

# NEW TESTAMENT ESSAYS

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**Thomas Walter Manson**  
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## THE INTENTION OF THE EVANGELISTS

by

C. F. D. MOULE

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THE great scholar in whose honour this essay was offered might well have found in it much with which to disagree. But there are at least aspects of it which he would probably have supported; and at any rate nothing can alter the fact—whether or not the essay provides evidence of it—that the writer, in common with all present-day students of the New Testament, owes him an incalculable debt.

The view here presented<sup>1</sup> is that, at the time when the Gospels were being written and first used, the Church was well aware of a distinction between 'the Jesus of history' and 'the Christ of faith', to use the modern clichés; and that, in so far as the Gospels were used in Christian worship at all (and we shall have to ask how far, after all, that was the case), they filled a place broadly comparable to the narrative parts of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Synagogue, as the historical background against which the interpretative writings might be read. The interpretative writings for the Synagogue, one may presume, were, in the main, the Latter Prophets and many of the Writings; for the Christian Church, mostly the apostolic epistles or homilies. The Gospels, it will be here suggested, fall not so much into this latter category as into the former: they were in intention less interpretation, liturgy and theology than narrative statement. It is just possibly this distinction which lies at the back of Ignatius' words (however highly charged they may be with other associations besides) in Philad. 5: . . . προσφυγῶν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ ὡς σαρκὶ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τοῖς ἀποστόλοις ὡς πρεσβυτερίῳ ἐκκλησίας. So, *ibid.* 9, he writes: ἐξαιρέτων δέ τι ἔχει τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ σωτῆρος, Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τὸ πάθος αὐτοῦ, τὴν ἀνάστασιν. Lightfoot's very instructive note on the former passage, however, comes down in favour of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον *not* meaning a document, while οἱ

*ἀπόστολοι* means apostolic comment on the events, itself including the Gospels.

Be that as it may, the present trend of thought about the New Testament is, if I interpret it aright, inclined to deny, or at the very least, to overlook, the consciousness of any such distinction in the early Church. We are taught, instead, that even St. Mark, let alone the other Gospels, was written 'from faith to faith':<sup>2</sup> that is, that, so far from being a mere collection of annals, it reflects the religious convictions of the community which was its cradle; that it represents an interpretation of Jesus in terms of Christian conviction; and, in short, belongs rather to liturgy and even to high theology than to history in any of its colder and more annalistic senses. Thus, even one who, like Archbishop Carrington, strenuously denies that the primitive Church had no concern for biography, holds nevertheless that Mark was designed to present Jesus as Son of Man and Son of God and to be read at Christian worship;<sup>3</sup> and here he has a large number of other scholars with him, however little he has carried conviction in the matter of his own 'lectionary' theory of the Gospel.<sup>4</sup>

Now, that the Gospels, or comparable material, had some place in worship who could wish to deny? The analogy with synagogue worship already implies thus much. Indeed, it is virtually demonstrable by the time of Justin, for he speaks (*Apol.* 67) of the reading of the *ἀπομνημονεύματα* of the apostles at Christian worship, and these 'reminiscences' must have been in some sense evangelic and are indeed actually called Gospels in *Apol.* 66, 3 (though this may be a gloss<sup>5</sup>). Possibly something of the same sort is intended in the command in 1 Tim. 4:13, *πρόσεχε τῇ ἀναγνώσει*, though that may well mean the reading of the Old Testament scriptures. At any rate, nobody could deny the strong probability that from very early times traditions about Jesus were recited or read at Christian worship. We are all familiar with the suggestion that the passion narrative may have been recited at the Eucharist. These Gospel traditions, accordingly, were doubtless framed within the context of Christian faith, so that no Christian writings are mere dispassionate narratives but are documents of faith, springing from such an estimate of the person of Jesus as belongs not to a sceptic but to an already convinced believer.

All this is undeniable, and no one in his senses would attempt to deny it. What may be questioned, however, is any implication

of failure, in the primitive Christian community, to realize that there was some distinction in some sense—however impossible it was to draw it in practice—between ‘history’ and ‘interpretation’. Further, it may be suggested that it is a mistake to regard use at worship as the primary function of the Gospels. The Synoptic Gospels, at any rate, are better explained as apologetic material; and even in the context of Christian worship, or of the instruction and edification of Christians, they represent little more than the element of historical foundation—the explanation of ‘how it all started’.<sup>6</sup> After all, as to their ‘outline’ or framework, they are *κήρυγμα*; and the ‘heralding’ of the deeds of God in Jesus Christ is, in the first place, for the outsider, not for the already convinced Christian: it is evangelistic material; it is propaedeutic; it is that by which a man is first brought within reach of appropriating salvation.

It is only after this, and in the second place, that he is instructed further, and with more particular reference to the Christian *interpretation* of the facts, and is shown how to appropriate what the interpretation implies. Only then is he baptized and brought inside, thus beginning to experience the joint participation in the Holy Spirit. Only then does he find theology real and significant and begin to be nourished by life and worship within the body of Christ. Of course he will go on listening to and reading the narratives of how it all began; if he does not constantly return to these foundations, he will never secure the superstructure. But he will not be content with what the Gospels tell him; he will need the sort of theological interpretative matter provided by eucharistic worship and by the writings and sermons of Christian thinkers, in their capacity as prophets and teachers.

Viewed thus, the Gospels (or equivalent material now no longer extant) are first and foremost addressed ‘*from faith*’, indeed, but not ‘*to faith*’ so much as to unbelief. And such St. Luke’s Gospel, for one, seems explicitly to declare itself. Theophilus has already been instructed; but there is nothing to say that he has yet come inside the Church. The purpose of the Gospel is to possess him of the facts—*τὴν ἀσφάλειαν* (1:4, cf. *τὸ ἀσφαλές*, ‘the rights of the matter’, Acts 22:30, 25:26). Dibelius,<sup>7</sup> while holding that the contents of the Gospel are in a deeper sense *εὐαγγέλιον*, and were meant also for readers who were already Christians, noted the impartial tone of the exordium; it is as though Luke were announcing a history: *Λουκᾶ* (‘*Ἀντιοχείως*) *πράξεις*’ *Ἰησοῦ*. But if the

Gospel is the Acts of Jesus, Dibelius went on to draw a striking contrast between it and the Acts of the Apostles. Holding that the Acts speeches were Luke's own compositions, skilfully designed to point his moral and help to tell his story, he emphasized that in the Gospel, by contrast, Luke contents himself almost entirely with sayings—not speeches—and sayings drawn from the tradition. Thus, a *prima facie* case, at least, can be made for regarding Luke's Gospel as intended primarily to 'tell the story'—and that for the outsider.<sup>8</sup>

The other Gospel which declares its purpose is St. John's. It is (20:31) *ἵνα πιστεύητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ*. It is, as is well known, possible to interpret this as applying to those who have already come to believe, in the sense that the aim is to deepen or make constant that belief. But perhaps the more natural interpretation (despite the present tense, *si vera lectio*) is that the aim is to evoke belief—to bring outsiders within the fold of the believers. No doubt the other exegesis can be sustained: indeed, the opening words of I John provide a parallel, and they are clearly addressed to believers. But on the whole, there is a strong case for the view that the Fourth Gospel is more intelligible as a skilful apology to the pagan 'Gnostic' who had heard about Jesus but was misunderstanding him, and perhaps still more to the non-Christian Jew, than as primarily intended for the full believer.<sup>9</sup>

If, then, we may assume for the time being that both Luke and the Fourth Evangelist wrote with more than half an eye on outsiders—or at any rate on those who formed only the fringe of the Church and were not fully inside—what of the other two Evangelists? St. Matthew's Gospel never declares its purpose in so many words; but it does not take much reading between the lines to recognize that a large amount of its material would be eminently suitable for pastoral instruction in a Christian community which had come out from Judaism but was still beset by antagonistic Jews at close quarters and therefore required both directly apologetic material and also the narrative of 'how it all began', which is indirectly of great apologetic importance. It looks like ethical and religious instruction designed to equip Christians not only with spiritual help but also with intellectual guidance in facing attack from Jews. All the time it is presenting Christianity as true Judaism in contrast to the spurious Judaism of

the anti-Christian Synagogue; and in this regard it is comparable to the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is both conciliatory to the heart of Judaism ('Think not that I came to destroy . . .') and also rigid in its insistence on the *differentia* of Christianity.<sup>10</sup>

Then what of Mark? The most significant fact about it, for the present inquiry, is simply its contents, which are not only within the framework of the *κήρυγμα*<sup>11</sup> but are themselves in the nature of *κήρυγμα*; and *κήρυγμα* is primarily the 'propaedeutic' for the outsider. Bishop Rawlinson, in his well-known commentary (p. xxii) described Mark as written 'partly to edify converts, and to satisfy a natural curiosity as to how Christianity began, and partly to supply Christian preachers with materials for missionary preaching, and partly also to furnish a kind of armoury of apologetic arguments for use in controversy with opponents, whether Jewish or heathen.' This seems to be a far more plausible account of it than those which view it first and foremost as liturgically or theologically conditioned. Bishop Rawlinson, it is true, ends the same paragraph by saying that 'the Evangelist's motives were not primarily historical; they were primarily religious.' But 'religious' requires defining; and there are contexts in which religion is best served by the historical. If Professor Cullmann has urged that it is a mistake to postulate two types of Christian worship—a 'synagogue' type and a 'temple' type—at any rate he does allow that it is possible to distinguish a meeting for missionary preaching from a meeting for the edification of the community (despite the fact that an unbeliever may be found wandering into the latter, 1 Cor. 14:23-5);<sup>12</sup> and (so, at least, it will be argued directly) it is the *preaching* that is primarily the content of Mark: the *κήρυγμα* for unbelievers.

Now there were many different types of unbeliever and outsider. Some were Jews, some were devout God-fearers—pagans who had been attracted by the lofty monotheism of the Jews without actually becoming proselytes. Some, if we conjecture aright, were deeply religious inquirers with a background of Hellenistic Saviour cults: not only deeply religious, but capable of understanding such a profoundly spiritual idea as, for instance, the idea of being nourished upon the life of the Saviour and finding life through his death. Others had to be fought with and stood up to: detractors, against whom it was vital that Christians should be armed with polemically effective material. Others again

might be described as neutral: they were neither profound, spiritually or mentally, nor yet specially antagonistic: people for whom the first approach to Christianity might be the plain story of what God had achieved in Christ; and if (for the sake of argument) we are classifying the Gospels as though they were addressed, directly or indirectly, to outsiders, it will clearly be this third, 'average' group, for which Mark in particular is the best suited. The cosmopolitan crowds of Rome might well require this type of 'ammunition'.

The words 'directly or indirectly' have been used, since it may now be suggested (cf. Rawlinson *ut sup.*) that Matthew and Mark were both intended chiefly as instruction for *Christians*, though in order to familiarize them with what they needed as equipment for their evangelistic witness to outsiders; while John and Luke were meant as tracts, to be placed directly in the hands of individual readers representing outside inquirers of different types.<sup>13</sup>

But it is time to return to current orthodoxy. Current orthodoxy regarding Mark is, as we know, that it was, in some sense, a composition made up from little narratives and sayings into a structure of great theological significance, for use within the Christian community—perhaps actually at worship; at any rate, largely within the Christian circle, partly for edification, partly to convey theological teaching. After all, the sacraments certainly acted as vehicles of the Christian proclamation: Baptism and the Lord's Supper both represented the shape and sequence of the Gospel; they were epitomes of the Gospel. Why, then, should not the worshipping communities have cast their creed and their theology into the framework of some such narrative as is found in Mark, as well as dramatizing it in the sacraments? That is, *a priori*, plausible enough. Yet, if that was the primary purpose of the Gospels, why did they not include an estimate of the position and status of Christ comparable to that implied by the sacraments and explicitly articulated in the letters of St. Paul? Why are they not more credal? And, still more, why is there not some indication as to how Christ might be received and appropriated, or, in other words, how incorporation into the Body of Christ took place?<sup>14</sup>

What we have to visualize, it must be remembered, is a community of Christians (say at Rome) who would find it perfectly



natural to endorse the little creed at the beginning of Romans (1:3 f.); who would know what was meant by trusting Christ (Rom. 3:22), by having access through Christ to God (Rom. 5:2, 11), by being baptized into his death and fused with him in a death and resurrection like his (Rom. 6:1-11), by being a single body in union with Christ (Rom. 12:5) and by being possessed of and by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8). Now, if a Gospel like Mark was indeed primarily an expression of the faith of a worshipping community with such an experience and such a creed, and was addressed to its own members, or to those who were in the act of becoming such, how comes it that it exercises such extraordinary—and, on this assumption, misplaced—restraint? It probably (if we accept a well-supported reading in 1:1) twice directly designates Jesus Son of God—1:1, 13:32; otherwise only indirectly—3:11, 5:7 (demoniacs), 14:61 (the high priest—but perhaps the phrase is only messianic), 15:39 (the centurion), and 1:11, 9:7 (the divine voice at the baptism and the transfiguration). It once (but only by implication) represents him as claiming the title Lord—12:36; it never calls him Saviour; it only twice alludes to his death as redemptive—10:45, 14:24. It does not get anywhere near suggesting the possibility of disciples becoming more than disciples so as to be living members incorporated in his body.<sup>15</sup> It knows about dying so as to live (8:35), but this is by *following* Christ, that is, by discipleship, rather than by membership, in the post-resurrection manner. Seldom (as is familiar to all students of the Gospels) is there any allusion to the Holy Spirit, and then not in any characteristically Christian sense, but only in ways in which a devout Jew might use it.<sup>16</sup>

It is difficult to understand how such a presentation of Christ could have seemed adequate, if Mark was really intended primarily as a vehicle of praise and meditation for the worshipping Church. Indeed, Mark's *εὐαγγέλιον* provides a striking contrast to what Professor Einar Molland showed to be the content of *εὐαγγέλιον* in Paul: '... der Inhalt des Evangeliums ist Jesus Christus selbst. Die christologische Lehre von dem Präexistenten, der Mensch wurde um uns zu erlösen, und den Kreuzestod erlitt, der auferstanden ist und zur Rechten Gottes weilt, bildet den Kern des Evangeliums.'<sup>17</sup> In Mark the good news is the good news of the kingdom of God, announced by Jesus; in Paul it is Christ himself offered in the preaching and the worship of the

Church. To the same effect are the words of R. Leivestad: 'When we read Mark's story of the passion, we are struck by the remarkable lack of theological interpretation. It is indeed surprising that the Easter tidings could ever be related in this sober, reporting style by members of the Christian Church . . . there is no clear hint at the metaphysical background.'<sup>18</sup>

Why did Mark not go on to portray (as indeed the Fourth Gospel did) the Saviour who gives his life in such a way that we are nourished by it, and whose risen body is that of which we are limbs—the Saviour of Baptism and of the Eucharist? It is not a matter of *disciplina arcani*, for the institution narrative is included. But it is a lack of theology. The Pauline theology which is sometimes claimed for Mark,<sup>19</sup> and which indeed it ought to display if it were primarily for the instructed and for use in worship is uncommonly difficult to demonstrate. The same applies, to take an instance from the other Synoptists, to the Lord's Prayer in Matthew and Luke, containing no word or phrase that is explicitly Christian; and to the Sermon on the Mount, with never a word about the grace of God or about that quality of conduct which is described as *ἐν Κυρίῳ*. Relevant to this, although in a different context, are Dr. Manson's own words:<sup>20</sup> 'It seems a little odd that if the story of Jesus was the creation of the Christian community, no use should have been made of the excellent material offered by one of the most able, active, and influential members of the community.'

Must we not, then, retrace our steps at least part of the way, and examine the ground for a fresh start? Suppose the worshipping communities, as well as 'singing hymns to Christ as God', as well as offering petitions to God in Christ's name, and celebrating sacraments in which they found themselves limbs of Christ and linked with one another, also recognized that their faith stood or fell with the sober facts of a story, and that it was vital to maintain the unbroken tradition of those facts? Would they not, from time to time, rehearse the narratives *as such*, first of one incident, then of another, doing their best to keep within the historical limits and not embroider the tale anachronistically, however well they knew its sequel and its inner meaning? Sometimes, obviously, they did embroider and distort, failing to recapture the historical situation. Sometimes, no doubt, they might, in the process, turn aside to underline a hint of something latent in

a saying or a deed, which contemporaries had at the time failed to notice, but which subsequent events had exposed and shown to be significant. But sometimes, conversely, may they not have said, 'We would never have dreamed, considering the original facts, that afterwards they would come to be understood so differently?' And in such cases, would they not be all the more careful to keep the story as it was, not spoiling the contrast with what had followed, but rather enhancing it?<sup>21</sup>

It must be reiterated that, of course, this exercise of reminiscent reconstruction (in obedience, perhaps, to a command to remember Jesus) is in no way alien to worship. On the contrary, it corresponds, as has already been observed, to the historical and quasi-historical traditions of the Jews, more particularly to the story of the Exodus which underlay so much of Jewish prophecy, preaching, and worship.<sup>22</sup> But—and this is one of the chief contentions of this essay—it remains in some sense distinguishable from theological deductions, from the preaching of the way of salvation, and from adoration. It is only one ingredient in worship; and its very nature demands that, so far as possible, it be kept in this distinguishable condition and not overlaid by interpretation. And—another point—its purpose accordingly was not only or even chiefly to be used for worship. Still more, it was to equip Christians with a knowledge of their origins, for use in evangelism and apologetic. The real core of worship was the experience of the risen Christ within the Christian Church through participation in the Spirit. But Christians knew well that if they lost sight of the story behind that experience their worship would be like a house built on sand; and that if they preached salvation without the story of how it came they would be powerless as evangelists; and that if they could not explain how they came to stand where they did, they would be failing to give a reason for their hope.

Therefore, they cherished the narrative as something precious. It would be ludicrous to deny that ecclesiastical interests and theological value-judgments ever overlaid the story. It has been as good as demonstrated that they do. But that is not the point. The point is that the Christians knew the difference between the two—between the pre-resurrection situation and the post-resurrection situation—and that their aim was to try to tell faithfully the story of how the former led to the latter. And in actual fact, they succeeded better than is often allowed.

Two instances may not unprofitably be recalled. First, the saying about fasting in Mark 2:18 ff. and parallels. There can be little doubt that the primitive Church practised fasting: the Acts and the *Didache* are sufficient witness to this. So much so that it has naturally been suggested that the words 'The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day' are an addition by the early Church to justify the difference between their current practice and the non-fasting vindicated by the words of the Lord in the first part of the section. But even if this is granted (and it is not necessarily so), that only underlines the probability of the first part, at any rate, being genuine history. It appears to serve no 'useful' purpose in the primitive Church as a pointer to correct behaviour or procedure; indeed (on the assumption that the second part is an effort to justify current practice), it seems to have been positively embarrassing and perplexing. It is only 'useful' if it is allowed that the Church recognized as 'useful'—indeed, as vital—the reconstruction and preservation of what Jesus said and did in his ministry, *as distinct from* what the Holy Spirit was saying and doing at the time of narration (cf., of course, 1 Cor. 7:10, 12).<sup>23</sup> Secondly, may one dare to interpret the much-debated saying about parables in Mark 4:10–12 (with or without Dr. Manson's Targumic explanation of v. 12)<sup>24</sup> as likewise free from the doctrinaire distortions of the Church? May it not merely mean that nobody can receive the mystery of the kingdom of God without exercising his own responsibility to respond to it? Those who are outside, *οἱ ἔξω*, are not a fixed, unalterable class: they are merely those who, for lack of response, are at the time remaining 'outside'. In Mark 8:18 the Twelve themselves are in that class. At any time when a man has ears without hearing, he is 'outside'; whenever he listens, responds, and begins to ask for more, he is beginning to be within reach of the mystery. If that is what is meant, it is entirely conceivable within the historical ministry of Jesus. As for the linguistic difficulties in vv. 13–20, there seems to be much truth in the contention that they are by no means fatal to the substantial genuineness of the section.<sup>25</sup> This is not, of course, to ignore the ecclesiastical origin of the variants in the Matthean and Lucan versions: it is only to claim that, in its essence, the saying is not difficult to fit into a place in the ministry of Jesus.

In all this, nothing is further from the intention of this essay

than to attempt the impossible (and, in any case, undesirable) feat of drawing an *ultimate* distinction between 'history' and 'interpretation'. Of course it was inevitable—especially for the profounder and more mystical type of mind—that the two should be seen as ultimately one: and the Fourth Gospel portrays the earthly story *sub specie aeternitatis*, perhaps for 'Gnostics' who would be quick to appreciate certain aspects of such a presentation and who were in sore need of conversion, away from dualism, to certain other aspects less familiar to them. But all the time, it may still be urged, the Christian communities were vividly aware of the necessity of trying to avoid romancing, and of not confusing post-resurrection experiences of incorporation in the Body of Christ with the pre-resurrection process of discipleship—of following, learning, imitating.<sup>26</sup> This does not mean for a moment that they wholly escaped the temptation to heighten the miraculous and to modify the details.<sup>27</sup> But the amazing thing is not that they have sometimes modified, but that they have generally resisted so phenomenally well the temptation to read back into the narrative the contemporary interpretation of Christ; and was not this due to a conscious resistance to the non-'historical' in the sense just indicated?

It is sometimes observed that the high, theologically developed Christology of the Fourth Gospel represented, in a sense, the earliest impulse of Christian preaching, while the Synoptists represent rather a mature reflectiveness, bringing with it a realization that some historical reconstruction of the antecedents had its place in the preaching of the Gospel, as well as a theological presentation of the meaning and power of the contemporary Christ active spiritually in his Church. To say so is not, of course, to reverse the Gospels chronologically, or to imply that the Fourth Gospel was not the crown of mature reflexion: it is simply to stress that the presentation of the power of the Risen Lord is itself an early and immediate instinct of the Christian Church, whereas the reconstruction of the narrative leading up to it is something more deliberately and more consciously undertaken. In any case, it still remains at least possible that even the Fourth Gospel was not primarily 'worship' but apologetic.<sup>28</sup>

What is here argued for, therefore, is that all four Gospels alike are to be interpreted as more than anything else evangelistic and apologetic in purpose; and that the Synoptic Gospels represent

primarily the recognition that a vital element in evangelism is the plain story of what happened in the ministry of Jesus. Thus, all four are to be regarded as having been written primarily with a view to the outsider (*from* faith but *to* unbelief or ignorance), although, as has already been suggested, Luke and John are more likely to have been intended to be *read* by the outsider, whereas Matthew and Mark may well represent instruction for *Christians*, with a view to equipping them in their turn for spoken evangelism. Only secondarily, it is here suggested, would a Gospel have been intended for purposes of Christian worship—and, if for such a purpose, then for its more *instructional* side as distinct from its more directly *devotional* side. I have argued elsewhere,<sup>29</sup> indeed, that a good deal of homiletic matter in the Epistles of the New Testament bears traces of the use of the Gospel narratives as illustrative material. And the Justin passage already alluded to (*Apol.* 67) speaks of the president urging upon his hearers the imitation of the good things which had been read about. But even so, this would not be incompatible with the contention that it is worth while asking whether the primary purpose was not simply the maintenance, for apologetic purposes, of the historical story.

The one point in the Synoptists where all attempt at historical narrative seems to be abandoned is in the reference to the *rending of the veil*. This is surely symbolical *in intention*. Is it not as much as to say, 'Here realized eschatology begins'? But until that point is reached, narrative rather than theology is the intention.<sup>30</sup>

It is a familiar fact that St. Mark is the first known book of an absolutely new type. May it not be said that it is the result of a conscious desire to preserve the sporadic traditions of incidents and to set them on permanent record for evangelistic purposes, and that, since the outline of the Good News (which we know as the *κήρυγμα*) was already necessarily in use in Christian preaching (as it had been from the beginning), it was natural to attach these floating units to this already existing framework? Once this was done, it becomes easier to imagine Matthew as compiled for the same purpose but with much more material and with particular apologetic requirements in view; and Luke-Acts and John as written to be *read* by individuals or groups outside the fully convinced Christian congregation—the earliest known written apologies.

When this has been said, it must still be asked exactly how we envisage the ἀπομνημονεύματα fitting into Christian worship when they were so used: was the passion narrative read at the Eucharist? Was the baptism story read at baptisms? Were there other occasions in the course of worship when other narratives were read? Can we fit any such reminiscing into the picture of 1 Cor. 14? Or is it, indeed, significant that it is precisely to such a community that the Apostle addresses remarks which suggest that his friends are forgetting the historical in favour of direct revelation? But for the moment, it need only be reiterated that sooner or later the distinction between narrative and interpretation has to be made both in worship and in evangelism: and we gain nothing by assuming that the early church was indifferent to the distinction, however true it is that, at a deeper level, the two belong inseparably together and are complementary.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For a most interesting view of the origin of the Gospel tradition—different from that here advanced, but at more than one point relevant to this investigation—see H. Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings* (an address at 'The Four Gospels' Congress, Oxford, Sept. 1957), delivered just as the present essay is going to the Editor. See also the communication read by Bishop R. R. Williams at the same Congress, whose proceedings are to appear in TU issued by the Berlin Academy.

<sup>2</sup> The phrase is wrenched indeed from its context in Rom. 1:17, and made to mean something quite different. But it is convenient and intelligible in its modern context.

<sup>3</sup> See P. Carrington, *The Primitive Christian Calendar* (1940), 7, 9 ff.

<sup>4</sup> See the detailed criticism by W. D. Davies in *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology*, ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube (1956), 124–52.

<sup>5</sup> See the late R. G. Heard, in NTS 1 (1954), 122 ff.

<sup>6</sup> It must be freely admitted that Justin, *Apol.* 67, 3, just cited, makes the apostolic reminiscences alternatives to lections not from the Law but from the Prophets.

<sup>7</sup> *Die Reden der Apostelgeschichte* (*Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie*, 1949), translated in *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (1956), 138 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. H. Conzelmann, *Die Mitte der Zeit* (1954), 5.

<sup>9</sup> For discussions of this point, see C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (1953), 7–9; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John* (1955), in *loc.* and 114 ff.; and, for arguments in favour of a primarily Jewish 'audience', the paper by W. C. van Unnik at 'The Four Gospels' Congress (as in note 1 above).

<sup>10</sup> I cannot help thinking that this apologetic purpose deserves even more prominence than, e.g., G. D. Kilpatrick's liturgical interpretation suggests (*The Origins of the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, 1946). K. Stendahl (*The School of*

*St. Matthew*, 1954) agrees that there is material in Matthew, e.g. the 'Church discipline' material, which is not compatible with a purely liturgical use (28). His conclusions (35) might well be extended to make room for the apologetic motive. Incidentally, however, it is perplexing to find, in a Gospel apparently directed to that end, such seeming ignorance of Jewish customs as is implied by Matt. 27:62 ff. (the Jews treat with Gentiles about the guarding of the tomb on the day after *paraskeue*).

<sup>11</sup> The sense in which this statement is true may be examined in C. H. Dodd's famous article 'The Framework of the Gospel Narrative' (ET June, 1932, and *New Testament Studies*, 1953) and D. E. Nineham's criticism of it in *Studies in the Gospels*, 1955). See also my comments on the latter in JTS n.s. 7 (1956).

<sup>12</sup> *Early Christian Worship* (1953), 29.

<sup>13</sup> This raises questions, which I am not capable of answering, about the extent to which books or tracts could be produced and multiplied in communities so poor as, for the most part, the Christian communities were.

<sup>14</sup> The Fourth Gospel admittedly, though addressed to outsiders (if the suggestion already made be accepted) goes far further to meet this need than the other Gospels. But why should not that be because the outsiders in question were already of a deeply religious cast of mind?

<sup>15</sup> Cf. W. F. Flemington, *The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism* (1948), 95: 'It was only *after* that Act [the death and resurrection of Jesus] that the rite of Christian baptism could possess its full meaning and potency. Thus we need not feel any surprise that in the Synoptic Gospels there are no passages linking the teaching of Jesus about men as "sons of God" with baptism. The Synoptic silence about baptism is a measure of the faithfulness with which the records of the ministry and teaching of Jesus have been presented.'

<sup>16</sup> About this Dr. E. Schweizer, in TWNT 6, 400, says something very similar to what Mr Flemington, cited in note 15, says about baptism; and see now a short communication on even Luke's restraint regarding 'universalism', read by N. Q. King at 'The Four Gospels' Congress (as in note 1 above). There are also other differences between the Gospel and the Acts which are relevant to our enquiry.

<sup>17</sup> *Das paulinische Evangelion* (1934), 78.

<sup>18</sup> *Christ the Conqueror* (1954), 65. I have omitted the following words, as slightly confusing the issue for my present purposes: 'No doubt Mark has written his gospel with the same intention as John, "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," but the account of the last hours of Jesus has a strangely sombre and tragic colour. No beams of light from Easter day penetrate the gloom of Good Friday. There is no halo around the cross, no grandeur in the sad countenance of the crucified, and there are no groaning demons.'

<sup>19</sup> Dr. Vincent Taylor writes in his commentary: 'Mark's christology is a high christology, as high as any in the New Testament, not excluding that of John' (121); '... the *ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν* of 14:33, and the death cry of 15:34, reveal that experience of sinbearing which inalienably belongs to the destiny of the Suffering Son of Man. Ultimately, the Markan representation belongs to the cycle of ideas which is worked out in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but it has closer affinities with the Pauline doctrine of *In Christo*' (125).



<sup>20</sup> In Davies and Daube (as in note 4 above), 214 f.

<sup>21</sup> C. C. McCown, in *The Search for the Real Jesus* (1940), 305 f., after allowing (what, on my showing, would need to be considerably modified) that the Gospels contain the apostolic faith in an already idealized mystical Christ, goes on to say that they contain 'also a record, meager, but vivid and vital, based upon authentic and largely trustworthy tradition, about a Jesus who actually lived in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago. The Gospels are not merely cult ritual, catechism, and *Kerygma*. They contain all three, but also unimpeachable reminiscence.' I would only question how much 'cult ritual' there is, and whether 'unimpeachable reminiscence' is not itself part of the *Kerygma*.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Neh. 9, where it is actually woven into a prayer. But see n. 6 above.

<sup>23</sup> See O. Cullmann, *Die Christologie des Neuen Testaments* (1957), 60 f., and the literature there cited.

<sup>24</sup> *The Teaching of Jesus* (1935), 177 ff.

<sup>25</sup> See C. E. B. Cranfield in *SJT* 4 (1951), 398 ff., 5 (1952), 49 ff. Incidentally, the confusion between seed and recipients is, if anything, a primitive trait, which I should be prepared to believe is reproduced rather than introduced in Col. 1:6, 10. It may be added that the acceptance of the section Mark 4:10-20 as it stands is made simpler if it is recognized that vv. 10-12 may be treated as a generalization. When Jesus was alone those who took the trouble used to ask for explanation of the parables. To them he used to say that the mystery was theirs, while for those who stayed outside everything remained only on the parabolic level (Jeremias' suggestion that this originally meant simply enigmatic is not cogent). Then, in vv. 13 ff., follows a specific instance of explanation. This accounts for the sudden change from τὰς παραβολὰς (v. 10) to τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην (v. 13).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. 1 John 2:24 ff. ὑμεῖς δὲ ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἐν ὑμῖν μὲνέτω, etc.

<sup>27</sup> The Gospels were (in the words of H. E. W. Turner, *Jesus, Master and Lord* (1953), 31 f.) 'both books for believers by believers and records of a factual nature about a historical figure. Here is a tension between the subjective and objective side.'

<sup>28</sup> To allow this is not necessarily to deny that its thought and words themselves spring from worship—even (as has been suggested by some) from the eucharistic prayer and meditation of the celebrant.

<sup>29</sup> *JTS* n.s. 3 (1952).

<sup>30</sup> Even after this point, it is incidentally remarkable (as C. H. Dodd has observed in *Studies in the Gospels* (ed. D. E. Nineham (1955), 25)) that the post-resurrection narratives in Matthew, Luke and John do not borrow the 'brilliant light' which might so easily have been imported from the traditions of St. Paul's Damascus road vision. In the Gospels this is confined to the transfiguration and (in Matthew) the angel of the resurrection.