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C. H. DODD AND E. C. HOSKYNS

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Eighteen eighty-four saw the birth of these two significant New Testament scholars: C. H. Dodd was born on 7 April; E. C. Hoskyns on 9 August. Hoskyns died tragically on 28 June, 1937; C. H. Dodd in the fullness of a long life on 22 September, 1973. Both have to this day devoted disciples and the world of New Testament scholarship stands in their debt, yet the work of both is increasingly questioned. The purpose of this paper is to make a biographical and theological comparison and to examine in some detail their treatment of the problem of history and its meaning in the Fourth Gospel.

Ancestry and Formative Years

Dodd was born in Wrexham, the son of a local headmaster who was a leading figure in the Independent Church in the town. Nonconformity was flourishing and the town was divided between those who spoke Welsh and those who spoke English; between those who went to Chapel and those who went to the Parish Church. Dodd owed much to his nurture in Pen-y-bryn chapel. It is possible to trace the Dodds back to the 17th century; Professor A. H. Dodd, C. H. Dodd's younger brother, has done this. Dodd's father, Charles, was born in 1855 and F. W. Dillistone paints a moving picture of his self-education which still stands a monument to determination and the opportunity open to those with ability and great diligence. Sufficient here to say that at the age of 12 he was accepted as a pupil teacher at Brookside School, beginning an association that lasted for 50 years and ended with his becoming headmaster. He showed both ability and determination, progressing by way of becoming a Queen's Scholar, which entitled him to two years' full time training in a Normal College, where his work was marked by such distinction that he was offered another scholarship but was prevented by poverty from further full time education, although his self-education continued so that it became something of a legend in the Dodd household. Dodd's grandfather, Edward, grew up on the family farm but enjoyed neither educational nor commercial success. This was partly due to ill health; he in fact for part of his life worked as a labourer on the family farm, earning the going-rate of six shillings per week.

Dodd's mother, Sarah, née Parsonage, was born in 1854; she lost both parents when very young and was brought up by her stepmother. She, too, was able, winning a Queen's Scholarship and gaining entrance to Stockwell College, ultimately becoming headmistress of the infant school in Penygelly. Upon her marriage to Charles Dodd in 1882, she gave up teaching, gave birth to four sons and was a considerable domestic and educational influence. Very little is known of the ancestry of the Parsonage family.

This is a remarkably different background to E. C. Hoskyns, who was a clerical baronet. The Hoskynses may be traced to Herefordshire, to a family of Welsh ancestry. If we trace this line back to the 17th century, we find John Hoskyns, Member of Parliament for the City of Hereford, who was imprisoned in the Tower in 1614. The baronetcy was purchased from Charles II, by Benedict in 1676. In his Biographical Introduction to E. C. Hoskyns and Noel Davey, *Crucifixion-Resurrection*, SPCK, 1981, G. Wakefield concurs with the judgement that John Hoskyns was "was very much a Church of England man"[1]. Hoskyns's father, Edwyn, succeeded to the baronetcy on the death of Leigh; it was something of an indirect succession for he was the fourth son of the Reverend Canon Sir John Leigh Hoskyns. More significantly he was Bishop of Southwell; he was in the tradition of the so-called new episcopate which owed much to the Oxford Movement and "socialist" convictions. Thus, on his father's side, Hoskyns's ancestry was thoroughly English, upper middle class and Anglican but nonetheless leavened with a heritage from the Welsh Marches and a committed social tractarian Christianity.

On his mother's side his ancestry can be traced back to the 16th century for Edwyn Hoskyns married Mary Constance Maude Benson. The family originated in Cumberland, travelling by way of commercial activity in Liverpool to London, where Mary's father became bankrupt. Nonetheless her private income survived this debacle, while her brother became a most successful financier. Strangely the Bensons were socialists, owing much to the teachings of William Morris. Apparently Mary was something of an educationalist, though of the "new school" and, alas, the general verdict is that she hampered rather than promoted the educational development of her children.

Education

The difference in background was reflected in the educational path that each trod. After education at home, Hoskyns went by way of his preparatory school, Rottingdean, to Haileybury in 1897. He was not considered a great scholar yet naturally enough followed his father to Jesus College Cambridge, of which Dodd was later to be a Fellow, and achieved a second in history. He was incidentally a good oarsman whereas Dodd coxing the University College boat was in collision with the Wadham boat, which included in its crew Hewlett Johnson, later to be the so-called "Red Dean" of Canterbury. Dodd's career on the river was effectively ended.

Dodd went by way of Brookside School, where he was in the Infant Department until the age of seven and in the Boys' School until he was 12, to Grove Park Secondary School. He won a scholarship to this school, formerly a private school but later becoming a grammar school; his father would not allow him to take this up lest it be thought undue privilege had been accorded a headmaster's son. How the two families regarded privilege differently! Dodd won an Open Scholarship in Classics at University College, Oxford, where he won a First both in Classical Moderations and Greats. In 1907 he was elected to a Senior Demyship at Magdalen College. Interestingly it was only in 1871 that Oxford opened its doors to Nonconformists and there was still something of a move to prevent their reading Theology and in fact Dodd could not have pursued a higher degree in Theology at Oxford. Although too much must not be made of this, Hoskyns seems to have opposed a move to open the University Sermon at Cambridge to Nonconformists. There was desire to invite Dr. Anderson Scott from Westminster College; Hoskyns suggested two Anglicans and threw the meeting into some turmoil by suggesting the Abbot of Downside.

There was no doubting the possibility of an academic

career of distinction for Dodd; with Hoskyns it was otherwise and his election to a Fellowship at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge in 1916 is one of those instances of the strange workings of Providence or inspired choice for a second class historian was preferred to better equipped theologians. Hoskyns had no degree in Theology.

Towards the fullness of powers; the influence of Germany

In 1907 Dodd went to Berlin to pursue his research; Hoskyns was in Berlin at the same time. We may make a comparison between their attitudes to three scholars; Harnack, Schweitzer and Barth. Harnack made a significant positive impression on Dodd. Harnack was something of a liberal and quickly a reaction set in against his teaching but in certain respects Dodd epitomised one of Harnack's convictions that Christianity was "the revelation of God's relation to mankind in terms of a particular career which men could apprehend as part of their own historical inheritance and to which they could respond in a way which made sense within their contemporary world"[2]. Dodd shared Harnack's view of the nature and importance of history. However, Dodd, the classicist, could never follow Harnack in his conviction that the original genius of Christianity had been infected by Greek metaphysical thought; for Dodd, as we shall see later, Greek thought was necessary for the fullest expression of the Gospel. It is easy now after two world wars and countless smaller ones to deride Harnack's liberal belief in the ideas of the divine fatherhood, the universal human brotherhood and the duty of man to his neighbour. Dodd continued to operate with a natural theology in which these ideas were congenial; Hoskyns apparently came to reject any natural theology but it is important to note that Dodd's understanding of natural theology did not deny the necessity for revelation, rather it made it if anything more important. Hoskyns, although he came to reject Harnack's position, was initially impressed by him.

For many in this period the influence of Schweitzer was dominant; it was the effective riposte to liberalism in that it made central the eschatological dimension with which liberalism was always unhappy and reduced to the status of an interim ethic the ethics that made such a natural appeal to the liberals. Hoskyns was impressed by this insistence on eschatology: "The one fundamental problem is what should we still possess if the whole of our world were destroyed tomorrow, and we stood naked before God. The eschatological belief crudely and ruthlessly sweeps away all our little moral busyness, strips us naked of worldly possessions and worldly entanglements, and asks what survives the catastrophy"[3]. Not only did Dodd propose an alternative solution to the eschatological problem but ethics were a central and relevant concern to the end of his life. Quite simply he could not accept the notion of the interim ethic. Moreover, Schweitzer's Jesus was a strange bewildering figure, barely accessible to us and certainly not congenial to our time. Dodd was certainly prepared to invite the interpreter of the New Testament to enter the strange first century world but he would return to our world to give an authentic and relevant account of Jesus and the Gospel[4]. J. O. Cobham is right to stress the importance of the debt that Hoskyns owed to Schweitzer, while Dillistone is guilty of some exaggeration when he cites with approval the verdict that Dodd "fought against Schweitzer throughout his life"[5].

Dodd coined a beautiful phrase; "we took our Karl Barth in water"[6]. This did not indicate that Dodd was unaware of the work of Barth nor indeed of his influence but, rather, "in Great Britain the pendulum does not swing with such violence as in Germany"[7]. It is difficult to assess Barth's influence on Dodd; there is evidence that he lectured at Oxford on the theological revolution caused by Barth's teaching and maybe in his coming to stress the primacy of the interpretation of the New Testament rather than following up his earlier interests in psychology and religious experience we can see the seminal influence of Barth. There is more universal agreement that Hoskyns was influenced by Barth, not least because of the publication of his translation of Barth's famous commentary on Romans in 1933. There the agreement among scholars ends. Hoskyns agreed with Barth that "religion is not a thing to be desired and extolled; rather it is a misfortune which takes fatal hold upon some men and by them is passed on to others"[8]. While there is evidence that Hoskyns did not fully accept the Barthian rejection of natural theology, he tended towards that position and was concerned to stress the otherness of God: "The Church exists in the world only to bear witness to God, to His sovereign, regal power and holiness, to His miraculous power and glory . . . It is not what we think about God that matters but what he thinks about us; it is not what we think about Christ and the Church and the scriptures which is of any great value, but how we are judged by the word of God and his Son, Jesus Christ"[9]. There is, on the other hand, no evidence that he welcomed the appearance of Barth's *Church Dogmatics* nor that he was influenced by them. A. M. Ramsey is therefore right to counsel caution before we describe Hoskyns as a Barthian; he is equally right to suggest that Hoskyns's own style, often obscure, oracular and sententious, owes much to Barth as too his insistence on the cruciality of the Cross[10].

Ordination

Hoskyns, by way of Wells Theological College, served his Title at St. Ignatius Sunderland; in this mining parish he ministered from 1908 until 1912, having rejected the offer of a curacy at the much more fashionable St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol. In 1912 he moved to become Warden of Stephenson Hall, Sheffield and in 1915 became chaplain of the Manchester Regiment, serving with distinction and valour. Dodd trained for the Ministry at Mansfield College, Oxford, accepting a Call from Brook Street Congregational Church, Warwick; he was ordained in April 1912, serving there until 1915 when he received an invitation to return to Mansfield.

Military service made a significant impact on Hoskyns; not perhaps as flamboyant an impact as it had on Studdert-Kennedy but what he proclaimed in memorable form in *The Unutterable Beauty* Hoskyns declared in a sermon; "the commemoration of Armistice Day requires a gospel to make sense of it"[11]. Dodd was a pacifist in an age when it was exceedingly difficult to be one. I do not think that we can draw any conclusions from Dodd's theological development from his pacifism but in terms of our comparison of these two scholars and their background some important issues emerge. At the outbreak of the First World War there were no Free Church Chaplains in the armed forces; additionally there was a considerable pacifist tradition within these churches, though Norman Gooddall has been right to remind us that before conscription there were many members of these churches serving in Kitchener's armies.

Dodd became active in the National Council against Conscription, later addressed the Congregational Union Autumn Assembly of 1929 on "The Teaching of Jesus on Christianity and War" and later still in 1938 contributed to *The bases of Christian Pacifism*. He saw the difficulties with crystal clarity, being aware both of the demands that a state might rightly make upon its members in times of national crisis and of the pacifist demands of the teaching of Jesus. Dillistone recalls D. Daube's description of his dilemma: "A pacifist with a bad conscience"[12]. One final point may be made here: there was no doubt that Dodd was acutely aware of the tyranny of Nazi Germany (and later of Stalinist Russia) whereas Wakefield asserts that Hoskyns's attitude to the rise of Nazi Germany was ambivalent: "at first at any rate Hoskyns was inclined to give Hitler the benefit of the doubt"[13]. It is necessary to remind ourselves that Hoskyns was not out of step with many in this country at that time. By the time that G. Kittel came to Cambridge, as a result of Hoskyns's pressure, to lecture in 1937 Hoskyns was dead and was not there to see this significant scholar wearing his Nazi membership badge.

Spirituality

Another and more interesting comparison may be drawn in terms of their spirituality. Hoskyns was a liberal catholic, convinced of the central importance of the Eucharist, the necessity of the Church and the significance of tradition. That is precisely what one would expect of a liberal catholic but he was also self-consciously an Anglican and that opened to him the rich vistas of the Protestant tradition. Not only his encounter with Barth's commentary on Romans but also his professional work on the Scriptures confirmed his opinion of the importance of the Bible. This was not so typically Anglican in this period. Wakefield has seen the significance of this well; "In the end Hoskyns's theology was completely Catholic and completely Protestant too. Properly understood, the two words are almost synonymous"[14].

Dodd, with his roots deep in the tradition of the chapels in Wales, was, of course, convinced of the central importance of the Bible. We may, however, see a similar movement in spirituality. It is not very well known that Dodd valued the Eucharist much more highly than many in his tradition; in a letter written just before his engagement to Phyllis Terry, an Anglican, he wrote, "she has found her way through to a religious position in which we find common ground and can help one another; and in the Sacrament we both find our strength"[15]. Personal and theological interests neatly coincided. The importance that Dodd placed on the Sacrament may be well illustrated in his words: "the historical and mystical elements of our religion are perfectly fused in the Sacrament"[16], and, "The Eucharist, rather than the episcopate, is the true *sacramentum unitatis*"[17]. For Dodd the Eucharist did full justice both to Realised Eschatology and the distinctive and definitive nature of Christianity as an historical religion: "in its central sacrament the Church places itself ever anew within the eschatological crisis in which it had its origin. Here Christ is set before us incarnate, crucified and risen, and we partake of the benefits of his finished work, as contemporaries with it. We are neither merely recalling a story of the past, nor merely expressing and nourishing a hope for the future, but experiencing in one significant rite the reality of the coming of Christ, which is both His coming in humiliation and His coming in glory . . . This contemporaneity must not be confused with the timeless 'now' of the mystics. For that which the Church experiences is not just an eternal reality symbolically set forth under the forms of space, time and matter. It is a slice of the actual history of the world . . . It happened and we are *there*"[18]. Here we see not only the importance of the Eucharist, not simply the stress on Realised Eschatology and history, but also the importance of the Church.

It would be idle to pretend that there are no differences in the spirituality of Dodd and Hoskyns but we see here a coming together of the traditional insights of Catholicism and Protestantism in both of these scholars.

Johannine Scholars

Hoskyns's Johannine studies were obviously incomplete; that his work was published owed much to that most gifted of all "midwives", F. N. Davey, who at times felt the task to be burdensome. Hoskyns did not work on this commentary after 1936. Dodd's Johannine studies were also incomplete. G. B. Caird asserts that Dodd intended to write a commentary to complete his trilogy on the Fourth Gospel[19]. I have been assured by C. F. D. Moule, Dodd's literary executor, that no evidence actually exists to suggest that Dodd had begun work on this commentary. In the event much of Dodd's efforts were devoted to the New English Bible. Nonetheless Dodd's work required a commentary for its completion, for many of the issues raised in his two great works, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* and *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, required the exacting demands of a commentary and it would have been interesting to see if Dodd could have related those studies to the "new" insights of Johannine scholarship in the 1970s.

For our comparison to be justified, it must be demonstrated that Dodd's essential position was known before Hoskyns's death and also that in terms of the problem of history in the Fourth Gospel Dodd was working in conscious dialogue with Hoskyns. Dillistone has argued that Dodd sought to repair two deficiencies in Hoskyns's work: *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* was to do justice to the wide hellenistic background that Hoskyns ignored while *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* was to grapple with the problem of historicity in the Fourth Gospel[20]. This is too simple; Dodd does not grapple with the problem of historicity in *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*: what was demonstrated so massively in this book was already there in embryo long ago. As early as 1921 Dodd was prepared to consider the possibility of a genuine historical tradition behind the Fourth Gospel[21]; by 1926 he was arguing for his classical position that "the writer (the evangelist) was probably himself not of the first Christian generation, but in the communal life of the Church at Ephesus, to which he belonged, he stood in the centre of a living tradition going back to very early days, and very likely preserving much authentic reminiscence of the first witnesses of Christ"[22]. The same point was made in his review of Bernard's commentary[23].

Similarly Dodd's position on the background of the Fourth Gospel was well known before Hoskyns's death. It was put forward in his review of Bernard's commentary where he averred that "the most serious limitation of the commentary, however, is its almost total neglect of the Hellenistic background . . . It is not enough to dismiss contemptuously the suggestion that the Evangelist drew upon such material as a source"[24]. This was to do less than

justice to Bernard's considerable expertise in this field. Hoskyns applauded Bernard; in his review, "the reader of the commentary is never overwhelmed by undisciplined catenas of irrelevant parallels from the sphere of comparative religion. The references are primarily Biblical references with which are combined references to the Apostolic Fathers and Irenaeus"[25].

There is a tension in Dodd's position whereas there is no tension in Hoskyns's, for his commentary continues along the lines set out by Bernard. Dodd argued that the Fourth Gospel was a remarkable example of the interpenetration of Greek and Semitic thought yet, in the period which was climaxed by the publication of *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, he argued for the necessity of Greek thought for the fullest expression of the Gospel; he wrote of a "powerful new experience *which demands the resources of both Greek and Jewish thought to express it*"[26]. Thus, while in his Inaugural Lecture at Cambridge, 2 June 1936, he could criticise those who collected parallels from Hellenistic sources and then concluded that Christianity was "one more amalgam of half-digested ideas drawn from Hellenistic sources, with a larger contribution from popular Judaism than is usual in such an amalgam"[27], Dodd made an identical criticism of Hoskyns's commentary as he had made of Bernard's[28].

In his Inaugural Lecture, Dodd suggested the necessity for the centripetal approach to the interpretation of the New Testament; this was carefully distinguished from the centrifugal approach that stressed the diversity of the New Testament and the special problems associated with each part. Dodd's aim was to "bring these ideas (those discovered by the centrifugal approach), now better understood in their individual character, into the unity of the life that had originally informed them"[29]. Dodd suggested that this approach be applied to the new Testament as a whole. As Dodd himself recognised, Hoskyns's commentary was a brilliant example of this approach, demonstrating an interpretation from within the Biblical and Christian tradition[30]. Ironically while Dodd applauded Hoskyns for this, he criticised him for ignoring the wider Hellenistic background. Put another way, the centripetal approach for Dodd had to embrace also Greek philosophy and the higher religions of paganism, to use his description. Hoskyns has been more consistent than Dodd at this point.

I suggest, then, that our comparison is a valid one. Upon his demobilisation, Hoskyns became College Lecturer in Divinity at Corpus Christi College; upon his election to the Norris-Hulse Chair of Divinity, Dodd became a Fellow of Jesus College. Although by this time, 1936, Hoskyns was "declining", the positions of both scholars had been worked out in some detail. Hoskyns in *The Riddle of the New Testament* and in the work for his commentary; Dodd notably in *The Authority of the Bible*, amplified admittedly in *History and the Gospel*, 1938, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Development* and two lectures, "The Background of the Fourth Gospel" and "The Present Task in New Testament Studies". Moreover, both reviewed Bernard's commentary; in each review we can see distinctive features which were to emerge in later work.

Christianity as an Historical Religion

For both Hoskyns and Dodd Christianity is an historical religion; we shall illustrate their positions briefly, outline some differences and conclude by examining their discussions of the problems as illustrated in their studies of the Fourth Gospel.

It is generally held that the main thesis of *The Riddle of the New Testament* is that the Jesus of history and the Christ of the Church's faith cannot be ultimately separated. This was set forth classically at the beginning of Hoskyns's essay, "The Christ of Synoptic Gospels", in *Essays Catholic and Critical*: "for the Catholic Christian '*Quid vobis videtur de ecclesia*, What think ye of the Church?' is not merely as pertinent a question as '*Quid vobis videtur de Christo*, What think ye of the Christ?': it is but the same question differently formulated"[31]. *The Riddle of the New Testament* begins with part of the Nicene Creed in Latin; that part that stresses the historical nature of the Incarnation. Hoskyns observed; "When the Catholic Christian kneels at the words *incarnatus est* . . . he marks with proper solemnity his recognition that the Christian religion has its origin neither in general religious experience, nor in some peculiar esoteric mysticism, nor in a dogma. He declares his faith to rest upon a particular event in history . . . In consequence, the Christian religion is not merely open to historical investigation, but demands it, and its piety depends upon it. Inadequate or false reconstruction of the history of Jesus cuts at the heart of Christianity. The critical and historical study of the New Testament is therefore the prime activity of the church"[32]. Two initial points may be made; first, in asserting the necessity of the historical Jesus, Hoskyns was departing from one of his mentors, W. Spens, for whom the historical Jesus was not necessary in that Christianity could still have been true even if Jesus had not lived and, secondly, Hoskyns took every opportunity to show how Jesus was a stranger to our time.

We may set against this second point a claim made very near the end of *The Riddle of the New Testament*: "on the basis of a purely critical examination of the New Testament documents he (the historian) can reconstruct a clear historical figure, which is an intelligible figure; and he can, as result of this reconstruction, show that the emergence of the primitive church is also intelligible"[33]. Yet the conclusion of the book stresses the "unresolved tension between confidence and helplessness"[34]. Confidence because of the success of the historical method and helplessness because the "solution of the historical problem does nothing either to compel faith or to encourage unbelief"[35]. We shall return to this situation later when we compare Hoskyns with Dodd but we may see the classical stance of Hoskyns developing in his review of Bernard's commentary. Bernard drew a distinction between the "evangelist" and the "witness" upon whom he depended. Hoskyns probed this distinction in a way that Bernard could not have expected; he maintained that this distinction is fundamental to the commentary so that "the Gospel is history and interpretation, not history interpreted, but history *and* (italicised) interpretation . . . The weakness of the commentary is that it introduces into a Gospel which is all of one piece a distinction which destroys the unity of both the whole and of each section"[36]. This issued in the claim that the interpretation is all important and controls the history; this is the point seen clearly by Wakefield some 50 years later that in Hoskyns's understanding "theology controls the history"[37]. This may well be Hoskyns's position and he was never averse to reminding his readers that a whole generation of scholars had become so obsessed with the problem of historicity that they failed to grapple with the

problem of history and its meaning[38], but he was quite simply wrong in his assessment of Bernard, fastening onto a distinction that is not central to the commentary and in so doing misrepresenting Bernard who argued that the evangelist is "not only a historian but an interpreter of history"[39].

Dodd welcomed this distinction because it amounted to Bernard's abandonment of strict Apostolic authorship; he criticised Bernard for not going far enough arguing that it was virtually illusory for John, Son of Zebedee, is so responsible for the narrative and substance of the discourse that "the strict historicity of the record is hardly affected by the intervention of the evangelist"[40]. Whereas Dodd's "classical" stance is to emphasise the historical value of the Johannine tradition, the younger Dodd placed very much less value on it.

It is easy to demonstrate that for Dodd Christianity is an historical religion; it is indeed the definitive characteristic of Christianity, as may be seen in part four of *The Authority of the Bible* being entitled "The Authority of History". Reminiscent of Hoskyns, Dodd argued that Christianity cannot consider the historical order irrelevant "while it uses as the symbol of its faith a creed which cites events 'under Pontius Pilate', and includes among the objects of belief an historical society, the Catholic Church"[41]. We have already seen how Dodd's understanding of the Eucharist coincided with his understanding of Christianity as an historical religion. This is such a "commonplace" in Dodd's thought that we need only elaborate on the dangers of neglecting the historical: "If we lose hold upon the historical actuality, the Gospels are betrayed into the hands of the Gnostics and we stand upon the verge of a new Docetism. Moreover, the denial of the importance of historical facts would carry with it a denial of what is the essence of the Gospel, namely, that the historical order – that order within which we must live and work – has received a specific character from the entrance into it of the Eternal Word of God"[42].

The Problem of History in the Fourth Gospel

Again it is natural to continue our comparison of these two scholars for, as we have seen, both considered Christianity an historical religion and Dodd, while criticising Hoskyns for not taking the problem of historicity seriously enough, continued "in saying this, however, I do not wish to depart from Hoskyns's solution of the theological-historical problem"[43]. One contention of this comparison is that the differences are as fundamental as the similarities. We have already seen that Dodd is more likely to be concerned with the problems of historicity and Hoskyns with the problem of history. One besetting problem is that Hoskyns's work here is more fragmentary than usual in that Davey wrote "The Fourth Gospel and the problem of the meaning of history" in the commentary although he hoped that it reflected Hoskyns's position. Moreover, he also wrote "The Problem of History" in *Crucifixion-Resurrection*. Nonetheless, Hoskyns's essential position seems clear.

Hoskyns maintained that the Evangelist intended to confront his readers with the problem of history. This was also the intention of the commentary: "it must endeavour to hear and set forth the Meaning which the author of the Gospel has himself heard and seen in the concrete, historical life and death of Jesus of Nazareth, in His separate actions and His audible words"[44]. It will not do this either by the "disentangling of history and interpretation"[45] or "by regarding this Meaning as an idea of the author or as something which itself belongs to the mere hearing or sight of an eyewitness, regarded as historian"[46]. This is Hoskyns's famous "triple barricade". This position comes towards the end of the long introduction to the commentary, encapsulating the position set out in the very first paragraph where, however, Hoskyns argued "he (the author of the Fourth Gospel) insists with the whole power of his conviction that what he records is *what actually and really occurred*"[47]. Admittedly he continues that this is where we are confronted by the eternal Word of God, with what is beyond history but "this Problem of all problems is presented to us . . . by confronting us with the precise and bodily history of Jesus from whose 'belly' flowed rivers of living water, who came not by water only, but by water and blood, by whose blood men are saved and whose flesh they must eat"[48]. There is here an insistence on the genuine historicity of the events described in the Fourth Gospel yet there is a tension in Hoskyns's position, for formally he agrees that the history of Jesus is where God is made known to men and yet on other occasions he does not seem at all concerned with the historical character of that revelation.

Like Dodd, Hoskyns attempted to do justice to the unique character of the Incarnation. To use Dodd's words, "thus the historical situation in which Christ lived and died is also the moment at which what is beyond history takes command of history and gives to it an ultimate or 'eschatological' character"[49]. This position seems to demand that as clear an attempt as possible be made to discover what were the actual events of the life of Jesus and as full an account as possible of the teaching of Jesus be set forth. To be true to the Johannine theological presentation one must work within the "dialectic" of "The Word was made flesh" and "The flesh profiteth nothing".

At the conclusion of the long section on "The historical tension of the Fourth Gospel", Hoskyns proposed his solution. He argued that "the visible, historical Jesus is the place in history where it is demanded that men should believe, and where they can so easily disbelieve, but where, if they disbelieve, the concrete history is found to be altogether meaningless, and where, if they believe, the fragmentary story of His life is woven into one whole, manifesting the glory of God and the glory of men who have been made by Him"[50]. This is profound writing offering a right solution but he went on to argue that the Evangelist intended no escape from history and demanded that men "must be brought into full relationship with His stark historicity"[51], although such a relationship would be profitless unless "the Spirit be veritably encountered there"[52].

Yet what does Hoskyns mean by this entering into a full relationship with His stark historicity? Not a great deal, presumably, unless the reader is going to dismantle one of the triple barricades, that set against the separation of history and interpretation. If pressed at this point, Hoskyns's solution leaves some questions unanswered not least because he asks "how can non-historical truth be set forth save in non-historical terms?"[53]. He also argued that if we demand that an evangelist only narrate observable history, we are "demanding of him that he should not be an evangelist"[54]. It appears that Hoskyns in his sheer exhilaration at being free from the problem of historicity never realised fully that the

question of historicity is an important part of the investigation of the Gospels.

Hoskyns apparently did not want to say that the Evangelist invented stories to be treated as allegories[55], yet this possibility must be seriously considered for Dodd probed Hoskyns's contention that non-historical truth can only be set forth in non-historical terms. For Dodd this amounted to Hoskyns's insistence "that an occurrence must often be related in a form which is factually untrue, in order that its inherent meaning may be brought out"[56].

This problem naturally climaxes in the Raising of Lazarus. Davey noted that anyone who lectures on the Fourth Gospel is asked "Did Lazarus rise from the dead? . . . It is, moreover, essentially a right question, not merely because so much seems to stand or fall with the answer to it, but because the conscious purpose of the fourth Evangelist seems to be to force his readers back upon the history – the flesh – of Jesus, in which according to his account the raising of Lazarus played so vital a part"[57]. Hoskyns's treatment is not totally satisfactory; he argued that neither this miracle nor that in chapter nine "are introduced as proofs of doctrine or as symbolical illustrations of Christian mysticism; they constitute the revelation of the power of Jesus, and the truth is *manifested in historical action*"[58]. Yet of chapter nine Hoskyns also wrote about a "complete fusion into one narrative of the experience of conversion to Christianity, of controversy with the Jews which was caused by the success of the Christian mission, and of the traditional accounts of healing of blind men by Jesus"[59]. In this "complete fusion" the question of historicity is relegated to a comparatively unimportant place.

It comes, then, as no surprise that the raising of Lazarus is handled in a similar way. Hoskyns placed it in a profound theological context but the actual result of this is to leave the question of historicity unanswered and virtually unraised. There may indeed by no answer but at least the question ought to be raised in a commentary, particularly when the author writes "in spite of the author's emphasis on historicity, the narrative of the raising of Lazarus presents the historian with a very delicate problem"[60]. Hoskyns contents himself with wondering about a possible connection with the Lucan parable of Dives and Lazarus and ultimately concluded "the form of the record of the raising of Lazarus suggests the freedom that results from the mighty act of God by which the Christians have passed from death to life"[61]. Despite his knowledge that the Evangelist stresses the historical nature of the event, Hoskyns did not grapple with the question of historicity at the very point where it presses most strongly upon the reader of the Fourth Gospel.

Davey's treatment is open to similar criticisms; the discussion ends just where one is expecting an answer to what he had described as a "right question". He moved onto a discussion of the relationship of chronological history to the meaning of history. This is to avoid ultimately the problem of what is chronological history. This problem must be faced; indeed the commentary demands that it must be faced for, as Davey recognised, the Evangelist's "Gospel is consciously created by his recognition of the supreme importance of the history of Jesus, *which not only mediates all that is to be known of God*, but also, in so doing, confronts man with the last things of God *now* (italicised), in the history through which man is passing, and so relates the whole world in which he stands to God"[62].

Dodd's Position

Dodd was much more concerned with the problems of historicity than Hoskyns; "when, therefore, we have acknowledged that the Fourth Gospel is concerned with the non-historical that makes sense of history, I do not see how we can be prevented from raising the question (answering it is another matter), What value is to be assigned to the records of the facts of which sense is to be made?"[63]. Dodd correctly asserted that "the problem of 'historicity' has a place of its own within the larger 'problem of history' (to use Hoskyns's expression)"[64]. Dodd saw clearly that Hoskyns's position depended ultimately upon the unique character of the Incarnation and the confrontation of the world by God in Christ. For this to be a meaningful position there has to be a quest for the historical Jesus, some disentangling of the "triple barricade" as well as the recognition that the Jesus of history cannot be entirely separated from the Christ of the Church's faith.

Despite his long career Dodd did not in fact ever really grapple with the essential problem; it needs to be remembered that in *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, he contented himself with answering one question: "can we in any measure recover and describe a strain of tradition lying behind the Fourth Gospel, distinctive of it, and independent of other strains known to us?"[65]. In so doing he was, as we have already suggested, continuing the work suggested very early in his career. He did not in *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* "take responsibility for our judgements of historical probability, a responsibility which no serious historian can avoid, with all its risks of 'subjectivity'"[66].

While there is no gainsaying the impression that Dodd did rate the historical value of the Johannine tradition highly, in no major work did he accomplish the serious historian's task. There is nothing in *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* that takes us beyond the equation "ancient" equals "historically reliable". He had not demonstrated the historical reliability of this ancient, independent Johannine strain of the tradition. More seriously, as J. A. T. Robinson has amply demonstrated, Dodd has an unsatisfactory and contradictory picture of the tradition and the Evangelist's relationship to it. Dodd's position demanded that he attempt the serious historical task; without it his Johannine studies are less complete than they might have been[67].

Some have seen this weighing of the tradition, as distinct from "recovering" it, in *The Founder of Christianity*. This is not so; of all Dodd's books this seems to be the one in which there is an unsatisfactory blend of the "academic" and the "popular". It is not too harsh to describe his use of the Gospels there as "pre-critical". The book seems to have been spared criticism because it has been received as "the last will and testament" of a great scholar. Not only is it not the serious historical task that was necessary, but for our present purpose it gives rise to concern about Dodd's consistency. The "classical" Dodd stressed the factual nature of the Johannine tradition (and indeed of the tradition generally) but here there is strange withdrawal from that position; "this use of symbolism is fundamentally poetical. It is not a flight into fantasy. It means that facts are being viewed in depth, not superficially. This must be taken into account when we consider the stories of the miracles. In the Fourth Gospel these are treated as 'signs', that is symbols. Not that John thought they did not happen but

their happening to him was of less value than their meaning . . . If anyone chooses to read the miracle stories of the Gospels as pictorial symbols of the power of spiritual renewal which the first Christians found in their encounter with Jesus, *without* (my italics) raising the question whether it all happened just like that, he is not far from the intention of John at least, and possibly the others"[68]. Not only does this recall Dodd's early impatience with Bernard who, Dodd suggested, was too concerned with the factual nature of the miracles in the Fourth Gospel[69], but it is identical with part of Hoskyns's position.

Conclusions

Although Dodd was generally more consistent in his handling of the question, problems still remain partly because Dodd's own reconstruction is unsatisfactory, partly because of the inconsistency to which we have drawn attention but mainly because, whereas much current Johannine scholarship is rightly concerned with the quest for the historical Johannine community, Dodd ignored this, except for a few comments. Problems remain for Hoskyns because he has not satisfactorily related the meaning of history to chronological history and indeed on occasions avoided historical problems by recourse to the meaning of history.

The way in which each scholar approached the problem of history was determined by another factor. As in his doctrine of creation in which the natural and the supernatural were distinct yet related, so in Dodd's understanding of history the historical and the suprahistorical were related yet distinct. Hoskyns rejected natural theology, possibly under the influence of Barth. C. K. Barrett argues that it was the great achievement of Hoskyns and Davey to stress that the Fourth Gospel is a *theo*logical work. This means that Hoskyns could write of "the non-historical that makes sense of history"[71]. Hoskyns expressed the theological consequences of this eloquently: "the Fourth Gospel describes an ultimate tension . . . the tension between God and men. It vibrates and is set in motion at the point where trembling and arrogant human life is met by the Life that is eternal; at the point where men are confronted by Jesus, son of man and son of God"[72].

Dodd did not work with this tension; more than a difference of terminology is implied by his preference for "suprahistorical" rather than "non-historical". The suprahistorical is related to the historical so that there can be none of the tension that Hoskyns described.

For both the historical is a medium for God's self-revelation; for Dodd it was *the* medium. While we have argued that neither scholar has proposed a totally satisfying solution, each has raised fundamental questions that are as alive today as ever. It is appropriate to end with some of Hoskyns's words; to thank God for their work and to believe that both are "in the resting places which Jesus has prepared in His Father's house" where "this strictly theological tension can be resolved only in the resurrection"[73].

1. E. C. Hoskyns and Noel Davey, *Crucifixion-Resurrection*, SPCK, 1981, p. 29.
2. F. W. Dillistone, *C. H. Dodd: Interpreter of the New Testament*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1977, p. 56.
3. E. C. Hoskyns, *Cambridge Sermons*, SPCK, 1938, p. 37.
4. Paraphrasing Dodd's famous picture of the ideal interpreter of the New Testament from *The Present Task in New Testament Studies*, CUP, 1936.
5. cf. J. O. Cobham "Hoskyns the Sunderland Curate", *CQR*, 1957, 290-93, and Dillistone op.cit. p. 57.
6. Dodd, "Thirty Years of New Testament Studies", *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, 1950, 5-12; this quotation p. 6.
7. ibid.
8. K. Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (translated by Hoskyns) OUP, 1933, p. 258.
9. Hoskyns, *Cambridge Sermons*, p. 218f.
10. cf. A. M. Ramsey *From Gore to Temple*, Longmans, 1960, particularly pp. 131-40.
11. Hoskyns, *Cambridge Sermons*, p. 167.
12. Dillistone, op.cit., p. 156.
13. Hoskyns and Davey, *Crucifixion-Resurrection*, p. 64.
14. ibid., p. 67.
15. Dillistone, op.cit., p. 94.
16. Dodd "The Eucharist in Relation to the Fellowship of the Church", *Theology* 1931, 333-36; this quotation p. 336; it was a feature of his writings.
17. ibid p. 336.
18. Dodd, *History and the Gospel*, Nisbet, 1938, pp. 162ff. Italics in the original.
19. G. B. Caird, "Charles Harold Dodd", *The Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1974, pp. 3-16; this quotation p. 11.
20. Dillistone, op.cit., p. 165.
21. cf. Dodd, "The Close of the Galilaean Ministry", *Expositor*, 1921, 273-91.
22. Dodd, *The Gospel in the New Testament*, National Sunday School Union, 1926, p. 100.
23. cf. Dodd, Review of J. H. Bernard, *Gospel according to St. John, Congregational Quarterly*, 1929, 369-71.
24. ibid. p. 371.
25. Hoskyns, Review of Bernard, *Theology* 1930, 165-71; this quotation p. 167.
26. Dodd, "Hellenism and Christianity" in *Independence, Convergence and Borrowing in Institutions, Thought and Art*, CUP, 1937, p. 126, my italics. The extended title says it all!
27. Dodd, *The Present Task in New Testament Studies*, p. 14.
28. cf. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns and Davey, *The Fourth Gospel, Theology*, 1940, pp. 305-10.
29. Dodd, *The Present Task in New Testament Studies*, p. 35.
30. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns, p. 306.
31. Hoskyns, "The Christ of the Synoptic Gospels" in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, SPCK, 1926; this quotation p. 153.
32. Hoskyns and Davey, *The Riddle of the New Testament*, Faber and Faber, 1931; all citations from the 1958 edition; this quotation p. 9f.
33. ibid, p. 177.
34. ibid., p. 179.
35. ibid.
36. Hoskyns, Review of Bernard, p. 169f.
37. Hoskyns and Davey, *Crucifixion-Resurrection* p. 70.
38. cf. Hoskyns and Davey, *The Fourth Gospel*, Faber and Faber, 1947, pp. 58 and 112.
39. J. H. Bernard *The Gospel according to St. John*, T. and T. Clark, 1928, p. xc.
40. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p. 370.
41. Dodd, *The Authority of the Bible*, Nisbet, 1928, revised edition 1938 from which citations are taken; this quotation p. ix.
41. Dodd, *History and the Gospel*, p. 37.
43. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns, p. 308.
44. Hoskyns and Davey, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 132.
45. ibid.
46. ibid.
47. ibid. p. 17, my italics.
48. ibid. p. 18.
49. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns, p. 308.
50. Hoskyns and Davey, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 85.

51. ibid.
52. ibid.
53. ibid., p. 84.
54. ibid.
55. cf. ibid., p. 117.
56. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns, p. 309.
57. Hoskyns and Davey, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 109.
58. ibid. p. 112, my italics.
59. ibid. p. 362; interestingly this is close to the Dodd's understanding in *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 357.
60. ibid., p. 395.
61. ibid.
62. ibid., p. 126.
63. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns, p. 309.
64. ibid., p. 310.
65. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, CUP, 1963, p. 8.
66. ibid.
67. cf. J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, SCM, 1976, pp. 263-68.
68. Dodd *The Founder of Christianity*, Collins, 1971; quotation from the Fontana edition, pp. 31f.
69. cf. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p. 371.
70. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, SPCK, 1978, p. 97.
71. Hoskyns and Davey, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 129.
72. ibid., p. 61.
73. ibid., p. 130, where I have changed the order of the sentence.