acts of the Apostles ; and the earliest account of the Resurrection is to be found in the apocryphal Gospel of Peter, as I have already pointed out. In the Gospels is found the story of the Empty Tomb, told quite in the style of a legend ; and older perhaps still is the tradition mentioned by Paul, according to which the Lord appeared first to Peter, then to the twelve Apostles. The miracle is merely suggested—which shows that the tradition attached no importance to things miraculous and fabulous.

Divergent as are the traditions about the Birth of Jesus, a proper description of the miracle of the Incarnation is nowhere given. The Virgin Birth is hinted at in a very reserved and chaste manner ; everything mythological is forced into the background.

The stories in Luke i and ii are impressive for the very reason that they contain little that is fabulous, and that the divine but faintly enters scenes of ordinary human experience. Only in later accounts outside the New Testament has this reserve been abandoned.

What has so far been said about the miraculous life of Jesus as depicted in the Gospels amounts to this : whenever they seek to express the revelation of God through Jesus, they present his life as an epiphany of God—as miraculous. Epiphany, as we have seen, means that the divine becomes manifest in space and time, and in the view of antiquity this can only happen in miracle. To express this by means of a paradox : the miracle is for the men of that time the natural form of expressing the supernatural. If the miracles of the New Testament are compared with those related by Greek or Roman writers of the time of the Emperors, it will be found that the Gospels have nothing to do with such fabulous elements. The whole presentation is confined to the sphere of human existence. The life of Jesus is not told as a myth, nor do any mythic motives play any but a small part ; it is not even presented as a chain of miraculous divine interventions. As to the miracles performed by Jesus himself, these look quite modest beside those related of persons outside Christianity.

The deeper reason is this. In Jesus' own words the miracles are only meant to be signs and portents of the coming Kingdom of God. They are to proclaim that the Kingdom is near, and that Jesus possesses the powers of this Kingdom. The really great miracle—

the coming of the Kingdom—is yet to be realized. That which is now perceived and spoken of in the Gospels is only to awaken the belief in the Kingdom. Jesus' fate shows that as yet the Kingdom is delivered over to the powers of this world ; his path on earth therefore leads to the Cross and not to the power which the devil had offered him. Only through suffering does he come to heavenly glory, and the heavenly glory is the pre-condition for the coming of the Kingdom on earth.

Thus in the whole presentation of the Gospels a two-sidedness—not to say an antithesis—is observable. The Gospels seek to give more than mere reports ; they want to awaken faith, and therefore preach about faith. This has been demonstrated in all the elements of the Gospels and in their whole attitude. Just as artists paint the halo around the head of the lowly and despised Jesus, so the Evangelists seek to glorify the historical events of Jesus' life. But because they are bound to the tradition and consequently to individual occurrences, their accounts can never become pure legend and mere myth. The Gospels have their roots in the soil of Palestine and in time ; they seek to report historical facts as well as to engage in Christology. In the synthesis of these two tendencies lies their secret, and he who honestly engages in Gospel criticism must endeavour to explain this secret.

The fact that this two-sidedness is evident in the earliest conception of the Christian Church may be adduced as proof of the correctness of the view here taken : the Church glories in its historic origin,

and at the same time it is waiting for the supernatural to break in upon the world.

“ It glories in its historic origin ” :—this means that it is possible to speak of the foundation of the Christian Church by a man from Galilee who lived in the reign of Tiberius and under the administration of Pilate. Neither the cult of Mithras nor the cult of Serapis could lay claim to historic origin. How important such an origin was is shown by the effort made by the writer Euhemerus and his successors to convert the tradition of the Greek gods into reports about historical reigns of historical persons, and to explain the gods as kings of earlier times. But none of these alleged divine kings would have lived in periods historically ascertainable. For the Christian Church to find support in events of recent date was no doubt very important in its endeavour to convince and win new Christians.

On the other hand, the Church is the community of those who expect the supernatural. The supernatural is the coming Kingdom of God, the return of Christ, the beginning of the new era. The Church, however, lives not only in hope, but also in present experience ; it is the nucleus of that Kingdom, the temporary realization of the new era, and is connected with the heavenly Christ. This connection is already expressed in a New Testament phrase referring to Christ as the head of the community. And as the Church is connected with Christ, so are preaching and the Gospels, both historically and superhistorically.

This two-sidedness remains an essential characteristic of the Church to this day. The Church originated in

history and stands in time ; it is connected with temporal powers—it may be with the people to whom it seeks to bring the Gospel—it may be with the state—at all events with the men of this time whose language it speaks. And yet it remains a tower whose spire reaches into the clouds. The Church is the Word of eternity in time, and it remains this even when it is unworthy and administered by weak and erring men. And from the double character of the Church tensions naturally result. In the course of history these tensions have again and again produced one-sidedness in the Church or the individual churches, whenever the one or the other task has been forgotten. If the temporal ties are forgotten, the Church becomes self-righteous—pharisaic, as we say in allusion to the adversaries of Jesus. If, on the other hand, the churches become forgetful of their divine commission in the world, if they want to be no more than religious disciplinarians in society, moulders of the social mind, or social organs for relieving distress—then the churches may turn into more or less useful religious associations, but they will cease to be a Church. The significance of individual churches may be gauged by the extent to which they are a “ Church ” in obedience to the divine commission—that is to say, a Church in the Christological sense, ultimately responsible to God and not to any temporal power.

Thus the examination of the Gospels leads us to the meaning of the Church. The two-sidedness of the Church derives its legitimacy from the fact that the Gospels also show this two-sidedness. They also

contain the Word with which, as Ignatius expresses it, God broke His silence ; they press it into human speech and literary form, not always without error, yet by divine commission. It is impossible to attain to the eternal Word without studying the human words ; impossible to preach salvation without being aware of its historical revelation ; impossible to preach Christ without having heard and read of the historic person of Jesus. Thus we find that the dilemma from which I started in my first lecture, Jesus or Christ, is no longer a dilemma, but the necessary expression of the fact that we believe in a divine message that has been humanly manifested in the course of history. Gospel criticism can only be fruitful if it is clearly recognized that this connection has existed from the earliest beginnings. To show this was the object of my lectures.

The knowledge thus obtained determines the task of theology in general. It too must be two-sided if it is to be true science and yet something more, namely theology—knowledge of God. The true theologian must be able to give a true account of the historical beginning of Christianity, in accordance with the scientific methods which theology shares with other historical sciences, with scientific criticism, and with the historical principle which alone can make history out of a collection of isolated accounts. But he must also realize that neither methods nor facts suffice to provide a basis for faith. The school which I called the Life-of-Jesus Theology committed the error of thinking that historical data could satisfy the claims of faith, and that the significance of the events in early

Christianity could be explained historically. Such endeavours must be in vain. A purely historical examination of the Gospels cannot honestly show more than a noble and pure life that ended on the Cross. It suggests no reason why this life gained the significance it has for the world. Nor must we in this connection resort to the use of the familiar word "unique". The word fails to express what Jesus Christ means to the faithful, and on the other hand expresses more than history can vindicate. Science knows only of processes that have hitherto remained without analogy; but to these the word "unique" in the sense of "unique in its kind" is inapplicable. For faith, this and kindred words assert too little; for history, too much.

The significance which attaches to the life of Jesus and the events connected with it becomes evident only if we see in the Gospel more than a historic account. The true theologian must again and again make it clear to himself and to others that the Gospels receive their meaning for the world only from their relation to Salvation. If Salvation were not included in the message, the Gospel might be considered interesting and important; but there are more interesting and important texts in the literature of the world. Yet, in spite of the Gospel's tremendous claim—the claim to bring Salvation—the Gospel as mere literature must not be esteemed too highly. As Paul quite rightly says, the Gospel would then be to the one a stumbling-block, to the other foolishness.

However, the Gospels are what they are only for

the eye of faith. To make manifest what lies beyond our historical ken and aesthetic appreciation is the task of theology. My intention was to show that the accomplishment of this task does justice in a higher sense also to the historical task of theology. All Gospel criticism which digs into the depths and is not satisfied with finding sources and weighing possibilities, is concerned with Christology. All such criticism will find that the only explanation of the literary and historical peculiarities of the Gospels is that, from the very beginning, they set out to be testimonies in which the faithful spoke to the faithful about matters of faith. Gospel criticism and Christology are therefore not enemies, but in true theology they belong together.

I have the privilege of speaking in a country whose theologians have often felt this. In the past decades there have always been theologians in this country who in the spoken and the written word have been both great preachers and critical scholars. For the foreigner this is one of the many impressive syntheses in which English life is rich. And this synthesis he finds embodied in a number of men who hold a place of honour in the work of the Church and at the same time in the field of scholarship. German life, in comparison, has a more dynamic character, and for the most part the movements in the political as well as the spiritual sphere take the form of action and reaction. The result is greater intensity, but also an inclination to one-sidedness. In Germany we have experienced those different views of the Gospels of which I spoke at the beginning. We had that fruitful

critical theology of the Life of Jesus in connection with the general movement in the field of world history. This theology disclosed the eschatological character of the Gospel with historical conscientiousness, and in this way brought about its own destruction as theology. The discovery of the eschatological character of the preaching of Jesus led, in connection with other movements, to the dialectical theology which came upon us Germans not so much as a scientific theory but as a prophecy, a proclamation of the true nature of the biblical message. Christianity was recalled to its own essential significance away from all intercourse and compromise with culture, state, and humanity. The traditional tendency of theology to dogmatize about God as though it had control of Him, was shown to be erroneous ; for " God is in heaven, and thou art on earth ! " The Church was warned not to take its customary activities too seriously ; for no work of man, not even that of the Church, can establish on earth the Kingdom of God.

This was indeed a tremendous purge, and it was no accident that it came upon us in the form of an exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, the well-known commentary of Karl Barth. Again and again in every age Christianity had learned from Paul to emphasize the essential. But while the radical Paulinism which thus set in emphasizes the message of the forgiving grace of God, it must not make us forget the preaching of the Gospels, or miss the appeal of the Sermon on the Mount, the crucial questions of the Paradigms, the clarion call of the parables. It is

intelligible that in the face of that emphasis upon the dialectical theology the abundance of detail in the Gospels must be felt to be amazing. But, strictly speaking, this is only so if these details are taken as isolated incidents. I believe I have shown that this view is wrong, that the individual pericopæ were pearls put together to form a string. This was done in the preaching. The Christological teaching and preaching of the first communities is the thread which holds them together, which first makes their existence explicable. It is not only allowable, it is scientifically necessary, to view them from the standpoint of that emphasis. Thus, in the end, our subject opens our eyes to the unity of the biblical preaching.