

CHAPTER EIGHT

DID THE EARLY CHURCH DELIMIT ITS
EXPECTATION OF THE PAROUSIA?

In this chapter we seek an answer to the first of our four questions. Is there any evidence to determine that the early church as a whole expected the Parousia would certainly occur shortly, and definitely within its own generation? Since we cannot presuppose a united voice within the christian communities and the different elements within the New Testament, we begin by addressing the question to Paul; and because it is often argued¹ that here particularly Paul reveals a development of understanding, we examine the evidence chronologically.

I Thess. 4, 13-18

An analysis of the letter shows that 4, 13-18 is not the high peak but simply one paraenetic section amongst others.² It is not, however, unimportant.³ Paul writes in order that the Thessalonians should not sorrow, *ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε*,⁴ and the cause of their sorrow is clearly *not* disappointment over the non-arrival of the Parousia, as some scholars hold,⁵ but rather anxiety over the question whether (and how) Christian dead would experience the first festive phase

¹ Cf. above, p. 50f.

² After thanks and explanation (1;2—3;13) Paul turns to particular themes through which he apparently hopes to build up the faith of the Thessalonian community. 4; 1-5 concerns sexual purity; 4; 9-12 encourages brotherly love; 4; 13-18 encourages hope; 5; 1-11 exhorts to watchfulness; 5; 12-22 discusses discipline and order. (This, against Neil, *Thessalonians*, p. 89, who says, 'This important passage (4; 13-18) . . . gives the epistle its characteristic note.')

³ The clause *οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν* suggests that the teaching which follows is of special significance; cf. Rom. 1, 13; 11, 25; I Cor. 10, 1; 12, 1; II Cor. 1, 8; cf. also Phil. 1, 12; Col. 2, 1.

⁴ Haak, 'Exegetische dogmatische Studie zur Eschatologie I Thess. 4; 13-18, in *Z.s.T.* XV, 1938, pp. 544ff., rightly reminds us that the section is given with this end in view, and that exegesis should not overlook this nor import some other intention; similarly Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, p. 527.

⁵ Cf. Héring, in *R.H.P.R.* XII, 1932 pp. 316ff.; Heard, *Introduction*, p. 186; Davies, *Rabbinic Judaism*, pp. 291f.; partially, Sparks, *Formation*, p. 33.

of the Parousia.¹ The conclusion is supported by the following considerations. Verse 13 expressly states that Paul will not have his converts ignorant 'concerning them that fall asleep' (*κοιμηθέντας*).² Clearly it is *Christians* who are in mind,³ and the problem—is their status over against the status of living Christians at the moment of the Parousia.⁴ Verse 15 compares *οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι* with *τοὺς κοιμηθέντας*, the argument speaking about the fact that neither group will have advantage over the other. The mention of precedence shows that *this* was the problem, and not the fact that Christians died.⁵

The question remains whether *ἡμεῖς* in vv. 15 and 17⁶ indicates that Paul thought the Parousia would definitely occur within his own lifetime, as many contend.⁷ There is considerable support for the suggestion that Paul is speaking not of a particular group (you

¹ Cf. Haak, in *Z.s.T.* XV, 1938, pp. 544ff., Cullmann, *Time*, pp. 240f.; Michaelis, in *Wikenhauser Festschrift*, pp. 116f.; Schmaus, *Dogmatik*, p. 40; Beasley-Murray, *Future*, pp. 232f.; Neil, *Thessalonians*, p. 99; Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, pp. 527f.

² The present *κοιμηθέντας* is to be preferred; cf. Rigaux, *Thessaliniens*, p. 529.

³ For (a) the N.T. usage of *κοιμῶ* is almost uniformly of Christians (Acts 7, 60; I Cor. 15, 6; 8) or of believers under the old covenant (Mtt. 27, 52, Acts 13, 36;? II Peter 3, 4), and (b) v. 14 speaks of those asleep *κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ* (This punctuation seems best; cf. Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, p. 535; Frame, *Thessalonians*, p. 169).

⁴ Clearly this problem would not be tackled in the course of missionary preaching, but later, when it arose in connection with the real situation of christians dying (cf. Moffatt, in *E.G.T.* p. 36; Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, p. 528). Some concern over a similar matter is seen in Bar. 11; 6f., II Esdras, 5, 41, 42, etc. Oepke, *Thessalonicher*, pp. 144ff. (an appended note, 'Die Parusie-Erwartung in den älteren Paulus-Briefen') argues that the problem could only arise where a delimited hope had been held out; but this overlooks the fact that death itself was not the problem causing anxiety but only brought to light the problem (which one could hardly expect to arise in abstraction).

⁵ Those who argue that the early church was alarmed at the 'unexpected' death of Christians (cf. Moffatt, in *E.G.T.*, p. 40; Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, p. 92; Héring, in *R.H.P.R.* XII, 1932, pp. 316ff.; Davies *Rabbinic Judaism*, p. 291) appear to overlook the fact that Stephen had already died (Acts 7, 60) and, according to Acts 8, 1, a 'great persecution' had arisen; cf. also Acts 9, 1.

⁶ Cf. also I Cor. 15, 51.

⁷ Cf. Deissmann, *Paul*, p. 217; Frame, *Thessalonians*, pp. 172f.; Milligan, *Thessalonians*, pp. 58f.; Hadorn, *Zukunft und Hoffnung*, p. 125 Michel, in *Z.s.T.* 1932, pp. 645ff.; Oepke, *Thessalonicher, ad loc.*; Dodd, *Studies*, pp. 80ff.; 108ff.; Cullmann, *Time*, p. 88; *Early Church*, p. 152; Barclay, *Mind*, p. 134; Neil, *Thessalonians*, pp. 98f.; Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, pp. 225, 539f.; Albertz, *Botschaft*, II/1. pp. 203f.

Thessalonians and I, Paul), but of the Christian church in general; that Paul is not stating that he is certain he himself will be alive at the Parousia but only that some Christians will be.¹ We mention the following: first, the essential contrast being made is an impersonal one, between those alive at the Parousia and those dead; it is the *contrast* as such which is primary, not who comprises each group. Secondly, although Paul is not here speaking of the time of the Parousia's arrival, he does go on to discuss this in 5; 1-11, and there he affirms explicitly that the Parousia will come suddenly and all must watch (5, 2 ff.) and implies that 'we' (5; 9, 10) might either 'watch' (γρηγορῶμεν) or 'sleep' (καθεύδωμεν); i.e. the possibility seems to be held out that Paul and his readers might live to the Parousia but also that they might die prior to it.² Thirdly, the fact that in v. 15 and v. 17 'we' is expanded, ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι . . . εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν should probably be taken to imply that the actual composition of the group is being left open. Fourthly, it would appear unlikely that Paul's personal experiences should have led him to any confident expectation of life.⁴ Finally, whilst it is usual to contrast I Thess. 4, 13ff. with the so-called changed perspective of II Cor. 5; 6-10, Phil. 1, 23, etc., it is noteworthy that II Cor. 5, 9 still reckons with the dual possibility, εἴτε ἐνδημοῦντες εἴτε ἐκδημοῦντες, and Phil. 1, 20 similarly. We therefore do not take ἡμεῖς as necessarily indicative of a delimited hope. As the expression of an *undelimited* hope it is the natural prelude to 5; 1-11 where Paul reminds his converts that since the date of the End is unknown, all are enjoined to watchful, obedient discipleship.⁵

II. Thess. 1, 5-12, 2, 1-15

It is frequently argued that here Paul teaches that the Parousia

¹ Cf. e.g. Chrysostom, Augustine, Theodoret (see Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, pp. 540f); Schmaus, *Dogmatik*, p. 40; Haak, in *Z.s.T.* XV, 1938, pp. 544ff.; Flückiger, *Ursprung*, p. 144. We may compare Jn. 1, 14 where ἡμεῖς ἀγαπᾶμεθα probably means 'we Christians . . .' and, according to Barrett (*John*, pp. 119, 138) does not include the author. (cf. also 'you' in Amos 2, 10, which cannot mean that the prophet thought those he was addressing were ever in Egypt.)

² This is said to be already familiar to the Thessalonians; 5, 1f.

³ Cf. Flückiger, *Ursprung*, p. 144.

⁴ Cf. Acts 8, 1, 9, 23f., II Cor. 11, 23f.

⁵ Exactly similarly Mk. 13; 33-37 following v. 32, and II Peter 3, 11f., following vv. 8-10.

will arrive shortly.¹ However, far from affirming such a view, this letter distinctly emphasises that the 'end is not yet'.² Two passages in particular support this contention.

The first is II Thess. 2, 3, a reminiscence of Dan. 11, 36f., where Paul maintains that prior to the End there must be an upsurge of evil in unique form, involving Antichrist.³ Clearly the point of the reference lies in the fact that such unique wickedness had not yet occurred. To be sure, Paul speaks (v. 7) of the 'mystery' of lawlessness already at work' τὸ γὰρ μυστήριον ἤδη ἐνεργεῖται τῆς ἀνομίας. Many⁴ take this as a reference to Caligula, from which it follows that Paul expected the End to come very soon (once Claudius was removed and Nero came to power). But this identification is hardly likely since (a) Paul's present indicative ἐνεργεῖται does not mean that lawlessness has once occurred (which would require an aorist):⁵ (b) Paul speaks of a 'mystery' μυστήριον, whereas if the reference were to Caligula he could easily have said 'lawlessness has been manifested':⁶ (c) Paul would need an astounding foreknowledge to know that Nero would succeed Claudius⁷ and that Nero would prove to be a ruler of unprecedented wickedness.⁸ We must understand the relation between the future 'revelation of the man of sin' and the present 'working of the mystery of lawlessness' in some other way, and probably the clue lies in the terms

¹ Cf. Glasson, *Advent*, p. 183, pp. 193ff., (who regards the 'adoption' of the man of sin tradition into the primitive tradition as one of the causes of the delimited hope); Neil, *Thessalonians*, p. 177.; Frame, *Thessalonians*, p. 243; Milligan, *Thessalonians*, pp. 94f.

² Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, p. 42, regarded the non-immediate note of the letter as proof of its unauthenticity!

³ The ref. in Dan. 11, 36f., is to Antiochus Euphianes; cf. Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, p. 658.

⁴ Cf. Hölscher, in *T.B.* VI, 1933, p. 137; Glasson, *Advent*, p. 183 (following Andrews, in Peake's *Commentary* (unrevised ed.) ad loc).

⁵ Cf. Blass-Debrunner, *Grammar*, p. 167, p. 171.

⁶ So, in fact, Andrews, in Peake's *Commentary*, quoted by Glasson, *Advent*, p. 183, writes 'The mystery of lawlessness has already manifested itself in Caligula.'

⁷ Though announced in A.D. 50 (when Nero was 13), the succession depended largely on his mother Agrippina's support (Claudius' fourth wife), and involved the supersession of Claudius' son Britannicus.

⁸ Though influenced by Seneca, Nero was also influenced for the good by 'Burrus, prefect of the praetorian guard, an honest and virtuous soldier' (Cowan, in *H.D.B.* III, pp. 514f.). Cf. also the favourable judgements on his early years of rule given in Suet. Nero 10, 11. Tacitus, Ann. xii, 45. Neil, *Thessalonians*, pp. 167f., notices the problem.

ἀποκαλυφθῆ (v. 3) and μυστήριον (v. 7). In the period prior to the Parousia (cf 2, 8f.), wickedness is at work in hidden form.¹ That does not mean that wickedness does not ever become open and apparent, but rather that in general it works in a subtle way, only on occasions and in violent upsurges taking on an apparent form. Such a violent upsurge of evil, concentrated in the person of Antichrist, was expected prior to the End,² and Paul warns that since it has not yet occurred, it is absurd to suppose that 'the day of the Lord is present' (2, 2). We may notice that although Paul aligns himself with the expectation of an upsurge of evil in this form prior to the End, he does not conclude that the End would necessarily follow any lesser outbreak of violence, nor that violent outbreaks cannot often occur.³

The other passage is II Thess. 2, 6-7, the teaching concerning τὸ κατέχον and ὁ κατέχων. The general interpretation⁴ sees τὸ κατέχον as the Roman state and ὁ κατέχων as Claudius the reigning emperor. It is pointed out in support that the neuter and masculine parallel the usage in Mk. 13; 14 where the allusion originally was to state power (neuter) represented by the emperor Antiochus (masculine): also that this view accords with Paul's high evaluation of the state.⁵ However, this interpretation is very unlikely to be correct, and there are many reasons for accepting the suggestion⁶ that Paul

¹ Cf. on μυστήριον in this sense, Robinson, *Ephesians*, pp. 234ff.; Moule, *Colossians*, pp. 80ff.

² Cf. Dan. 11, 36ff, 9, 25ff., which idea emerges in Ps. Sol., Test. of the Twelve Patriarchs, etc. cf. also Ezek. 28, 2, Is. 14, 13-14. Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, pp. 259ff. (and authorities there cited).

³ Every working of the 'mystery of lawlessness' will point to the final revelation of ὁ ἄνομος at the Parousia, but not every working—even violent—is to be seen as the immediate prelude to the removal of the restraint and the revelation of wickedness. Cf. Bornkamm, in *T.W.N.T.* IV, p. 830.)

⁴ Which goes back to Tertullian (de Ress. 24; cf. also Apol. 32) and has 'since won the support of the great majority of ancient and modern scholars' (Milligan, *Thessalonians*, p. 101); cf. Glasson, *Advent*, p. 183; Hölscher, in *T.B.* VI, 1933 p. 137.; Lauk, *Thessalonicher*, ad loc; Oepke, *Thessalonicher*, ad loc, allows it as a possibility.

⁵ Most refer to Rom. 13, 1-7; cf. Lauk, II *Thessalonicher*, ad loc; Milligan, *Thessalonians*, p. 101. Oepke (who thinks Paul may have in mind angelic powers working in the political institutions) thinks the evaluation is due partly to psychological causes, partly to experience (cf. Acts 13, 6f., 17, 6f.) and partly to Paul's sober realism; *Thessalonicher*, ad loc).

⁶ Which goes back to Theodoret (Migne P.G. Vol. 82, 665A) and Theodore of Mopsuestia (Migne, P.G. Vol. 66, 936A), was held by Calvin (*Commentary on Thessalonians*, ad loc), and recently is advocated by Cullmann (first in

is actually referring to gospel proclamation. Thus (a) the identification of Claudius with ὁ κατέχων would mean that Paul placed a high evaluation on this emperor not *qua* emperor but in contrast to his predecessor Caligula and the untried Nero. But Stauffer¹ says of Claudius that he was 'an insignificant fool who was ruled by his wife of the moment': is it this weakling ruler whom Paul defines as 'he who restrains'? (b) on the other hand, if one speaks not of Claudius particularly, but simply of the Roman rule, then the specific ὁ κατέχων is difficult:² (c) the prevailing New Testament usage of κατέχω suggests *activity*³ which is rather different from a restraining which arises from the passive fact of being alive and of thus hindering one's successor from ruling: (d) the evaluation of the state in terms of a power ordained of God, and therefore to be honoured⁴ is not questioned,⁵ nor do we doubt that Paul thinks of the state as something which often opposes itself to God's rule.⁶ But it is, surely, unlikely that Paul would refer in the same passage to the state both as that which requires restraining and as that which does the restraining; Cullmann⁷ rightly says that 'Paul would thereby have introduced into the eschatological conceptions a remarkable confusion': (e) gospel preaching is frequently referred to in the context, 1, 8; 1, 10; 2, 5; 2, 10; 2, 13. Paul was ever anxious to preach the gospel continually⁸ and to do nothing to hinder the course of the gospel.⁹ (f) ὁ κατέχων can satisfactorily be understood¹⁰

R.H.P.R. 1936, pp. 210ff.; later in *Time*, pp. 145ff.; *State*, p. 64, n. 7; in *Background of the N.T.*, pp. 418f.) and Munck, *Paul*, pp. 36ff.

¹ *Christ and the Caesars*, p. 138; cf. also Benecke, in *H.D.B.* I, pp. 446f.

² Hanse (in *T.W.N.T.* II, pp. 829f.) writes, 'die beliebte Deutung auf die Ordnung des römischen Reiches passt schlecht zu dem persönlichen ὁ κατέχων'. Without altogether underestimating the significance of the masculine and neuter (as Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, p. 275, appears to do) it could perhaps be said that the masculine is a reference to any personification of the state power (cf. Milligan, *Thessalonians*, p. 101).

³ Cf. Arndt-Gingrich, *Lexicon*, p. 434. Hanse, in *T.W.N.T.* II, p. 829.

⁴ Cf. Rom. 13, 1-17 (I Tim. 2, 2).

⁵ Cf. Barth's comment (re Jn. 19, 11) 'The State, even in this "demonic" form, cannot help rendering the service it is meant to render'. (*State*, p. 17).

⁶ Cf. Stauffer, *Theology*, p. 85.

⁷ *Time*, p. 164.

⁸ Cf. I Cor. 9, 23; II Cor. 10, 16; Rom. 15, 19ff., etc.

⁹ Cf. I Cor. 9, 13; II Cor. 6, 3-4.

¹⁰ With Cullmann, *Time*, pp. 145ff., *State*, p. 64, n. 7, etc.; Munck, *Paul*, pp. 36ff.

as a reference to Paul himself, or more probably¹ as a reference to 'the preacher' who gives actual form to the restraining force, τὸ κατέχον, namely the gospel itself.² We conclude, therefore, that Paul is here teaching that the Parousia *can* delay; and that this teaching is not a corrective for a delimited hope previously held, but is precisely the message which he had already preached at Thessalonica (cf 2, 5; 2, 15).

I Corinthians 7

Many scholars³ maintain that this chapter betrays Paul's con-

¹ Because the view of Cullmann and Munck (which Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, p. 266, calls gratuitous) is supported by two considerations which are open to criticism; they are:—

a) Paul's lofty consciousness of mission (Cullmann, *Time*, p. 165; Munck, *Paul*, pp. 39f.) But Paul must have been aware that he was not *alone* in his missionary task; cf. I Cor. 3, 1-9 in which it is basic to the argument that both Paul and Apollos are 'ministers through whom ye believed'; also Acts 13, 2; where Paul *and* Barbanas are set aside for special work together; II Cor. 11, 23f, too, where Paul does not even hint that the mission to the Gentiles was altogether imperilled by the experiences which threatened his own life. The unique function of apostleship, whether to Jew or Gentiles, lay in witnessing (cf. Barrett, in *Studia Paulina*, pp. 18f.) But it is an exaggeration to suggest that Paul regarded *his* witness as decisive for the inbreak of the End. (It is interesting that Munck nowhere mentions I Cor. 15, 9; except p. 13, n. 2, as evidence that Paul was a persecutor; for although he declares in v. 10 that he laboured more than others, his self-assessment in v. 9 should be taken seriously.) b) Supporting the allusiveness of the so-called self designation, Cullmann (*Time*, pp. 156f.) refers to II Cor. 12, 2;—another self designation couched in the 3rd person. But this is an exception (contrast Rom. 1, 1; 11, 13; I Cor. 1, 1; 9, 1; II Cor. 1, 1; 11, 5; etc.) intended to point away from his own glorying. Rigaux (*Thessaloniciens*, p. 276, following Schmid, in *T.Q.* CXXIV, 1949, p. 336 is right: 'Paul ne l'aurait pas dit secrètement, mais ouvertement.' (Though Rigaux's own objection (*Thessaloniciens*, p. 277), 'contre ceux qui identifient Paul aux κατέχων et font de la mort de Paul la condition de l'éclosion de la lutte eschatologique on est en droit de faire valoir que, dans ce cas, il y a une contradiction flagrante entre notre péricope et I Thess. 4; 13-18 où Paul exprime l'espoir d'être vivant à la parousie', will not stand on our interpretation of I Thess. 4, 13-18. Cf. too the despairing conclusion of Dibelius, *Thessalonicher*, p. 43; Neil, *Thessalonians*, pp. 165ff.)

² Cf. Hanse, in *T.W.N.T.* II, p. 830 (though Hanse does not identify δ κατέχων with 'the preacher'). Perhaps support for this interpretation can be drawn from the chain of events listed in Rom. 10, 13ff.; 'how can they believe in whom they have not heard?' is a reference to preaching as such; and 'how shall they hear without a preacher?' is a reference to the concrete form. It is when there is no longer 'a preacher' (i.e. when God decrees; cf. Blass-Debrunner, *Grammar*, p. 164) that the mission must cease and the End come.

³ Cf. Dodd, *Studies*, pp. 180ff.; Robertson-Plummer, *I Corinthians*, p. 152; Lietzmann, *Korinther*, p. 29; Glasson, *Advent*, p. 139; Munck, *Paul*, p. 165.

viction that the Parousia would definitely arrive within a few years. Against this interpretation of the chapter we offer the following considerations:

Though the ethics expressed here are, to some extent, ascetic in character,¹ this asceticism should be evaluated with the special situation of the Corinthians in mind.² Not only was Corinth traditionally vicious³ but within the Christian community there was division (1, 11), 'worldliness' (3, 2f.), especially sexual impurity (5, 1ff.)⁴

The relativity of the asceticism⁵ suggests that it was motivated by Paul's concern for the well-being and faithfulness of his Corinthian converts, rather than by a conviction that the world would necessarily end within a few years. Paul is above all else concerned with the problem how Christians can best 'please the Lord' (v. 32) and he enumerates in fact three principles: first, do what will avoid sin: ⁶ secondly, do that to which God calls; ⁷ thirdly, do that which will not distract from discipleship.⁸ This complex of world affirmation and of world denial, neither of which is absolutised,⁹ certainly does not necessitate as its basis the expectation that the Parousia must come within a definite, short, period.¹⁰

Three particular expressions in vv. 26-31 are often taken to indicate a delimited expectation. The first τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην,

¹ Cf. esp. v. 1, v. 8, vv. 26-27, v. 40.

² Cf. Morris, *I Corinthians*, p. 106.

³ Cf. Metzger, *Journeys*, p. 48.

⁴ It is possible that Paul was seeking not only to counter laxity but also to counter an overstressed rigorism; 7, 1-2 look as though Paul acknowledges the thesis put to him by the Corinthians and then modifies it (καλὸν . . . διὰ δὲ . . .); cf. Goudge, *I Corinthians*, p. 52; Héring, *I Corinthiens*, p. 50.

⁵ V. 1 is modified by v. 2; v. 8 by v. 9; vv. 26-27 by vv. 28f; v. 37 by v. 36; and v. 40 by v. 39.

⁶ Cf. vv. 2, 5, 9, 36.

⁷ Cf. vv. 7, 17f., 20, 21ff.

⁸ Cf. vv. 19, 24, 32, 33-36.

⁹ Cf. Cullmann, *Time*, pp. 212f. Earthly ties must be regarded as subservient to the demands of the Lord and his gospel (cf. Mtt. 10, 37) and the things which the world counts vital, recognised as transient (cf. similarly Rom. 12, 2; Phil. 4, 11).

¹⁰ It is interesting that in Phil. 4, 11; (where, according to those who affirm a development in Paul's thought, we have his later ideas) contentment with his conditions is again stated. It appears quite possible that this contentment with what befalls one (and refusal to seek to change one's lot) is what Paul is commending in I Cor. 7, 7; 8. Such freedom from cares is encouraged in 7, 32-36 (cf. v. 28), and is the ground for a man to be as he is (v. 26) and not seek change.

is sometimes taken to denote pre-messianic woes (cf Lk. 21, 23); but even if we understand the phrase in this way, it does not need to mean that Paul believed the period of woes to be very short. There is, however, good reason to suggest that Paul had in mind here the distressing situation in Corinth¹ which complicated and jeopardized the formation of new relationships, and which could be of any imaginable duration, long or short.²

The second expression *ὁ καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος ἐστίν* need not simply mean that there is not much time left, for *καιρὸς* is neutral concerning its duration,³ and the expression *συνεσταλμένος*⁴ whilst clearly affirming that the Parousia is in some sense imminent, does not necessarily mean that Paul thought it must come within a delimited time.⁵

The third expression *παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου* is hardly a reference to the expected destruction and renewal of the world (cf Rom. 8, 19f.), for the present tense (cf also *ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην*)

¹ Robertson-Plummer *I Corinthians*, p. 152; Héring, *I Corinthiens*, p. 57; and Lietzmann, *Korinther*, pp. 33f.; all take *ἀνάγκη* in connection with *ὁ καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος* and interpret v. 26 of the messianic woes. But whilst Lk. 21, 23 uses *ἀνάγκη* in this connection, Mtt. 24, 21; 29 and Mk., 13, 19; 24, use rather *Θλίψις*. Certainly Paul can use *ἀνάγκη* elsewhere of distress not directly connected with the End, cf. Rom. 13, 5; II Cor. 6, 4; 9, 7; 12, 10; I Thess. 3, 7 (Arndt-Gingrich, *Lexicon*, give only I Cor. 7, 26 as meaning 'the distress in the last days,' apart from Lk. 21, 23) (cf. also III Macc. 1, 16 for the phrase 'present distress' where there is no direct connection with messianic woes). Significantly Paul uses *ἀνάγκη* in 7, 37 where he suggests that the present distress of v. 26 might not affect all the Corinthians. The chief objection to interpreting the expression in terms of the local Corinthian trouble is that vv. 29-31 speak certainly of the 'End'; but the clear break in v. 29 (*τοῦτο δὲ φημι*, 'indiquant sans doute qu'il s'agit d'une révélation nouvelle'; Héring, *I Corinthiens*, p. 57) makes this objection weak. It may well be that the two ideas should be taken together, and that Paul saw in the distress in Corinth one aspect of those woes which precede the Parousia.

² It is unlikely that *τῇ σαρκί* in v. 28 refers to the sort of situation envisaged in Mk. 13, 17 par., but that Paul rather had in mind the 'outward cares of living'; Bultmann, *Theology*, I, p. 233; Lietzmann, *Korinther*, p. 34.

³ Delling, in *T.W.N.T.* III, p. 463, calls *καιρὸς* 'der entscheidende Zeitpunkt' (cf. Cullmann, *Time*, p. 39); but *καιρὸς* can certainly mean a decisive period (cf. esp. Col. 4, 5; Rom. 13, 11; also Rom. 12, 11; in D*G. Ambrst.)

⁴ The verb is used in Acts 5, 6 of 'wrapping up' a corpse.

⁵ Calvin (*Commentary on I Corinthians*, p. 159) says Paul 'bases his argument on the shortness of human life' but Robertson-Plummer *Commentary*, p. 155) rightly comment 'This makes good sense, but probably not the right sense.' That God should contract the time prior to the Parousia gives us no grounds for delimiting it, but simply urges us to patience and urgency in discipleship.

suggests a process already begun. *τὸ σχῆμα*, used in the New Testament twice only,¹ probably means the outward customs and ordinances of human life, the permanency of which is called in question; the Christian must stand over against them with a certain detachment.²

Such detachment is, surely, a proper expression of Christian discipleship. Héring³ writes, 'mais ce qu'il y a de curieux, c'est que les recommandations de 30 et 31 ont une portée beaucoup plus grande, indépendante de la date de la parousie.' Paul can encourage watchfulness,⁴ believing that the Parousia is near without necessarily believing that it would certainly come within a definite period of time.

I Corinthians 15

Does this chapter contain evidence that Paul believed that the Parousia must come within a few years? Lietzmann maintains that those who denied the resurrection (cf. v. 12) 'müssten denn ihre Ewigkeitshoffnung, allein auf das Erleben der Parusie eingestellt haben, was nicht unmöglich ist (vgl. I Thess. 4, 13f.)'.⁵ If he were right, it is significant that Paul does *not* answer simply that this is also *his* hope! However, Lietzmann's conclusion does not necessarily follow, for there have been Christians in every generation who have substituted for the belief in the resurrection some other doctrine, often the idea of the immortality of the soul.⁶ Certainly

¹ Here and in Phil. 2, 8; where it is clear that the meaning is 'the outward appearance.' But in view of the doubts concerning authorship of Phil. 2, 5-11 (cf. Lohmeyer, *Philipper*, p. 90; contrast Martin, *An Early Christian Confession*, pp. 8ff.), the passage cannot help very much in understanding I. Cor. 7.

² Cf. Rich, *Die Bedeutung*, p. 21. Calvin, *I Corinthians*, p. 160, paraphrases 'there is nothing stable or solid, for it is only a facade, or outward appearance.' Cf. Rom. 12, 2.

³ *I Corinthiens*, p. 58. Contrast, Robertson-Plummer, *I Corinthians* p. 152, who write 'We cannot assume that his opinion would have been the same in a more peaceful period, and after experience had proved that the Advent might be long delayed.'

⁴ It is because the End can come at any moment (cf. also I Cor. 10, 11) that Paul exhorts to 'care-lessness'; cf. exactly parallel Lk. 21, 34 (cf. 'the cares of this life'). The parallel is specially interesting since Luke is said to be concerned with an indefinite interim!

⁵ *Korinther*, p. 79.

⁶ For a full discussion of the views of those referred to in I Cor. 15, 12; cf. Weiss, *I Korinther*, pp. 343ff.

Paul does not address himself to such a hope, but directly to the denial of the resurrection (15; 13f.) and then to the problems arising (15, 22ff.). It seems most probable,¹ that the deniers of the Resurrection were Christians who being open to Hellenistic influences found in the idea of resurrection *per se* a source of difficulty'.²

The problem under discussion is certainly not the Parousia delay; the denial (v. 12) does not arise through any disillusionment—for Paul answers not that the Parousia will come (after all!), but that Christ is risen and therefore Christians too will be raised.³

Only two passages might possibly be taken as indicating a delimited expectation in this chapter. The first is v. 23 'then they that are Christ's, at his *παρουσία*'. But, though this points to the next phase of salvation history (Christ the *ἀπαρχή* being a past phase, cf. v. 20), the moment of its coming is entirely undefined. *ἔπειτα* certainly links the two events⁴ but no chronological delimitation is ventured.⁵

The other passage is vv. 51-52. Here the first person plural is taken by many⁶ as meaning that Paul includes himself amongst those who will not die. This is extremely unlikely. To press the form of the expression so, would mean that in I Cor. 6, 14 Paul expected certainly to die.⁷ In fact Paul probably means Christians generally—as, we suggest, he means in I Thess. 4, 15; 17.⁸ Paul does

¹ With Davies, *Rabbinic Judaism*, p. 303; Robertson-Plummer *I Corinthians*, p. 346.

² Davies, *Rabbinic Judaism*, p. 303. Hence, perhaps, the argument includes the section vv. 35ff.

³ Nor is the problem that Christians were not expected to die. I Cor. 15, 6 mentions *τινὲς ἐκοιμήθησαν* without more ado! If Michaelis (in *Wikenhauser Festschrift*, pp. 114f.) says that Menoud ignores this verse, we may note that Davies (*Rabbinic Judaism*) and Munck (*Paul*) do also.

⁴ And they *are* linked, for Christ is the *ἀπαρχή* of this next phase.

⁵ Already nearly 30 years had separated the two events. The discussion concerning the possibility of an interval between *ἔπειτα* and *εἶτα* (vv. 23, 34) (cf. Robinson, *Coming*, p. 31; Kennedy, *Last Things* p. 323) has no bearing on this question.

⁶ Cf. Bultmann, *Theology*, I p. 103; Deissmann, *Paul*, p. 217; Robertson-Plummer, *I Corinthians*, p. 376; Lietzmann, *Korinther*, p. 87; Anderson-Scott *Footnotes*, p. 140, etc. (Lietzmann indeed suggests that the non fulfilment of the verse accounts for the textual variants; but peculiarities of the construction here (*πάντες οὐ . . . ὁμῆθα* and *πάντες δὲ . . . ὁμῆθα*) may well be sufficient grounds for variations having arisen.)

⁷ As Morris, *I Corinthians*, p. 232, notes.

⁸ Cf. above pp. 100ff.; Héring, *I Corinthiens*, p. 150.

not write as one who will certainly be dead at the Parousia, but as one who awaits the Parousia as an event which might occur at any moment and therefore he reckons with the possibility of his being alive at that time; but this does not mean that he included himself amongst those who would necessarily be alive at its coming.

II Corinthians 5, 1-10

Here (and in Phil. 1, 23) we meet with the so-called developed view of Paul.¹ Davies² declares that 'there is nothing in the text to suggest Paul's hope of surviving to the Parousia'. Many, however, argue that Paul is, in fact, longing for the Parousia so that he will not have to undergo the state of nakedness (*γυμνός*) following death.³ It seems at least possible that Paul does not mean that nakedness follows upon the death of *Christians*,⁴ and that therefore he is not 'groaning' (*στενάζομεν*) because of the oppressive thought that death may come before the Lord returns. Nevertheless there is here a longing for the coming of the Parousia; *στενάζειν* as used by Paul⁵ has a definite eschatological sense (cf. Rom. 8, 22; 23). The hope remains, and remains undelimited.⁶

¹ Cf. Dodd, *Studies*, pp. 110f.; Cullmann, *Time*, p. 88; Robertson-Plummer, *I Corinthians*, p. 376; Anderson-Scott, *Footnotes*, p. 140; Davies, *Rabbinic Judaism*, pp. 310f.

² Cf. *Rabbinic Judaism*, p. 311 (following Cave, *Gospel*, p. 255); contrast, Kennedy, *Last Things*, p. 256.

³ Cf. Lietzmann, *Korinther*, p. 117; Deissmann, *Paul*, p. 65; Kennedy, *Last Things*, p. 256; Robertson-Plummer, *I Corinthians*, p. 148; Sevenster, in *Studia Paulina*, p. 207.

⁴ Calvin (*I Corinthians, ad loc.*), Oepke (in *T.W.N.T.* 1, p. 774) and Flückiger (*Ursprung*, p. 145, n. 86), think that Paul means that 'the wicked' are to be naked. Sevenster (in *Studia Paulina*, pp. 202ff.) disagrees on the grounds that we have no justification for thinking that Paul did not expect the wicked also to be raised. Yet the resurrection to a *naked* state could, surely, be envisaged by Paul? Robinson (*Body*, p. 29) maintains that 'to be absent from the body' means 'to be naked'; but there is no need to take the parenthesis of v. 3 and the negation in v. 4 as interpreting the phrase of v. 6, v. 8 and v. 9. If Paul is thinking in vv. 3f., of the putting off of the old man (cf. Col. 3, 9f., Rom. 6, 6) the longing for the 'new man' and the dread of not attaining (cf. I Cor. 9, 27), then the readiness to die or live (vv. 6ff.) is readily understandable. To be sure, Sevenster (in *Studia Paulina*, pp. 206f.) has shown that the comparison in Phil. 1, 23 is not the same as the one made in II Cor. 5, 3; at the same time, the willingness to die (Phil. 1, 23) is more easily understood if Paul is thinking of the wicked as those who, not being 'in Christ', must be 'naked'.

⁵ Contrast the N.T. usage elsewhere, Jam. 5, 9; Heb. 13, 17; Mk. 7, 34.

⁶ It is, anyway, extremely improbable that Paul should have so suddenly changed his views. Davies, *Rabbinic Judaism*, p. 311; Cave, *Gospel*, p. 254;

Romans 13.

This chapter is interpreted, on the one hand, as giving a re-appraisal of Paul's earlier 'world-denial'¹ and, on the other hand, as evidence that Paul still believed that the Parousia would come within a very few years.²

The first estimate, besides wrongly attributing to Paul in his earlier letters a simple 'world denial'³ surely exaggerates in seeing in Rom. 13, 1-7 a simple 'world-affirmation'. Dodd thinks that here Paul grounds civil government in 'the natural moral order of the universe, but lying outside the order of grace revealed in Christ'.⁴ There are, however, good reasons for understanding Paul's injunction *πάσα ψυχή ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις ὑποτασέσθω* Christologically.⁵ Christians are required 'to submit themselves' because the

Denney, *II Corinthians*, p. 175, think that II Cor. 1; 8-9 reflects the event which led to such a change. But dangers had faced Paul often enough before.

¹ Cf. Dodd, *Studies*, pp. 108ff.; *Romans*, pp. 209f.; Dodd connects his view of Rom. 13 with chapters 9-11 of which he says, 'the forecast of history in ch. 11 is hardly framed for a period of a few months' (*Romans*, p. 209). But in reply we must mention these considerations:—

a. Paul attaches to the present and future *no different* significance here than that found elsewhere. The present as the period in which the Gospel is preached is an idea found in I Cor. 9; 12, 23, II Cor. 6, 1f., 10, 15 (and cf. the interpretation of *κατέχον* (ων) in II Thess. 2, 6-7 above, pp. 112f.). The ultimate inclusion of the Jews, though not worked out elsewhere, is implied in the argument of the 'universalism' of I Cor. 15, 22; II Cor. 5, 14; Rom. 5, 12f.

b. The perspective of the chapters does not rule out the *possibility* of a speedy End. Already the 'grafting in of the Gentiles' can be spoken of in the past tense (cf. 11, 17 *ἐνεκεν τρισθης*) just as the breaking off of 'some of the branches' is past (v. 17). And although Paul hopes, by provoking his fellows to jealousy on account of the Gentiles' faith, to gain the conversion of some of them (cf. Deut. 32, 21), he does not say that Israel as a whole will have to be converted before the End comes (which might indeed suggest a *Fernerwartung*), but connects their ingrafting with the End itself (cf. 11, 26). Everything depends, therefore, on how long the 'times of the Gentiles' (cf. τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν) may be—but, significantly, Paul does not venture an opinion on this.

² Cf. Barrett, *Romans*, ad loc; Gore, *Romans*, II, p. 134; Sanday-Headlam, *Romans*, p. 380; Leenhardt, *Romans*, p. 339; (with reservations) Bultmann, *Theology*, I, pp. 103, 347.

³ Cf. above on I Cor. 7, pp. 114f.

⁴ *Romans*, p. 204.

⁵ Even if *ἐξουσία* is not taken as a reference to the demonic powers subjected to Christ through his Cross and Resurrection (this Christological interpretation has been advocated most recently by Barth, *Shorter Commentary*, p. 158; Cullmann, *Time*, pp. 191ff.; cf. Brunner, *Romans*, pp. 108f., contrast Michel, *Römer*, p. 281; von Campenhausen, 'Zur Auslegung von

civil power is an instrument of Christ's kingly rule and because, in so far as its existence is for the good of one's neighbour, one's service of it is a part of the debt of love owed to the neighbour in whom Christ himself is mysteriously present'.¹ If this interpretation is correct, Paul is not voicing a simple world-affirmation but asserting the Lordship of Christ in the political sphere of human life, a Lordship implicit already in his earliest letters.²

The second estimate, that Paul 'still' thinks in Romans (especially 13, 11-12) that the Parousia will come within a few years,³ attributes to him a delimitation of the present period which, in fact, he refuses to make.⁴ Paul requires that his readers 'should know the time'—something which unbelief cannot do (cf. Mtt. 16, 2-3); this knowledge gives to Christian ethics⁵ urgency and seriousness.⁶ ἡ ἡμέρα

Röm. 13'. in *Festschrift für A. Bertholet*, pp. 97ff.; Leenhardt, *Romans*, p. 328 note), the Christological interpretation of the passage can stand (cf. Cranfield, 'Some observations on Romans 13; 1-7' in *N.T.S.* VI, pp. 241ff. contrast Barrett, *Romans*, p. 249.) Cranfield mentions in support of the implicit Christological understanding in the credal formula *κύριος Ἰησοῦς*, the use made of Ps. 110, and such a passage as Mtt. 28, 18, and the explicit understanding in Rev. 1, 5; 17, 14; 19, 16 (in *N.T.S.* VI, p. 242). Barth (*Shorter Commentary*, p. 158) declares, 'Not a word suggests that Paul in these verses suddenly ceases to exhort "by the mercies of God" (12, 1), that he no longer appeals to Christians as such and therefore to their obedience to Jesus Christ.'

¹ Cranfield, in *N.T.S.* VI, p. 244.

² Cf. *κύριος Ἰησοῦς* in I Thess. 1, 1; 3, 2, 15; 19, 3, 11; 13, 4, 2, 5, 9; 23; 8 II Thess. 1, 1; 2; 7; 8; 12, 2, 1; 8; 14; 16, 3, 6; 12; 18.

³ Strangely, Dodd accepts this, and has to speak of Paul 'reverting' to his 'old view' in the midst of his 'developed view'; cf. *Studies*, pp. 108f.; *Romans*, p. 109.

⁴ Lietzmann *Römer*, p. 113, rightly only comments 'Die Nähe der Parusie als Motiv der Lebenserneuerung'; Sanday-Headlam, *Romans*, p. 378 say, 'The language is that befitting those who expect the actual coming of Christ almost immediately, but it will fit the circumstances of any Christian for whom death brings the day'; cf. also Leenhardt, *Romans*, p. 339.

⁵ All the injunctions preceding (beginning with 12, 1-2) and those which follow (14, 1ff.) are comprehended (cf. Blass-Debrunner, *Grammar*, p. 480; Michel, *Römer*, p. 281.)

⁶ If the difference between *καιρός* and *χρόνος* has sometimes been read into passages where it need not be present, Barr's criticisms, despite the service they have done, are surely too severe (as too his attack on modern lexicographical methodology; cf. *Biblical Words for Time*, and, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*). At any rate, it is clear that *καιρός* in Rom. 13, 11 must have the sense of divinely given opportunity, a period of special significance in the salvation history, as vv. 12f., show (cf. Leenhardt, *Romans*, p. 339, who compares the *vöv* of 13, 11b with the eschatological *vöv* in 3, 26, 5, 9; 11, 7, 6, 8, 1; 18; 22, 11, 5; 30; 31, 16, 26). But Rom. 13, 11 is a passage Barr does not discuss in *Biblical Words for Time*.

ἡγγικεν¹ means that the present period is a 'dawn'; the dawn, however, is not delimited—only the present is characterised *as* dawn throughout its duration.²

In the parenthesis of v. 11b, Paul claims νῦν γὰρ ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἢ σωτηρία ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεῦσαμεν. Barrett³ understands here, 'the lapse of time between the conversion of Paul and of his readers and the moment of writing is a significant proportion of the total interval between the resurrection of Jesus and his parousia at the last day.' But Paul could have said simply 'for you have only a few years left', had he meant this. Surely he means only that every day brings the End one day nearer. He has not ventured to suggest what proportion of the total this past period represents.⁴ Each moment is a significant moment not because necessarily few moments remain, but because the entire present period is a 'dawn' and the day *could* come at any moment.

Romans 15, 19; 23

On the expression πεπληρωμέναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (v. 19) Barrett comments, 'he does not mean that he (or any-one else) has preached the gospel to every person . . . but that it has been covered in a representative way. The Gospel has been heard; more could not be expected before the Parousia . . .'⁵ But whilst it is certainly true that Paul understands preaching (and the response of faith) directly related to the purpose for which the present time prior to the Parousia has been given (and therefore understands preaching as an

¹ The parallel with ἡγγικεν ἢ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is obviously important. The metaphor used by Paul can only be understood Christologically.

² Cf. Nygren, *Romans*, p. 436; Michel, *Römer*, p. 291; Brunner, *Romans*, p. 113. The dawn had already lasted some 25 years when Paul wrote (Dodd dates the letter in A.D. 59; Sanday and Headlam in 58.)

³ *Romans*, ad loc. More hesitantly Leenhardt, *Romans*, p. 339 (but to say, as Leenhardt does 'he (Paul) is not interested in the chronological aspect of the event itself . . .' surely goes too far in minimising Paul's hope that the Parousia *might* come shortly.)

⁴ Cf. Nygren, *Romans*, p. 436, 'When the Christian sees how time runs on, he ought thereby to be made mindful that "it is full time . . . to awake from sleep . . ."'

Paul certainly *is* referring to the period between acceptance of the gospel and the time of writing the epistle; cf. Bultmann, in *T.W.N.T.* VI, p. 215; Pallis, *Romans*, ad loc, connects with baptism (cf. Acts 19, 2); similarly Michel, *Römer*, p. 293; Brunner, *Romans*, p. 113.

⁵ *Romans*, p. 211; similarly, Munck, *Paul*, pp. 47ff.; Schoeps, *Paul*, p. 101. (following Overbeck, *Christentum und Kultur*, pp. 57, 62).

eschatological activity),¹ is there really any evidence here that Paul believed the gospel could only be preached in a representative way?, that 'more could not be expected before the Parousia'?

In answering these questions in the negative, we must notice that Paul himself—before even accomplishing a complete tour of 'representative' preaching²—visited some of his communities more than once,³ and stayed in some longer than one would expect if he had really believed that the Parousia's arrival was dependent upon the completion of his representative preaching.⁴ Moreover, Paul's general rule (v. 20) indicates that he himself did not concern himself in detail with the administration of the communities he had founded,⁵ nor did he work in places where the church had already been founded by others, but considered himself a pioneer missionary.⁶

Further, although we take πεπληρωμέναι as meaning that throughout the regions ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ κύκλῳ μέχρι τοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ Paul had fulfilled his task of a pioneer preaching of the gospel⁷ the fact is mentioned here, and re-iterated in v. 23 *not* in the context of expounding the fulfilment of the divine pattern of salvation-history, but in the course of explaining why Paul, as a pioneer missionary, intends to visit Rome.⁸ To be sure, there *is* a connection between fulfilment of the Gospel (πεπληρωμέναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) (and cf. Col. 1, 25; II Tim. 4, 17), and the command to preach to all nations (Mk. 13, 10; Mtt. 24, 14), the former being necessitated by the latter. But the world of that time was extensive,⁹ Paul's work that of a pioneer, and there is not evidence to show that Paul thought the completion of his preaching in certain parts was the same thing as the completion of all the preaching those parts would hear.¹⁰

¹ Cf. Cullmann, *Time*, pp. 157ff.; Michel, *Römer*, p. 330, Hunter, *Interpreting Paul's Gospel*, pp. 130f.

² Paul had, obviously, not yet been to Spain; Egypt, too, had apparently not been visited.

³ E.g. Corinth.

⁴ 18 months at Corinth, for instance (Acts 18, 11) and 2 years at Ephesus (Acts 19, 10).

⁵ Cf. Dibelius, *Paul*, p. 68.

⁶ Cf. II Cor. 4, 1ff., 5, 20; etc.

⁷ Hence the expression νυνὶ δὲ μηκέτι τόπον ἔχων in v. 23. Pallis, *Romans*, p. 157, describes μηκέτι τόπον ἔχων wrongly as an 'irresponsible exaggeration'.

⁸ The explanation is as elaborate and careful as it is, simply because it is a departure from custom.

⁹ Contrast Barrett, *Romans*, p. 277.

¹⁰ Rom. 11, 25 speaks of τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εισέλθῃ; similarly Lk. 21, 24. Both expressions are passive, suggesting that the fulness of the Gentiles is

Philippians, 3, 20; 4, 5

Not a few critics¹ think that Paul expressed in *Philippians* his 'developed' view of the future—namely, that he must die before the Parousia which (it is said) is now fading from his mind.

We admit that martyrdom certainly presents itself in this letter as a real possibility (cf. 1, 20; 2, 17). But this, surely, is to the forefront because of the nature of Paul's circumstances. Paul was in prison² and judgement in his case was awaited imminently (cf. 2, 23). In any case, the possibility of dying before the Parousia is not new (cf. I Thess. 5, 10; II Cor. 5, 9).³ There is no 'weariness of life'⁴ here, and Paul is by no means blind to the advantage of living (*ἀναγκαϊότερον*); indeed, his choice falls on this side (cf. 1, 25). Further, Paul apparently hopes still to be released (1, 25; 2, 24) so that he can hardly be said to have viewed his death prior to the Parousia as certain.

Paul eagerly awaits the Parousia (cf. 3, 20),⁵ but when he writes *ὁ Κύριος ἔγγυς* we cannot say that he believed the Parousia would necessarily come within a few years. Apart from the possibility that *ἔγγυς*⁶ here has a spatial rather than a temporal significance,⁷ the nearness, if temporal, is not delimited.

not accomplished without God's determining will. Contrast Munck, *Paul*, pp. 48f.

¹ Cf. esp. Dodd, *Studies*, pp. 108ff.; Michel, in *Z.s.T.* 1932, pp. 645ff. Sanday-Headlam, *Romans*, pp. 38f., etc.

² This is true whatever theory concerning the origin of the captivity epistles one takes (cf. Caesarea—Lohmeyer, *Philippianer*, p. 3; or Ephesus—Michaelis, esp. *Einleitung*, ad loc; Duncan, *St. Paul's Ephesian Ministry*, and in *E.T.* LXVII, 1956, pp. 163ff.; (for other authorities); or, the traditional view, Rome—Barth, *Philippians*). Manson's suggestion ('St. Paul in Ephesus. The Date of the Epistle to the Ephesians', in *B.J.R.L.* XXIII, 1939, pp. 182ff.) that Paul wrote from Ephesus but not in prison, rather with reference to his experiences with Gallio at Corinth (cf. Acts 18, 1ff.) makes inadequate sense of Phil. 1, 7; 13; 16. 2, 23, and has not been accepted.

³ Cf. above, p. 119f.

⁴ Cf. Heinzelmann, *Philippianer*, p. 92; Thurneysen, *Philippianer*, p. 423.

⁵ Cf. *ἀπεκδεχόμεθα* which denotes 'earnest awaiting'; Rom. 8, 9; 23, I Cor. 1, 7; Gal. 5, 5; (cf. Heb. 9, 28); it is always used by Paul with reference to the End (cf. Lohmeyer, *Philippianer*, ad loc; similarly, Vincent, *Philippians*, p. 119; Grundmann, in *T.W.N.T.* II, p. 55).

⁶ *ἔγγυς* even in a temporal sense remains flexible. In some cases it refers to an event known to be due in a few days (Mtt. 26, 18), in others it is used of a more general nearness (Mtt. 24, 32).

⁷ Dodd, *Studies*, p. 110; and Michaelis, *Philippianer*, p. 67, understand the nearness as that of the fellowship of the faithful with the Lord (cf. Ps. 114, 18; 118, 151 LXX.) In support of this it is to be noted that the context in

There appears, therefore, to be no sufficient ground for thinking that Paul believed that the Parousia must come within a fixed, short number of years. The question remains whether the church has left us evidence elsewhere of such a delimited expectation, and so we address our original question next to the tradition which has been embodied in the Synoptics. Clearly the texts we shall have to examine are Mk. 9, 1 par., Mk. 13, 30 par., Mk. 14, 25 par., Mk. 14, 62 par., and Mtt. 10, 23.

Mark 9, 1

Many modern scholars¹ find in this verse indirect evidence of a delimited near-expectation in the early church. It speaks, they say, of a short delay and is addressed as a comfort and reassurance to those whose hope was beginning to waver.²

This interpretation, in that it sees a definitely Christological reference in Mk. 9, 1 par., is certainly preferable to those evasive views examined earlier in chapter 7.³ Yet it is unsatisfactory, chiefly because it fails to take seriously its context.⁴ In the tradition followed by all three Synoptists Mk. 9, 1 is connected on the one hand to the coming of the Son of Man in glory (Mk. 8, 38),⁵ and on the

Phil. 4, 6 is that of prayer, as it is in the two cases cited from the Psalms. (Lohmeyer, *Philippianer*, p. 169, links the nearness with that of the martyr who approaches his Lord through death; Bonnard, *Philippiens*, p. 75, mentions this interpretation but inclines against it.) Against this view Kümmel, *Promise*, p. 20, says that the eschatological tone cannot be so lightly set aside. The two ideas are, however, not incompatible. If the readiness of the Lord to hear the prayers of the faithful were in mind in Phil. 4, 5, it would be founded upon the eschatological nearness (near, though undelimited) which Kümmel (*Promise*, p. 20; cf. Bonnard, *Philippiens*, p. 75) takes to be primary.

¹ Cf. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, p. 128; Bornkamm, in *In Memoriam*, pp. 116 f.; Fuchs, in *V.F.* 1947-9, p. 76; Marxsen, *Markus*, ad loc; Grässer *Problem*, pp. 130f.; Conzelmann, *Mitte*, p. 88.

² Its *Sitz im Leben*, it is said, was the initial crisis facing the community through the non-arrival of the expected Parousia, and (it is further suggested) the saying is less general than Mk. 13, 30 and therefore reflects a situation where both disappointment at delay and hope in an imminent coming were both present.

The problem of authenticity does not here concern us; but cf. below, chapter 10, pp. 177ff.

³ Cf. above, pp. 92ff.

⁴ Besides the authorities cited above, p. 103, cf. Blunt, *Mark*, pp. 204f.; Gould, *Mark*, p. 159 (who connects with 8, 38 but not with 9, 2ff.); Klostermann, *Markus*, p. 96; Robinson, *Coming*, p. 54; Taylor, *Mark*, pp. 384f.

⁵ The connection is, of course, indisputable in Mtt. 16, 28 which 'has undoubtedly taken it as a reference to the parousia' (Boobyer, *Transfiguration*, p. 60).

other hand to the Transfiguration (Mk. 9, 2ff.). Kümmel¹ and Taylor² and others³ think that the introductory formula *καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς* shows the saying to be a detached one. Nevertheless, the link in the tradition appears firm enough and it must be given due attention. Robinson⁴ thinks the connection with 8, 38 artificial since 8, 38 was 'added in the course of transmission.' But his arguments⁵ are insufficient, and the connection to 8, 38 may well be taken as authentic.⁶ The link with 9, 2ff. is also firm. The temporal statement (*καὶ μετὰ ἡμέρας ἑξ*) is unique⁷ and Klostermann is no doubt correct in thinking it refers back to Peter's confession (8, 27f.)⁸—only he wrongly maintains that therefore Mk. 9, 1 was an intrusion.⁹

¹ *Promise*, p. 25.

² *Mark*, p. 386.

³ Blunt, *Mark*, pp. 204f.; Lohmeyer, *Markus*, p. 171; Hauck, *Markus*, p. 105; Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 285.

⁴ *Coming*, p. 54; similarly Taylor, *Mark*, *ad loc.*

⁵ Robinson's two chief objections are a) that the usage 'of the Father' τοῦ Πατρὸς here is 'unparalleled either in Jewish usage or in that of primitive Christianity, for it equates God with 'the Father of the Son of Man', and b) that the idea of the Son of Man as the coming judge conflicts with the earlier tradition (represented, according to Robinson, by Mk. 8, 38; Mtt. 10, 32; Lk. 12, 8; Mtt. 7, 22f; Lk. 13, 26f.) which represents God himself as the judge (cf. *Coming*, p. 55). But the absence of the idea in the early church of 'Father of the Son of Man' is accounted for by the non-usage of the term 'Son of Man' (concerning τοῦ Πατρὸς in 8, 38 cf. most recently Van Iersel, *Der Sohn*, pp. 103, 114f.). Concerning Robinson's second objection we cite Kümmel (*Promise*, p. 45), '... the meaning (of Mk. 8, 38) is clear: whoever declares himself for or against Jesus by open support or denial will meet with a corresponding fate when the Son of Man appears in glory ...' There is no conflict here.

⁶ Cf. Boobyer, *Transfiguration*, pp. 58f.; Lohmeyer, *Markus*, pp. 172f., Gould, *Mark*, p. 159; Robinson, *Problem*, p. 60. To be sure *καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς* reads like an editorial introduction, but this does not mean that Mark (or his source) made a break in thought, nor that they misrepresented the historical sequence.

⁷ Cf. Hort, *Mark*, pp. 123f.; Taylor, *Mark*, p. 388; Ramsey, *Glory*, p. 113. Lohmeyer, *Markus*, p. 173 (following Bacon, 'After six days' in *H.T.R.* 1915, pp. 94ff.) thinks of it as a sacred-history sign (cf. Ex. 24, 15f.), but cf. Taylor, *Mark*, p. 388 and Blunt, *Mark*, p. 205. Carrington, *Mark*, p. 190 (with Riesenfeld) takes the reference as a calendrical one, and Branscomb, *Mark*, p. 163, suggests 'perhaps in the original form of the story the voice to Jesus and his disciples was 6 days after they went up the mount.' But both views are rather fanciful.

⁸ *Markus*, pp. 96f. cf. Taylor, *Mark*, p. 388; Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 289.

⁹ The view that Mark saw the Transfiguration as a ratification of Peter's confession is not incompatible with the view that he saw it, too, as a fulfilment in some sense of Mk. 9, 1 (cf. Boobyer, *Transfiguration*, p. 58).

If the context is taken fully into account, it suggests that the early church, so far as its views are reflected in the Synoptic tradition, did *not* regard this saying as a community-formulation sustaining it in its crisis, but as a promise fulfilled in some sense in the Transfiguration. This shows the unsatisfactory attempts to circumvent the apparent meaning of *γεύσονται θανάτου* or *ᾧδε*¹ to be entirely misplaced. This interpretation of Mk. 9, 1 is supported by tradition and by some modern scholars² and is not affected by the frequently raised objection³ that *τινες* meant a lapse of some considerable time was anticipated prior to the fulfilment of Mk. 9, 1.⁴

In understanding Mk. 9, 1 in this way, the early church can hardly be said to have made poor sense either of Mk. 9, 1 or of the Transfiguration narrative. To be sure, not only because of the connection of Mk. 9, 1 with Mk. 8, 38, but also because the phrase

¹ Michaelis, *Verheissung*, p. 39 mentions (only to discard) the interpretation of *γεύσονται θανάτου* here metaphorically (cf. Jn. 8, 52; 11, 26; Heb. 2, 9). In Jn. 8, 58 the argument hinges on the fact that the Jewish opponents understand *γεύσονται θανάτου* as physical death; it is because 'Abraham is dead, and the prophets', yet Jesus says 'if a man keep my word he shall never taste of death' that the Jews retort 'now we know that thou hast a devil'. In Jn. 11, 26 Jesus may well be referring to spiritual death, but significantly, here he does *not* use the expression *γεύσονται θανάτου*. Heb. 2, 9 is ambiguous. Behm (in *T.W.N.T.* I, p. 676) comments, 'Die Formel *γεύσονται θανάτου* Mk. 9, 1 par, Jn. 8, 52 (vgl. das Logion P. Oxy 654; 5) Heb. 2, 9 ... drückt wie *ιδεῖν* oder *θεωρεῖν θάνατον* (Heb. 11, 5; Lk. 2, 26; Jn. 8, 51) mit sinnlicher Kraft die harte, schmerzvolle Wirklichkeit des Sterbens aus, die der Mensch erfährt, die auch Jesus erlitten hat (vgl. Heb. 2, 9).'

Michaelis, *Verheissung*, p. 34, suggests taking *ᾧδε* in a non-spatial sense as 'thus' and *τῶν ἐστηκότων* in the sense of 'those who stand as distinct from those who fall', and suggests that the saying meant 'some, at the End, will be so abiding (in faith) that they will be saved'. But probably *ᾧδε* has a spatial force here (cf. *μετ' ἐμοῦ* in D 565), and, although *ἵστημι* is used in the N.T. of 'standing firm' (Mtt. 12, 25, 12, 26; Lk. 21, 36) the large majority of occurrences have the meaning 'being present'. There is nothing to suggest the minority usage is intended in Mk. 9, 1. Kümmel, *Promise*, p. 28, n. 33, rightly describes the suggestion as 'untenable'; cf. Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 286.

² Taylor, *Mark*, p. 385, mentions Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius and Theodotus. Cf. also Boobyer, *Transfiguration*, pp. 27f; Barth, *C.D.* III/2, p. 499; Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 288.

³ Cf. Hort, *Mark*, p. 123; Gould, *Mark*, p. 159; Murray, *Future*, p. 185, Michaelis, *Verheissung*, p. 35; Kümmel, *Promise*, p. 27; Lagrange, *Marc*, p. 227; Bornkamm, in *In Memoriam*, p. 118; Cullmann, *Early Church*, p. 152.

⁴ It is not said in Mk. 9, 1 that death would exclude certain ones from seeing the awaited event (Schlatter, *Markus*, *ad loc.* suggests it was a question of election). The basis of selection is left entirely neutral (cf. Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 288; M. Barth, *Augenzeuge*, pp. 87ff).

ἕως ἄν ἴδωσιν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ suggests the Parousia. The Transfiguration story itself is full of overtones suggesting the Parousia; μετεμορφώθη,¹ the cloud² and the voice³ all hint at the Parousia.⁴ The manifestation of Christ in power in the Transfiguration scene was only temporary; but it was a *real* manifestation and therefore, in some sense, a real anticipation of the Parousia. Characteristic of the final End event is its manifest quality and its Christocentricity;⁵ the Transfiguration exhibits both qualities. The central figure is without question Jesus himself, and the emphasis throughout is upon the visible nature of the occurrence.⁶ The mention of Moses and Elijah can be accounted for on this view, though their presence has often proved difficult.⁷ They are not merely 'predecessors and precursors of the Messiah',⁸ but representatives of the Sovereignty of God as it *was* expressed in the old covenant, assembled with him in whom, in the new covenant, the Kingdom is present.⁹

The parallels, Mtt. 16, 28 and Lk. 9, 27, arouse some discussion. Matthew identifies τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν explicitly with

¹ Omitted by Luke. Cf. Rom. 12, 2; II Cor. 3, 18. Here emphasis lies upon the *visible nature* of the transformation.

² The νεφέλη is reminiscent of the O.T. image of God's self-revelation and self-veiling (cf. Ex. 13, 21. 16, 10. 19, 9 etc). It is also a significant link with 8, 38; cf. Mk. 13, 26. 14, 62; (cf. further Oepke, in *T.W.N.T.* IV, pp. 91off.).

³ Boobyer, *Transfiguration*, p. 64f., tentatively suggests a link with the expected φωνή at the Parousia (cf. I Thess. 4, 16) though this is unlikely on account of the words spoken here (Mk. 9, 7) compared with the speaker in I Thess. 4, 16. However, the link with Mk. 8, 38 is again important. Not only does the confirmation of Sonship reflect 8, 38, but the command ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ appears to confirm the challenge of 8, 38.

⁴ Boobyer, *Transfiguration*, pp. 64ff., finds other links, but in some cases rather tenuous ones. Nevertheless his conclusion seems to be justified, 'For Mark, then, it seems, the transfiguration prophesies the parousia in the sense that it is a portrayal of what Christ will be at that day, and is in some degree a miniature picture of the whole second advent scene.' (p. 87). Similarly, Ramsey, *Glory*, p. 118; Cranfield, *Mark*, pp. 286f.

⁵ Cf. above, chapter 7, pp. 104ff.

⁶ Cf. μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν v. 2; ὤφθη αὐτοῖς v. 4; and εἶδον vv. 8, 9.

⁷ For those who take the Transfiguration narrative as a resurrection story, it is of foremost difficulty. But even Boobyer, it seems, does not explain their presence very satisfactorily (*Transfiguration*, pp. 67ff.) True, Mtt. 8, 11, Lk. 13, 28f, suggest the presence of the Patriarchs and Prophets in the Kingdom; but why Moses and Elijah in particular?

⁸ Ramsey, *Glory*, p. 114; following Jeremias, in *T.W.N.T.* II, pp. 93off.

⁹ He who came 'not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil', Mtt. 5, 17.

Jesus, and it has been customary to view this as an explicit reference to the Parousia.¹ Such a view is difficult, however, unless the promise contained in Mtt. 16, 28 is regarded as in some sense fulfilled in the Transfiguration, for on the traditional dating of this gospel² eye-witnesses would by then have been few and the text should have been growing increasingly embarrassing.³ Recently some scholars⁴ have suggested that Matthew regarded the saying as fulfilled in the Resurrection and in this has imposed his own particular theology upon Mk. 9, 1; this theology, it is said, held that, 'Die gegenwärtige Kirche ist . . . die βασιλεία des Menschensohnes, aber nicht identisch mit der Schar derer die in die Gottesherrschaft eingehen';⁵ and this Kingdom of the Son of Man was inaugurated in the Resurrection and Ascension.⁶ But this interpretation we find unacceptable,⁷ because (a) the expression 'in his Kingdom' (ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ αὐτοῦ) is probably an explication of Mark's meaning, for Mark certainly links the thought of the Kingdom of God directly with Jesus himself (cf. Mk. 3, 21ff.), and speaks of sending angels to gather *his* (the Son of Man's) elect (Mk. 13, 27); and because (b) it is doubtful if Matthew distinguishes between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the Son in the way Bornkamm suggests, for in Mtt. 12, 28, for example, it is the 'Kingdom of God' which is mentioned;⁸ and because (c) the reference in Mtt. 16, 28 is still to

¹ Cf. Glasson, *Advent*, p. 72 (who says Mtt. has introduced the Parousia into a saying where it was absent in Mk.; similarly Robinson, *Coming*, p. 53); Fison, *Hope*, p. 189; Kümmel, *Promise*, p. 27; Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p. 193; Filson, *Matthew*, p. 190; Allen, *Matthew*, p. 183; M'Neile, *Matthew* p. 248.

² Kilpatrick, *Origins*, pp. 127ff., dates the gospel between 90 and 100 A.D. Bacon, *Studies*, pp. 63ff., similarly. M'Neile, *Matthew*, p. xxiv, suggests not earlier than 80 and not later than 100 A.D. (contrast Allen, *Matthew*, pp. lxxxivf., who dates the gospel between 65 and 75 A.D.).

³ Cf. Michaelis, *Matthäus*, *ad loc.*

⁴ Cf. esp. Bornkamm's contributions, 'Enderwartung und Kirche im Matthäusevangelium', in *T.L. LXXIX*, 1954, pp. 34ff.; in *Dodd Festschrift*, pp. 222ff.; in *Überlieferung und Auslegung* (with G. Barth and H. J. Held), pp. 11f.; cf. also G. Barth, in *Überlieferung und Auslegung* pp. 54ff.; Stonehouse, *Matthew and Mark*, p. 240.

⁵ Bornkamm, in *Überlieferung und Auslegung*, p. 40.

⁶ Cf. Bornkamm, in *Überlieferung und Auslegung*, pp. 20f.

⁷ Regarding the questionable methodology involved in redactional criticism, cf. above, pp. 70f.

⁸ G. Barth, in *Überlieferung und Auslegung*, p. 125, admits, 'Zu einer terminologischen Unterscheidung zwischen der gegenwärtigen Königsherrschaft Jesu Christi und der zukünftigen βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν hat es Matthäus jedoch nicht gebracht.'

the Parousia, and it is the Transfiguration which, in the first place provides a proleptic manifestation of that event. It is, however, to be noted that even if it were clear that Matthew had consciously imposed his own theology upon Mk. 9, 1, it would not follow that he had done so *because* Mk. 9, 1 was, for him, *problematical*. There is no compulsion to see here evidence of a crisis provoked by the Parousia delay, nor evidence that Mk. 9, 1 is being understood in a way different from Mark's own interpretation.

Lk. 9, 27 is also understood by a number of recent scholars¹ as evidence that Mk. 9, 1 was causing acute embarrassment in the early church. Conzelmann thinks Mk. 9, 1 an initial explanation of the Parousia delay which, by Luke's time was no longer any help; 'man brauchte eine neue Lösung.'² But against this line of interpretation we must note first that the context remains just as pronounced here as in Mark and Matthew³ and therefore the link with the coming of the Son of Man in the glory of the Father, and the link with the Transfiguration, is still suggested. Secondly, we may ask, if Mk. 9, 1 was really the problem Conzelmann and others suggest it was, why has Luke not dealt more radically with it? Conzelmann⁴ argues, 'Das Ende ist ja noch länger ausgeblieben; man brauchte eine neue Lösung. Soll diese dauerhaft sein, so darf sie nicht wieder der Bedrohung durch weitere Verzögerung ausgesetzt sein. Sie muss also auf Angabe eines bestimmten Termins überhaupt verzichten. Sie muss aber diesen Verzicht begründen können', But Luke's easiest solution, surely, would have been to have omitted Mk. 9, 1 altogether.⁵ It is still preferable to understand Lk. 9, 27

¹ Cf. esp. Conzelmann, *Mitte*, pp. 95f.; Grässer, *Problem*, pp. 178ff.; Bornkamm, in *In Memoriam*, pp. 116ff.

² *Mitte*, p. 95. One notes how hypothetical the argument is, for Mk. 9, 1 is being understood as definitely a community-formulation, 'in der Zeit entstanden, als man noch auf das Eintreten der Parusie in der ersten Generation, nämlich am Ende derselben, hoffen konnte' (*Mitte*, p. 95, n. 1.). If Mk. 9, 1 is *not* so interpreted, then the Lukan variant would take on a quite different significance.

³ Lk. has *ὡσεὶ ἡμέρα δατώ* but Klostermann's comment (*Lukas*, p. 107; *Matthäus*, p. 142) 'sachlich mit Mc.Mtt. übereinstimmend', is probably right (cf. Plummer, *Luke*, p. 280). Mtt. and Lk. omit Mk's *καὶ εἰπὲν αὐτοῖς* and so make the link with the preceding section even more definite.

⁴ *Mitte*, p. 95.

⁵ Lk. has omitted elsewhere often enough! Conzelmann himself has collected a number of sayings (cf. *Mitte*, pp. 92ff.; also Grässer, *Problem*, pp. 178ff.) which, he maintains, emphasise the Parousia delay, so that it would, on his own thesis, have been enough, surely, for Lk to have omitted Mk. 9, 1.

as a reference to the Parousia in some sense, because Luke still speaks of 'seeing the Kingdom of God.' In 9, 26 he speaks of Jesus' glory, and in 9, 32 it is this glory which the disciples see (*εἶδαν*) on the mount of Transfiguration. Conzelmann¹ interprets *εἶδαν* thus: 'Der Ausdruck "das Reich Sehen" besagt, dass das Reich zwar *nicht* sichtbar, aber *sehbar* geworden ist. Was heisst das nun? Die Antwort liegt im heilsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Lebens Jesu als der ausgegrenzten Darstellung des Heils innerhalb des Ganges der Heilsgeschichte. An ihm ist zu sehen, was das Reich ist. Es war in der Person Jesu anschaulich und wird am Ende der Zeiten wieder erscheinen . . .' But, whilst it is true that Luke speaks of seeing in connection with the salvation-historical significance of Jesus during his earthly ministry,² in 13, 28 (17, 22) and 21, 27, where 'seeing' is connected explicitly with 'the Kingdom of God' or 'the Son of Man in glory', it is clearly the future, final manifestation to which Luke here refers. Besides, we must note, as we did concerning Matthew, that even if Luke *has* consciously imposed a new significance upon Mk. 9, 1, it does not follow that he has done so because Mk. 9, 1 was an embarrassing problem for him or for those for whom Luke's gospel was written.

We therefore maintain that evidence of a delimited expectation in the early church is not forthcoming in Mk. 9, 1 or its parallels.

Mark 13, 30 par.

Is this saying evidence of a delimited Parousia expectation?³ Two problems must be discussed in order to obtain an answer. The first is the meaning of *ἡ γενεὰ αὐτῆς*. Schniewind⁴ and others⁵ interpret the phrase of the Jewish nation, understood especially as the 'faithless nation'.⁶ Others⁷ understand it as mankind in

¹ *Mitte*, p. 96.

² Cf. esp. 2, 30 and 10, 35. 13, 15 could be included if it were not so ambiguous; however, 19, 38 suggests that it is right to see in 13, 35 a reference to the 'Palm Sunday' story. 17, 22 would be applicable on Conzelmann's understanding of it (*Mitte*, p. 96, n. 3) but if we take vv. 26ff. as interpreting v. 22 rather than v. 25, then the verse tells rather against Conzelmann.

³ Regarding authenticity, cf. below, chapter 10, pp. 179ff.

⁴ *Markus*, pp. 175f.

⁵ Cf. Lohmeyer, *Markus*, pp. 281f.; Meinertz, *Theologie*, I, p. 61; Flückiger, *Ursprung*, pp. 116f. (Murray, *Future*, p. 260, cites other, older authorities.)

⁶ Schniewind thinks then that Mtt. 10, 23 is support, for he takes this to mean that unbelieving Jews will persist until the End; and Rom. 9-11 is, he thinks, a Pauline version or parallel.

⁷ Jerome saw it as a possible view; Bede too. Lowrie, *Mark*, p. 477 acknow-

general, whilst yet others¹ understand 'the faithful' and so 'the church': Murray's arguments² against all such interpretations need no repetition, and his conclusion, that ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη means Jesus' contemporaries³ is shared by many.⁴

The second problem is the meaning of ταῦτα πάντα. This could be taken to refer to the entire discourse, vv. 5-27. Many understand it so.⁵ But against it is the fact that ταῦτα (πάντα) in v. 30 must 'have a similar reference, at any rate as understood by the Evangelist'⁶ as the ταῦτα in v. 29; in v. 29 it is clear that the reference is only to the events preceding the End itself.⁷ Beasley-Murray⁸ objects that the addition of πάντα in v. 30 rules out any limitation of the reference to exclude vv. 24-27. However, if the reference of ταῦτα in v. 29 is taken as being the events preceding the End only, the πάντα of v. 30 can be understood as emphasising that all the 'signs' of the End (vv. 5-23) are to come upon the contemporary generation.⁹ Kümmel¹⁰ thinks it wrong to tie the exegesis down to its immediate context, which, he says, 'overlooks the original independence of the verse'. Nevertheless this context must be taken serious-

ly. Kümmel further suggests that 'it would be a remarkable statement that definite events previous to the end will be limited to the period of this γενεὰ, without making a pronouncement about the actual moment of the end which alone is of importance'.² However, it is not here suggested that Mk. 13, 30 refers to specific events³ but rather to the entire complex of events which may be termed 'signs of the end' and which are to be experienced, though not necessarily exhausted by,⁴ the contemporary generation. In further answer to Kümmel's criticism, we suggest that an answer concerning the 'when' of the Parousia's coming is not lacking from the discourse but has an independent answer (vv. 32ff.), just as vv. 24-27 are distinct from vv. 5-23.

In support of this understanding of Mk. 13, 30 we discuss here briefly, the structure of Mk. 13.⁵ Many scholars maintain that the discourse is at variance with itself, either because v. 32 is, they argue, irreconcilable with v. 30,⁶ or because the idea of a sequence of events prior to the Parousia is thought incompatible with its sudden arrival.⁷

It is true that a series of time references runs through the discourse,⁸ but it is doubtful indeed if these 'editorial touches trans-

lages that γενεὰ can mean contemporaries but adds, 'But it may equally well be translated by "age" which one can stretch much further, even infinitely far: and it seems to me more honest to give the Lord the benefit of the doubt.'

¹ Theophylact, Origen, Chrysostom, Victor of Antioch; and cf. Swete, *Mark*, p. 296; Michaelis, *Verheissung*, p. 31 (citing Luther as support). But Michaelis is reported as retracting (cf. Murray, *Mk.* 13, p. 100).

² *Mk.* 13, pp. 99f.

³ Cf. esp. the other instances of the phrase ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη; *Mk.* 8, 38, *Mtt.* 11, 16, 12, 41, 42; 45, 23, 36; *Lk.* 11, 50, 17, 25. Cf. Buchsel, in *T.W.N.T.* I, pp. 661f.

⁴ Cf. Cullmann, *Early Church*, pp. 150f.; Walter, *Kommen*, p. 81; Kümmel, *Promise*, p. 61; Klostermann, *Markus*, p. 154; Branscomb, *Mark*, p. 239; Menzies, *Earliest Gospel*, p. 241; Gould, *Mark*, p. 253; Lagrange, *Marc*, p. 348.

⁵ Cf. Beasley-Murray, *Mk.* 13, pp. 100f.; Allen, *Mark*, *ad loc.*; Kümmel, *Promise*, p. 60; Gould, *Mark*, p. 253; Lohmeyer, *Markus*, p. 282; Taylor, *Mark*, p. 521; Ridderbos, *De Komst*, pp. 422f.; Cullmann, *Early Church*, pp. 150f.

⁶ Barth, *C.D.* III/2, p. 500.

⁷ Cf. Calvin, *Harmony*, III, pp. 151f.; Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 409; Schmid, *Markus*, *ad loc.*; Michaelis, *Verheissung*, pp. 30f. Robinson, *Coming*, p. 86, too, but only by counting vv. 24-27 as spurious.

⁸ *Mk.* 13, pp. 100f., with Lohmeyer and Allen.

⁹ That the evangelist viewed πάντα in such a way is perhaps supported by the variations, cf. further below, p. 136.

¹⁰ *Promise*, p. 60.

¹ We discuss below the pattern of the whole discourse; cf. p. 134.

² *Promise*, p. 60.

³ As Taylor, *Mark*, p. 521, says was originally the case. Feuillet, (in *R.B.* LVI, 1949, pp. 84ff., etc.), Jones, (in *Scripture*, IV, 1951, pp. 264f.), Lagrange, (*Marc*, p. 348) and others, interpret Mk. 13, 30 of the Fall of Jerusalem. But cf. above, chapter 7, p. 104. Lightfoot, (*Gospel Message*, p. 54), M. Barth (*Augenzeuge*, pp. 125ff.) (and cf. K. Barth, *C.D.* III/2, p. 501) think that Mk. 13, 30 should be referred to the Resurrection, at least as an initial fulfilment. But whilst this may have been present in the Evangelist's mind (we note that there is here no mention of 'seeing' but of events 'coming to pass'), it is better to regard the reference of 13, 30 as the entire section, vv. 5-23.

⁴ Therefore Beasley-Murray, *Mk.* 13, p. 101, is wrong in saying, 'if the signs are to happen within the generation, the End is also expected to fall within the same period.'

⁵ The theory of a little apocalypse underlying Mark is of no account at this point; but cf. regarding this, and the question of authenticity, below, chapter 10, pp. 179ff.

⁶ Cf. Branscomb, *Mark*, p. 231; Blunt, *Mark*, p. 242.

⁷ Robinson, *Coming*, p. 127; Kümmel, *Promise*, p. 97; Taylor, *Mark*, pp. 523f.

⁸ Cf. οὐπω τὸ τέλος v. 7. ἀρχὴ ὧδινων ταῦτα v. 8: εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη πρῶτον δεῖ v. 10: καὶ ἔταν ἄγωνισιν v. 11 ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος v. 13: ἔταν . . . τότε . . . v. 14. εἰ μὴ ἐκολόβωσεν κύριος τὰς ἡμέρας v. 20: ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν v. 24: καὶ τότε ὄψονται v. 26: καὶ τότε ἀποστελεῖ v. 27: cf. also v. 30, v. 32, vv. 35f.

form the marks of time into a carefully graduated programme'.¹ We certainly miss here the exact and somewhat esoteric temporal references common in apocalyptic,² and the idea of a sudden coming of the Parousia is compatible with preceding signs. Of course there is no going back on Jesus' refusal elsewhere to give 'signs'.³ But this, the refusal to make faith easy, and so to annihilate the essential nature and possibility of faith, is not to be confused with the admonition to recognise the true significance of events.

That v. 32 is reconcilable with v. 30 is, we suggest, apparent through an analysis of the chapter and its structure. The pattern of the discourse is as follows:

- vv. 1-4 Introduction. The question raised in v. 4⁴ leading to a discourse on the End and its date, and the Signs of the End and their dates.
- vv. 5-23 The Signs of the End 'enframed at either end by warnings against the seduction of false messiahs and prophets with their fictitious claim ἐγὼ εἶμι (vv. 5-6 and 21-23)'.⁵
- vv. 24-27 The End itself.
- vv. 28-31 Regarding the time of the Signs of the End, and their significance for perceiving the time of the End itself.
- vv. 32-37 Regarding the time of the End event.⁶

This pattern⁷ exhibits the relationship of v. 30 to v. 32. Both the signs and the End itself are given a time reference. But whereas

¹ Robinson, *Coming*, p. 127. Against him, cf. Beasley-Murray, *Future*, pp. 214f.; Michaelis, *Verheissung*, pp. 21f.; Busch, *Zum Verständnis*; Cranfield, 'St. Mark xiii', in *S.J.T.* VI, pp. 189ff., 287ff., VII, pp. 284ff.

² Cf. e.g. Rev. 12, 14, 13, 5. Manson, in *Eschatology*, pp. 15f.

³ Cf. Lk. 17, 20; Mk. 8, 12; Jn. 4, 48; etc.

⁴ Posed by the prediction of the Temple's destruction (v. 2) and because of the eschatological significance of this (cf. Schrenk, in *T.W.N.T.* III, pp. 238ff.)

⁵ Barth, *C.D.* III/2, p. 500.

⁶ Including a threefold admonition to 'watch' (vv. 33, 35, 37) which appropriately concludes the discourse.

⁷ Lightfoot, *Gospel Message*, p. 49, and Lohmeyer, *Markus*, p. 267, wrongly divide thus: vv. 5-13 the beginning of the consummation. vv. 14-27 the consummation itself. vv. 28-37 warnings regarding the consummation. Albertz, *Botschaft*, I/1, pp. 180f., more correctly argues that 'Nach einer kurzen Einleitung 13; 3-4 werden die beiden Fragen behandelt: Was kommt 13; 5-27 und; Wann kommt's 13; 28-37?' He does not, however cross refer the two sections in the second group to the two sections in the first, as we suggest is correct. He simply divides each group into seven, '... in Anlehnung an den apokalyptischen Gebrauch der Siebenzahl ...'

the signs will occur within the immediate future (though not necessarily exhausted by that immediate future), the End itself is not so delimited. In both cases a parable is attached to enforce the significance of this time reference. The events of vv. 5-23 are 'signs', as the fig-tree is a sign, that 'he is nigh, even at the doors'. In the case of the End itself, the short parable of the returning lord is equally appropriate: he *will* return, but since his servants do not know when, they must constantly be on watch.

Thus it is reasonable to interpret Mk. 13, 30 as not providing a delimited expectation of the Parousia. The question remains whether by their alterations, Matthew and Luke provide evidence that Mk. 13, 30 *was* understood as signifying a delimited hope which, for the later Evangelists, was problematical.

We turn first to Mtt. 24, 34. G. Barth¹ maintains, 'Bei Mtt. tritt die Naherwartung zurück, die Paränese tritt in den Vordergrund.' If he is right, it would be very surprising indeed for Matthew to include v. 34 in the discourse, if this *were* understood, either by him or by the early church as a whole, as expressing a delimited Parousia expectation. It would be insufficient to contend that Matthew, by the addition of parables emphasising delay² has counterbalanced the effect of v. 34 (as Bornkamm holds),³ since if Mk. 13, 30 really meant what Bornkamm suggests it did, it would have required much more radical treatment than mere counterbalancing.

Next, Lk. 21, 32. Conzelmann⁴ thinks Mk. 13, 30 expressed a delimited expectation which Luke found problematical and removed by means of two expedients. The first is the new meaning (according to Conzelmann)⁵ which Luke gave to γενεά, namely 'humanity in general'; but, in fact, an examination of Luke's use of this word tells against Conzelmann's thesis.⁶ The second is the omission of

¹ *Überlieferung und Auslegung*, p. 51.

² A questionable interpretation of Mtt. 25; but cf. below, pp. 202ff.

³ In *In Memoriam*, pp. 116f.

⁴ *Mitte*, pp. 107ff.

⁵ *Mitte*, p. 122.

⁶ Mk. 8, 12; par Mtt. 16, 4 (cf. 12, 39); Lk. 11, 29. It is not Lk. but Mtt. who alters Mk's explicit ἡ γενεὰ αὐτῆς to simple γενεά. Lk. 11, 31; 32 show no difference from Mtt. 12, 41, 42, and the omission of Mtt.'s final phrase (14, 25) is insignificant.

Mk. 8, 38 uses the phrase, but Lk. and Mtt. omit, so no conclusion can be drawn for a specific Lukan usage.

Mk. 9, 19 is paralleled exactly, Mtt. 17, 17; Lk. 9, 41.

ταῦτα which Conzelmann argues allows πάντα to relate "... nicht auf die berichteten Einzelheiten, sondern auf das Ganze des göttlichen Planes".¹ However, in its context Lk. 21, 23, if an expression for the entire sweep of salvation-history, would appear to embrace the events of vv. 27-28, and so to delimit *the End* also to the contemporary generation! (since we cannot accept Conzelmann's interpretation of γενεά here). In fact, the omission of ταῦτα is probably to be understood as a stylistic alteration² signifying no alteration of Mark's meaning, namely that the *signs* of the End will come upon that generation.

There is, therefore, no reason to see a Parousia-delay crisis looming behind Mk. 13,30 or its parallels.

Mark 14,25 par.

Two questions concern us here. The first is, to what future event does the saying refer? Many³ think there is no reference to the Parousia at all. Others⁴ hold that the Parousia is only indirectly in mind, the primary reference being to the Resurrection; (meals prior to the Ascension⁵ are regarded as an initial fulfilment.) We suggest that the primary reference is, in fact, the Parousia. The expression τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης is most naturally understood of the final Day of the Lord⁶ and since 'that day' is hardly essential to the

Mk. 13, 30 (the case in question) is also exactly paralleled.

Lk. 11, 50-51 shows some variation from Mtt. 23, 35-36, but the use of γενεά remains exactly similar. The same is true of Lk. 7, 31 Mtt. 11, 16.

Lk. 16, 8 does not refer to the contemporary generation, but neither does it refer to 'humanity in general'.

Lk. 17, 25, against Conzelmann, means the contemporaries under whom the Son of Man suffered.

Lk. 1, 48; 50 would support Conzelmann, except that the problem of compilation (cf. e.g. Creed, *Luke, ad loc*) makes this indecisive for specific Lukan usage.

¹ *Mitte*, p. 122.

² Mk. 13, 29 has ταῦτα followed in v. 30 by ταῦτα πάντα. Mtt. has changed this rather unbalanced form by using πάντα ταῦτα both times (Mtt. 24, 33-34). Lk. on the other hand has also smoothed the style but by a different expedient; he has shortened Mk. using Mk's ταῦτα in 21, 31 and his πάντα in 21, 32, thereby retaining the overall sense of ταῦτα πάντα.

³ Cf. Glasson, *Advent*, p. 114; Dodd, *Parables*, p. 56; Robinson, *Coming*, pp. 42, 149.

⁴ Cf. Barth, *C.D.* III/2, p. 502; Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 428; M. Barth, *Abendmahl*, pp. 43f.

⁵ Cf. Lk. 24, 31-35, Jn. 21, 5; 12; 15, Act. 1, 4, 10, 41.

⁶ Cf. *ביום ההוא* e.g. Is. 2, 11; Jer. 4, 9; Amos 2, 16; etc. or the plural *ביומים ההם* e.g. Jer. 31, 29; 33, 15; Joel 3, 1; etc. Contrast Robinson, *Coming*,

contrast being drawn, should be taken in this way. Further, the word καινὸν should be taken as expressing otherness¹ and πῖνω καινὸν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ suggests the expected Messianic banquet.² Perhaps a *secondary* reference might be the Resurrection and the post-resurrection meals.³

The second question is, whether there is any temporal delimitation? Schweitzer⁴ understood it as delimiting the expectation of the Parousia, and M. Barth⁵ though referring the saying to the Resurrection, also thinks it carries a temporal delimitation. Kümmel⁶ seems to think a certain interval is presupposed, neither very long nor very short. But whilst the verse clearly foresees a period of separation from the disciples, 'über die Dauer dieser Trennung wird freilich nichts ausgesagt. Dass sie sehr kurz sein soll ergibt sich aus unserem Text nicht.'⁷ Jeremias⁸ has conclusively

p. 42, n. 1 (but in 2, 20 with which Robinson compares this expression, 'that day' is essential to the point).

¹ Cf. Swete, *Mark, ad loc*; Cadoux, *Theology*, p. 47; Michaelis, *Verheissung*, p. 28, Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, p. 172. Black, *Aramaic Approach*, pp. 71f., suggests 'until I am renewed in the Kingdom of God' as the meaning of the Aramaic. Our argument is not affected.

² Cf. Mtt. 22, 1-14, 26, 29; Lk. 14, 15, 22, 30; Rev. 19, 9. Dalman, *Words*, pp. 110ff.; Lohmeyer, *Markus*, p. 304; S.-B. *Kommentar*, IV, pp. 1154ff. For this imagery in the Qumran sect cf. Cullmann, in *J.B.L.* LXXIV, 1955, p. 215.

³ Though Calvin's suggestion may still be the clue regarding these post-resurrection meals; cf. *Harmony*, III, p. 211.

The church's celebration of the last supper may similarly be understood (as indeed it was from early days—cf. Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, pp. 259ff.) as, in a sense, a fulfilment of this verse: a fulfilment which points to further and final fulfilment. But the reference to a repeated 'last supper' is hardly primary (contrast Carrington, *Mark*, p. 317).

⁴ Cf. *Mystery*, p. 89; similarly Menzies, *Earliest Gospel*, pp. 224f.; Grässer, *Problem*, pp. 53f.

⁵ *Abendmahl*, p. 43.

⁶ *Promise*, p. 77. Actually, Kümmel appears to have three views concerning this verse. On p. 32 he says 'it is equally clear that Jesus foresees between his imminent death and this eschatological "coming" a certain interval of time about the length of which nothing is said in this word.' On p. 31, '... it follows that Jesus expects the coming of the Kingdom of God to be in the near future, and that he feels it to be so near that he can impress its proximity on his disciples by limiting his abstinence to the dawning of the Kingdom of God.' And on p. 77, 'the prediction... has meaning in fact only if the Kingdom of God is not expected in the most immediate future and if the disciples are to come together for meals for some time without their departed Lord. So the expectation of a *considerable interval*... is evident. (My italics).

⁷ Bosch, *Heidenmission*, p. 180; cf. Lohmeyer, *Markus*, p. 305.

⁸ *Eucharistic Words*, pp. 165ff. cf. Leaney, *Luke*, p. 267; Kümmel, *Promise*, p. 31; Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 428; Barth, *C.D.* III/2, p. 603.

shown that the verse is a vow of abstinence; the most natural understanding of this vow is that Jesus, recognising that 'his hour' (Jn. 13, 1) was imminent and that death was at hand, dedicated himself to this vocation.¹ Death was so near that he could make this his last meal. There is, however, no indication at all when the next, the *καινός* meal would take place. It is simply said that the time had arrived for ordinary human sustenance to be no longer appropriate or necessary.

This brings us to the parallels. Mtt. 26, 29 is essentially the same.² The addition of *μεθ' ὑμῶν* makes explicit what is already implicit in Mark; and the substitution of *ἀπ' ἄρτι* for Mark's *οὐκέτι* is best understood as a stylistic alteration.³ Luke too, in 22, 18,⁴ substitutes for reasons of style *ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν* for Mark's *οὐκέτι*. Still the meaning is that from the time of that meal onwards, that which sustains human life would have no place or necessity in Jesus' life.⁵ Conzelmann⁶ thinks that Luke has toned down the idea of the nearness of the Parousia, particularly in his expression *ἕως οὗ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἔλθῃ*. But the allusion would still appear to be to the Parousia and an awaited Messianic meal.⁷ It is apparent that for all three Evangelists the vow cannot have meant a Parousia *Nächsterwartung*,⁸ and we find no good reason for supposing this saying held any delimited expectation for them at all.

¹ Cf. Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, p. 171, 'Jesus . . . prepares himself with a resolute will to drink the bitter cup which the Father offers Him.'

² Not insignificantly, the volume *Überlieferung und Auslegung* nowhere discusses this verse.

³ Cf. Lagrange, *Matthieu*, p. 498; Mtt. uses *ἀπ' ἄρτι* 7 times, Mk. and Lk. not at all. Luke uses *ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν* 5 times, Mtt. and Mk. not at all.

⁴ Most agree that Mk. follows a primary tradition over against Lk. cf. Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, pp. 87ff., 118ff. for the evidence.

⁵ It is doubtful whether the post-resurrection meals are intended to be understood as necessary to Jesus' life; cf. above p. 137.

⁶ *Mitte*, p. 106.

⁷ Plummer, *Luke*, p. 495, thinks the allusion cannot be to such a messianic meal; he thinks it impossible because 'if *ἀνὸρ* means the paschal lamb, in what sense could Jesus partake of that in the future?' He himself, however, in referring to the fulfilment of the saying in terms of the Christian Eucharist, obviously extends the meaning. Cf. Manson, *Luke*, p. 239; Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, pp. 116, 172.

⁸ Else why have they included the saying? Similarly a *Nächsterwartung* is excluded from Mk. 14, 28 par., simply by the fact that the Evangelists record it. This reference, in any case, is perhaps best regarded as a prediction of the Resurrection, or of the gentile mission (cf. Schweitzer, *Mystery*, p. 144; Lohmeyer, *Markus*, p. 312, who interpret as *Nächsterwartung*).

Mark 14, 62 par.

Once more we pose the question, Does this verse speak of a delimited Parousia expectation? A number of critics find, in fact, no reference here to the Parousia¹ but this view seems unlikely to be correct.² Some argue³ that Luke and Matthew speak only of an immediate exaltation (and that Mark omitted the phrase *ἀπ' ἄρτι* (*ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν*) to conform with Mk. 13, 26 and the idea of the Son of Man being seen at the End. But the Matthean and Lukan variations are readily understandable⁴ and there is not sufficient reason for taking the Markan version here as secondary.⁵

Robinson⁶ maintains that *ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενων τῆς δυνάμεως* and *ἐρχόμενον μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ* are parallel expressions, one static and the other dynamic, for the same conviction, namely vindication. The allusion to Ps. 110, 1 certainly suggests coronation (and so, vindication); but the imagery of the Psalm is also strongly reminiscent of the awaited final Messianic reign, open and manifest and universal.⁷ Similarly Dan. 7, 13 is not exhausted by the idea of vindication but points to the End manifestation of God's rule. Glasson⁸ argues that Dan. 7, 13 does not suggest a *descent*; however, the whole scene of Dan. 7 is enacted *on earth* so that although the

Taylor, *Mark*, p. 549, Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 429 and Lagrange, *Marc*, p. 384, take it as a reference to the Resurrection appearances (which fits well with the context, and means taking *προάξω* in a temporal rather than spatial sense, which is permissible (cf. Mk. 6, 45); Hoskyns and Davey, *John*, pp. 425f., and Evans, in *J.T.S.* V, 1954, pp. 3ff., take *προάξω* in a spatial sense and think in terms of the Gentile mission in which Jesus leads the disciples. (Surprisingly Bosch, *Heidenmission*, makes no mention of Mk. 14, 28, 16, 7; Mtt. 26, 32, 28, 7.)

¹ Cf. Feuillet, in *R.B.* LVI, 1949, pp. 72ff.; Guy, *Last Things*, pp. 76ff.; Walter, *Kommen*, p. 90; Taylor, *Mark*, pp. 568f.; Glasson, *Advent*, pp. 63ff.; Robinson, *Coming*, pp. 43f.; Dodd, *Parables*, pp. 51f.; Lagrange *Matthieu*, p. 508; *Marc*, p. 402 (following Loisy, *Synoptiques*, II, p. 606); Gould, *Mark*, p. 279.

² If only because of the general objection raised in chapter 7 above; cf. esp. pp. 103ff.

³ Cf. Glasson, *Advent*, pp. 63f.; Robinson, *Coming*, pp. 43.

⁴ Cf. below, pp. 143f.

⁵ Cf. Streeter, *Four Gospels*, pp. 321f.; Lightfoot, *History and Interpretation*, pp. 180f.; Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels*, II, p. 337; Kümmel, *Promise*, p. 50, n. 102.

⁶ Cf. *Coming*, p. 45.

⁷ Cf. Grundmann, in *T.W.N.T.* p. 38; Kissane, *Psalms*, II, p. 194.

⁸ *Advent*, p. 64; similarly Robinson, *Coming*, p. 45; Taylor, *Mark*, p. 569.

Son of Man comes to the Ancient of Days, this is not to be interpreted as an ascent to heaven, but as a coming *on earth*.¹

Those who find here no reference to the Parousia argue that ὄψεσθε refers to a spiritual experience and must not be taken literally.² Glasson³ says we should compare with Jn. 8, 28 and Heb. 2, 9 but these are *not* able to support his argument⁴ and Kümmel⁵ rightly concludes 'to transfer ὄψεσθε to a spiritual experience is as arbitrary as to contest that Dan. 7, 13 points to an eschatological cosmic event'. We therefore accept that this passage refers to the Parousia.⁶

The next problem of interpretation is, whether or not the prediction here is delimited. Otto,⁷ for example, thinks there is an *immediate* expectation, but the fact that Mark has recorded the saying suggests that he did not understand it in this way.⁸ Others think there is a delimitation, though allowing for a short interval,⁹ and some conclude that there is here no distinction in perspective

¹ Ps. 110 also is clearly set upon the earth. Cf. Beasley-Murray, *Future*, p. 259 (following Dalman, *Words*, p. 241, n. 2, and Rowley, *Relevance*, p. 30, n. 1.).

² Lagrange, *Marc*, p. 403 writes, 'Le terme "vous verrez" ne signifie pas toujours "vous verrez de vos yeux" (cf. Dt. 28, 10; Ps. 48, 11; Ps. 88, 49).'

³ *Advent*, p. 65.

⁴ Heb. 2, 9 uses, in fact, βλέπειν and certainly refers to an experience of *faith* (contrast the unbelieving Sanhedrin), for the letter is written by a believer to believers (cf. 2, 1. 13, 7 etc.). That which is already true of Christ (i.e. his sovereignty) is 'seen' (2, 9) by an exercise of that faith referred to in 11, 1 as πραγμάτων ἐλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων. It is not a question here of *unbelief* witnessing the unmistakable manifestation of Christ's rule.

Jn. 8, 28 speaks not of 'seeing' but of 'knowing' (γνώσεσθε). It is not enough to say that this is the equivalent in John's language of what Mark, in 14, 62, means, for this is begging the question. Again it is possible that believers are in mind (cf. Barrett, *John*, *ad loc*), and not unbelievers as in Mk. 14, 62.

Of course, if the records gave us an account of a confession from the high priest similar perhaps to that of the centurion (Mk. 15, 39-40) then there might arise the question whether the evangelist understood Mk. 14, 62 in this sense; but there is no such record (Indeed Mtt. 27, 62ff., Acts 4, 1f. 5, 33f., suggest continued opposition). cf. further Michaelis, in *T.W.N.T.* V pp. 315ff. ⁵ *Promise*, p. 50, n. 102.

⁶ Cf. Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 444; Rawlinson, *Mark*, p. 222; Lohmeyer, *Markus*, p. 329; Sjöberg, *Verborgene Menschensohn*, p. 102; M'Neile, *Matthew*, p. 402; Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p. 265.

⁷ *Kingdom of God*, pp. 227f.

⁸ Grässer, *Problem*, pp. 30f., thinks that *because the saying presupposes a delay*, it is a community-saying!

⁹ Cf. Cullmann, *Early Church*, p. 152; Allen, *Matthew*, p. 284; Jeremias, in *T.B.* XX, 1941, pp. 219f.; Conzelmann, *Mitte*, p. 77, n. 2.

between the expectation of the Resurrection and of the Parousia.¹ It is, however, doubtful if a reference to the Resurrection is in mind here (expect perhaps as the presupposition of exaltation and the Parousia), for in what sense, we might ask, would the judges addressed *see* the Resurrection, or resurrection appearances? It is also unlikely that the Evangelists understood that the event foretold would necessarily occur within a short time. This contention is, we suggest, supported by the following considerations:

First, Mk. 14, 62 is addressed to the high priest personally. But this does not necessarily mean that the high priest was expected to live until the Parousia occurred; it is rather the assurance that he who now rejects the Messiah will one day see him in unmistakable clarity when he comes as Judge.² It is the high priest, and Sanhedrin, who, as representatives of God's people, *should* recognise their Messiah: it is they who, having rejected him, must see their rejection confounded when the truth concerning Jesus' person and work is openly manifested at the Parousia.³

Secondly, the addition in Matthew (26, 64) of ἀπ' ἄρτι supports our interpretation. Some, indeed, interpret ἀπ' ἄρτι as 'soon',⁴ but the phrase is probably intended to emphasise the contrast between what *from that time* (ἀπ' ἄρτι) ceases—namely Jesus' lowly status—and that which will be seen at his Parousia *whenever that occurs*. Thus the temporal aspect of ἀπ' ἄρτι refers to the past-present side of the contrast rather than to the future side.⁵ This is certainly the case with Mtt. 23, 39 and 26, 29 where it is the *cessation* of the past-present mode of Jesus' ministry which ἀπ'

¹ Cf. Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p. 265; Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, p. 329; M'Neile, *Matthew*, p. 402.

² This interpretation is to be found in Calvin, *Harmony*, III, p. 257; Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels*, II, p. 337; Cranfield, *Mark*, pp. 444f. (following J. P. Bercovitz, 'The Parables of the Messiah', an unpublished Edinburgh University doctoral thesis.) Kümmel, *Promise*, p. 67, concludes, 'Mk. 14, 62 gives no indication at all of the time when the Son of Man will be seen, and makes no mention whatever of the resurrection.'

³ Cf. Barth, *C.D.* III/2, pp. 503f.

⁴ Cf. Allen, *Matthew*, p. 284; Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, p. 369.

⁵ Montefiore suggests, 'From henceforth you have nothing more to expect than that you will see . . .' *Synoptic Gospels*, II, p. 337. Debrunner's suggestion (*Conjectanea Neotestamentica* XI, 1947-8; cf. Blass-Debrunner, *Grammar*, p. 8 para 12, 3) that we should read ἀπαρτί, is accepted by Michaelis ('Exegetisches zur Himmelfahrtspredigt', in *K.r.S.* CVIII, 1952, pp. 115f.), mentioned by Cranfield, (*Mark*, p. 445), and rejected by Kümmel (*Promise*, p. 51, n. 102) on the grounds that Lk. shows a similar need for alteration by his ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν which parallels Mtt's ἀπ' ἄρτι. We might add that the saying

ἄρτι emphasises, leaving open the moment when the new future mode shall begin.¹

Thirdly, Lk. 22, 69 is understandable on our interpretation of Mk. 14, 62. Luke has several alterations which many think² to be due to the problematical nature of Mk. 14, 62 for Luke and his contemporaries. Actually, Matthew's acceptance of the saying should suggest that this is an unlikely conclusion, but Luke himself gives us a clue as to the reason for the alterations. By his omission of ὄψεσθε and the phrase ἐρχόμενων μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ he has focussed attention upon the period of exaltation.³ This then forms an appropriate background against which he sets his Acts narrative of the work of the disciples during that period of exaltation. More explicitly than Mark or Matthew⁴ he speaks of this exaltation, thus giving a double focus to the church's life: the exaltation—the ground and possibility of the church's activity and the object of its faith: the Parousia (cf. Acts 1, 6-11)⁵ which is the end of that possibility and the constant object of the church's hope.⁶

Again, therefore, we find no incontrovertible evidence of a delimited expectation, only the open possibility that now that the

in Mtt. 26, 64, opening as it does with πλὴν λέγω ὑμῖν would probably have been emphasis enough without the Evangelist adding another emphatic term ἀπαρτι. The suggestion is perhaps not very likely.

¹ Thus Mtt. recognises that Mk. 14, 62, like Mk. 14, 25, is a contrast between a hidden ministry which is now brought to a close and the future open manifestation which can come at any moment after.

² Cf. Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, p. 295; Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels*, II p. 615; Grässer, *Problem*, pp. 30f.; Conzelmann, *Mitte*, p. 77, n. 2, etc.

³ Lk.'s phrase ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν is, as Mtt.'s ἀπ' ἄρτι, an emphasis upon the contrast between what is from that time onwards to cease, and what is at an unspecified future moment to take its place.

⁴ Cullmann, *Early Church*, p. 152 (cf. also *Peter*, p. 201) claims that even in Mk. 14, 62 'Jesus distinguishes between the moment when the Son of Man will sit at the right hand of God and the moment when he will return.' Robinson, *Coming*, p. 51, claims that Jesus does 'nothing of the sort.' Since both clauses are subordinated to the promise 'ye shall see' (ὄψεσθε), it is probable that the saying refers to the scene at the moment of the Parousia, when Jesus is to be seen both in the supreme position of authority (cf. Grundmann, in *T.W.N.T.* II, p. 38) and also 'coming'. This, of course, is different from the point brought out by Fison (*Hope*, pp. 192f.) and Cranfield, (*Mark*, p. 444), that the *order* of the saying is significant.

⁵ Cf. below, pp. 146ff.

⁶ Leaney (*Luke*, p. 276) says that for Luke the event referred to is hidden from unbelieving eyes. But for Luke the Parousia remains an open manifestation, certainly *not* hidden (cf. Acts 1, 6f.), and that to which he refers in 22, 69 is hidden precisely because it is *not* the Parousia (cf. Sjöberg, *Verborgene Menschensohn*, p. 235).

lowly ministry has ceased, the final manifestation can come at any moment.

Matthew 10, 23

Schweitzer¹ demanded, rightly, that this saying should be interpreted with reference to its context; he, however, wrongly understood this context.² There can be no doubt that the chapter is a composite compilation,³ as an analysis shows. Matthews opens this, his second discourse, with the calling and authorising of the Twelve—apparently a detached saying in the tradition;⁴ this gives the discourse its theme. Matthew then records instructions relating to the disciples' commission (vv. 5ff.) reminiscent of Mk. 6, 7-13, Lk. 9, 1-6, 10. Matthew expressly limits this mission by vv. 5-6 to 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel', and we are most probably to understand this with reference to the short preaching tour of the Twelve during Jesus' own ministry.⁵ With Mtt. 10; 16 we enter upon a new section, drawn from Mk. 13,⁶ which closes with v. 23.

¹ *Quest*, pp. 357ff.; cf. also Burkitt, *Beginnings*, p. 138; Werner, *Formation*, pp. 71ff. ² Cf. chapter 3 above, p. 38.

³ Cf. Schniewind, *Matthäus*, pp. 124f.; Allen, in *Oxford Studies*, pp. 235f.; Streeter, *Four Gospels*, pp. 263ff.; Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p. 35; M'Neile, *Matthew*, pp. 133f.; Kümmel, *Promise*, p. 63; Glasson, *Advent*, pp. 103f.; Robinson, *Coming*, pp. 76f.; Flückiger, *Ursprung*, p. 26; Lagrange, *Matthieu*, pp. 204f.; Grässer, *Problem*, p. 18; Bornkamm, in *Überlieferung und Auslegung*, p. 15; G. Barth, in *Überlieferung und Auslegung*, pp. 93f. Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, unfortunately fails here.

The compositeness of the discourse is borne out by an analysis of the other Matthean discourses (chs 5-7, 13, 18 and 23-25); all, including ch. 10, close with the sentence καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτι ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς. There appears to be a conscious pattern in this chapter:—

vv. 5-15 'mission to Jews', ending ἀμην λέγω ὑμῖν v. 15.

vv. 16-23 'mission to all', ending ἀμην γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν v. 23.

vv. 24-42 'various sayings', ending ἀμην λέγω ὑμῖν v. 42.

⁴ Mk. 3, 13-19 places it between an account of preaching and healing in Galilee (3, 7ff.) and the dispute with the scribes (3, 20f.). Lk. 6, 12-16 follows the dispute with Pharisees (6, 1ff.) and the healing of the man with the withered hand (6, 6f.), and is the immediate prelude to the Sermon on the Plain (6, 17ff.).

⁵ Cf. Calvin, *Harmony*, I, *ad loc.* Mk. and Lk. do not state that the tour (Mk. 6, 7ff., Lk. 9, 1ff.) was confined to Israelite territory, but there is nothing to suggest the contrary (Lk's πανταχοῦ in 9, 6 presumably means 'everywhere they went', rather than 'they went everywhere'.) Lk's mission of the Seventy may be intended to suggest a gentile mission contrasted with the mission of the Twelve (understand) to Jews.

⁶ The differences are very minor and understandable; contrast the divergencies between Lk. 21 and Mk. 13. Cf. Lagrange, *Matthieu*, p. 204. M'Neile, *Matthew*, p. 133.

The theme here is 'witness under persecution' and v. 18 suggests that the horizon apparent in Mtt. 28, 19 is present here also. The Evangelist speaks here not of a specific missionary enterprise, but of mission as such, of mission in general.¹ The final section of the discourse (vv. 24-42) drawn from diverse sources, continues the same theme.

If then we are to understand the chapter as composite, v. 23 must, in the first instance, be interpreted by reference to its context in vv. 16-22 and the wide missionary activity envisaged there. Two possible interpretations then present themselves. Either v. 23 means 'you will not have exhausted every refuge offered by Israel's cities before the Son of Man is come'; or it means, 'you will not have completed the work of mission amongst Israel's recalcitrant peoples, until the Son of Man is come'. The former,² it is said, is supported by the addition in D θ f 1, f 13 al, of *καὶ ἐκ ταύτης διώκωσιν ὑμᾶς φευγετε εἰς τὴν ἄλλην*. But this is not strong support³ and Montefiore rightly comments 'v. 23 seems to mean . . . not "you will not exhaust the cities in your flight from one to the other, before the Son of Man comes", which would be a very odd remark.'⁴ The second alternative gives to *τελέσητε* its natural meaning of 'bringing to an end' (cf. Lk. 12, 50), rather than the unnatural meaning 'come to an end'.⁵ It is, surely, not necessary to separate (as many do)⁶ v. 23a from v. 23b. Bosch⁷ holds that '23a redet von der Flucht der Jünger, während 23b von der Ausführung einer Aufgabe in den Städten Israels—also gerade *nicht* von einer Flucht!—redet'. But v. 23a is given missionary significance (as part of the missionary strategy) not only by its conjunction with v. 23b but by its setting in this missionary discourse, vv. 16-23.

¹ G. Barth in *Überlieferung und Auslegung*, p. 94 says, 'die Aussendungsrede spricht nun von Aussendung der Jünger überhaupt . . .'

² Cf. Glasson, *Advent*, p. 103; Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 89.

³ The idea of flight is only reinforced; nothing is added as to its purpose.

⁴ *Synoptic Gospels*, II, pp. 149f. cf. Robinson, *Matthew*, p. 92; Michaelis, *Matthäus*, II, p. 94.

⁵ Cf. Kümmel, *Promise*, p. 62; Beasley-Murray, *Future*, p. 198.

⁶ Cf. Kümmel, *Promise*, pp. 62f.; Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels*, p. 150; Bosch, *Heidenmission*, p. 156; G. Barth, in *Überlieferung und Auslegung*, p. 94, n. 1; Grässer, *Problem*, pp. 137f. Contrast, Bammel, in *S.T.* XV, 1962, pp. 8of.; Beasley-Murray, *Future*, p. 198, 'The two halves of the saying are sometimes regarded as independent, but if so they are cunningly put together. They form a coherent whole as they stand.'

⁷ *Heidenmission*, p. 156.

Verse 23 is therefore at once a *discouragement* of hasty martyrdom, and of easy optimism; and at the same time an *encouragement* in suggesting that the anticipated failure of the Jewish mission is part of the entire salvation-history and is not something for which the disciples are made to feel responsible—they themselves will not succeed in winning the Jews to allegiance of the gospel.¹

The reference to the 'coming of the Son of Man' has been variously interpreted as the fall of Jerusalem,² as the Resurrection³ or as Pentecost.⁴ But, as M'Neile points out, 'the meaning of "the coming of the Son of Man" is too distinctive in the gospels to allow us to suppose' that these interpretations are valid.⁵ Kümmel, agreeing with this, concludes, 'Then the meaning of the saying appears clearly to be: the parousia of the Son of Man will arrive before the disciples have finished proclaiming the Kingdom of God in Israel. Thereby the coming of the Kingdom of God is transferred here also to the lifetime of Jesus' disciples . . .'.⁶ However, the delimitation referred to in Kümmel's second sentence does not at all follow of necessity from his first observation; we suggest that such a delimitation is *not* involved here. V. 23b is neutral in respect of the duration of the work involved,⁷ simply affirming that it will not be completed before the parousia; and if v. 23a is understood in connection with v. 23b and the entire mission charge, this too is undelimited.

This interpretation is able to make sense of the juxtaposition of 10, 5 to 10, 18. It might perhaps be said that Matthew has simply not realised their incongruity—but, in view of the skill with which the discourse appears to be compiled, this seems unlikely. Schniewind⁸ and others⁹ are probably right in suggesting that the discourse is so arranged as to display the pattern 'to the Jew first,

¹ Cf. Cullmann, in *E.M.*, 1941, pp. 98ff.

² E.g. Lagrange, *Matthieu*, p. 205; Schmaus, *Dogmatik*, p. 34. Robinson, *Coming*, pp. 76ff.

³ E.g. Barth, *C.D.* III/2, pp. 499f.; Stonehouse, *Matthew and Mark*, p. 240.

⁴ E.g. Calvin, *Harmony*, I p. 458; Fison, *Hope*, p. 194.

⁵ *Matthieu*, p. 142. and cf. above, chapter 7, pp. 102f.

⁶ *Promise*, p. 63.

⁷ Cf. Bosch *Heidenmission*, p. 157, 'Über die Zeitdauer bis zur Parusie ist damit noch nichts gesagt, weil kein Anlass besteht, die zweite Person (im Verbum *τελέσητε*) zu pressen, also darunter die Zwölf zu verstehen . . .'

⁸ *Matthäus*, pp. 130f.

⁹ Cf. Flückiger, *Ursprung*, pp. 126f.; Michaelis, *Matthäus, ad loc.*; Beasley-Murray, *Future*, p. 198; Robinson, *Matthew*, pp. 87f.; G. Barth, in *Überlieferung und Auslegung*, p. 94; Schlatter, *Matthäus, ad loc.*

and also to the Greek' (Rom 1, 16; 2, 10; cf. 9-11). Thus the discourse is not only a series of instructions but offers also an overall plan of mission; vv. 5-15 'to the Jew first', vv. 16-23 'and also to the Greek',¹ v. 23 actually having relevance for both sections. We conclude² that there is *no* necessarily delimited expectation here.

With Mtt. 10, 23 we complete this review of the Synoptic evidence and it is now time to address our original question (is there any certain evidence of a delimited Parousia hope in the thought of the early church?) to the remainder of the New Testament material; to Acts, Hebrews, the Catholic Epistles, John and Revelation.

Acts 1, 6-11

Haenchen³ and others⁴ maintain that Acts 1, 6-11 gives us the contemporary situation against which Luke's own theological standpoint was directed. So, it is said, he here depicts the early church's delimited expectation and goes on to oppose it with the 'compensatory factors'—the Spirit and the Mission, hallmarks of the 'epoch of the Church.'

On the other hand it is entirely possible to interpret Acts 1, 6 as a question of the disciples prior to the Ascension and the coming of the Spirit—as it purports to be! Narrow nationalism⁵ is answered by the prophecy of world mission (v. 8) and the enquiry about the

¹ πορεύεσθε δὲ μᾶλλον to be sure means 'go rather', not 'go first' (though the superlative μάλιστα can certainly mean 'first, first and foremost'), and perhaps the saying referred originally to the short preaching tour of the Twelve.

² Against Streeter, *Four Gospels*, p. 255; Cullmann, *Early Church*, p. 152; Kümmel, *Promise*, p. 63, etc.

³ *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 114ff., 120ff.

⁴ Grässer, *Problem*, pp. 205ff.; Conzelmann, *Mitte*, p. 127.

⁵ Jackson and Lake, *Beginnings* IV, p. 8 (cf. I, pp. 317ff.) argue that the nationalism and reluctance to undertake the Gentile mission (cf. Acts 5, 16) prove that Jesus did not command such a mission (cf. Mtt. 28, 19; Mk. 13, 10; Mk. 16, 15). Flückiger, *Ursprung*, pp. 213ff., contends that a special revelation of the risen Lord was needed to rouse the disciples from their nationalistic hope, and again a special revelation was needed to turn them to the heathen. Bruce, *Acts*, *ad loc.*, thinks 'this interest in the hope of an earthly and national kingdom (cf. Mk. 10, 35ff.) gave place after Pentecost to the proclamation of the spiritual kingdom of God . . .' Bosch, *Heidenmission*, p. 187 argues (surely correctly), 'dass es in den Auseinandersetzungen der Apostelzeit gar nicht um das grundsätzliche Recht der Heidenmission ging, sondern vielmehr um die Bedingungen, unter denen die Mission erfolgen darf, um den Verkehr zwischen Juden und Heiden, um die theologischen Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Gesetz und Evangelium . . .'

date of the end is forbidden (v. 7); question and answer are both understandable in the context given them here, and though they serve as a foil to the pattern traced out in the subsequent chapters, this does not mean that the context is necessarily fictitious.

Haenchen¹ argues that in v. 7 'die Erwartung des nahen Weltendes verneint wird', but, in fact, the date of the end is not spoken of either as near or as far off; curiosity concerning the date is simply rejected and forbidden.²

The rebuke by the 'men in white' (v. 11) is interpreted by Haenchen in similar manner: 'Das βλέπειν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν wird . . . verboten . . . weil es die Naherwartung des Endes ausdrückt, die Lukas nicht nennt, sondern nur mit dieser Haltung beschreibt.'³ But it is very strange that Luke—if he understood the rebuke in this way and himself was opposing such a Naherwartung—should have added v. 11b. On Haenchen's interpretation of v. 11a, the verse should read, 'Why stand ye gazing? This same Jesus will *not* come for a long time . . .' whereas the disciples are actually encouraged by these words to await the Parousia. The disciples' attitude, gazing into heaven, can be understood as a wistful longing for Jesus' presence, and perhaps as a forlornness at his departure; only in this light can v. 11b become intelligible and appropriate.⁴

Luke traces, in the chapters following, the development of the gospel's progression.⁵ Grässer⁶ maintains that thereby the Parousia

¹ *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 114.

² Cf., of course, Mk. 13, 32. Stauffer, in *Background of the N.T.*, pp. 285f., regards this as evidence that the early church had an intense *Naherwartung* and that Jesus had not. This, however, overlooks the fact that it is the disciples prior to Pentecost who are depicted here, and that their immediate hope is represented as bound up with their nationalism of that time.

³ *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 120f. Calvin, *Harmony*, I, pp. 43ff., thinks that one of the reasons for the rebuke was that 'they hoped he would return again straightway, that they might enjoy the sight of him again . . . 'before such time as they begin to work they will have their wages.'

⁴ Renan was, then, perhaps not so far wrong as Haenchen suggests (*Apostelgeschichte*, p. 120, n. 4) in understanding the angels' words as comfort; cf. Jacquier, *Actes*, p. 21.

⁵ Cf. Dibelius, *Studies*, pp. 192ff.; Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, p. 3; Haenchen, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 92; O'Neill, *Acts*, p. 174.

⁶ *Problem*, p. 208. Cf. Haenchen, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 90.; Conzelmann, *Mitte*, passim.; Jackson-Lake, *Beginnings*, IV, p. 8. Cadbury, in *Background of the N.T.* p. 319, whilst recognising a lack of emphasis in Luke-Acts on vivid, urgent expectation, thinks this is due 'not so much to changing perspectives of a delayed Parousia, as to practical considerations of the Christian teachers . . .'

is pushed into the background. Yet the promise of the Parousia standing here at the outset of the church's life and work serves rather as a constant reminder that the history being narrated is to come to an end, that the opportunity for mission is temporary, and therefore that the missionary task of the church is urgent, forbidding idle wistfulness and lethargic sorrow.¹

Hebrews 1, 10, 25. 10, 37

The writer certainly appears to treat the Parousia as *near*.² Thus in 1, 2 the period of the old covenant is contrasted with ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων;³ 10, 25 suggests that the approaching of 'the Day' must be a motive of Christian obedience,⁴ and 10, 36f. exhorts to patience (ὑπομονῆς),⁵ adding a reference to Is. 26, 20 and Hab. 2, 3-4, as encouragement and assurance.⁶

Our thesis is certainly *not* that the New Testament does not regard the Parousia as near, but that this nearness is not delimited. In none of these passages cited is there such a delimited hope. It is because God's final word to man spoken in Jesus Christ *has come* (1, 1-2) that the present is characterised as 'last days',⁷ and that

¹ Cf. further, below chapter 12.

² Some, e.g. Wickham (*Hebrews*, ad loc. 10, 25), Westcott (*Hebrews*, p. 239), think that the writer has the fall of Jerusalem in mind. Robinson (*Coming*, p. 27) thinks the letter leaves no room for a Parousia; he argues that 6, 1 does not include the Parousia under the τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς . . . λόγον. But the Parousia is *not* an object of faith so much as of hope and the omission is understandable (ὁ ἐρχόμενος in 10, 37 also tells against Robinson if this is to be interpreted as a Messianic title; cf. Strobel, *Untersuchungen*, p. 81). Barrett, in *Background of the N.T.* pp. 363ff., argues for a Parousia expectation in Hebrews; cf. also Spicq, *Hébreux*, ad loc. 10, 37; Héring, *Hébreux*, pp. 20f.; Windisch, *Hebräerbrief*, in Excursus to 9, 28, pp. 86f.

³ Cf. Manson, *Hebrews*, pp. 88f.; Westcott, *Hebrews*, ad loc. Michel, *Hebräerbrief*, p. 35 writes, 'Das Besondere des Urchristentums liegt in der Gewissheit, das das Weltende eingesetzt hat; diese Tage sind die letzten Tage.'

⁴ Cf. Manson, *Hebrews*, p. 89. Of 2, 1 he writes, 'The writer brings in the eschatological note which . . . rings through and through his practical warnings to his readers' (*op cit* pp. 47ff.)

⁵ Cf. also παραστάων v. 35. Strobel, *Untersuchungen*, p. 81.

⁶ On this passage cf. esp. Strobel, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 79ff. 11, 40 might also be mentioned (cf. Windisch, *Hebräer*, p. 87) as evaluating highly the place of the writer and his contemporaries in the salvation-history plan. 12, 26, too, if the reference to Hag. 2, 6 were completed! (Cf. Michel, *Hebräer*, p. 241; Strobel, *Untersuchungen*, p. 84.)

⁷ Cf. further chapter 9 below.

the present demands a complex of faith (involving obedience and repentance) and hope.¹

The present is evaluated as a period wherein Christ reigns,² and wherein Christians obey him, living in faith in what is unseen (cf. 11, 1f.) and in hope of what will be revealed (namely Jesus Christ, cf. 12, 2; 13, 8 etc.); hope that this may occur soon, and assurance that it will come at the appointed time (οὐ χρονίσει); it is not far distant (μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον).³ But μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον is a relative expression and does not delimit the present period, only defining it as 'short'.⁴

James 5, 7-9

5, 7 probably begins a concluding section of the Epistle applicable to all the preceding teaching,⁵ thus depicting the Parousia of Christ⁶ as the motive for ethical obedience and persistent discipleship. Three particular expressions require comment. The first is ἕως τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου. The conjunction ἕως is certainly temporal, but the phrase does not define the present period prior to the Parousia as long or short, only characterising it as a time during which patience is necessary, in contrast to a time to come—at an unspecified date.⁷

The second expression is in v. 8, ὅτι ἡ παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου ἤγγικεν.

¹ In this respect cf. Michel, *Hebräer*, p. 233, 'eschatologische Erwartung ist nur dann echt, wenn sie mit der Nähe des Endes rechnet'. Strobel, *Untersuchungen*, p. 304, 'Glauben—das bedeutet in konkreten *Naherwartung* leben.' We shall hope to show that the N.T. relates hope and faith inextricably and knows of a tension between 'already accomplished' and 'not yet revealed'; but that a *Nächsterwartung*, or delimited *Naherwartung* is not inherent in faith and that *faith* can reckon with a period prior to the Parousia at the same time as *hope* regards it as near.

² Cf. Heb. 2, 5ff. Whether this is regarded as contrasting Christ's reign with man's not reigning, or Christ's present unseen reign with his future manifest rule, is here of no import; clearly he is king.

³ On ὅσον ὅσον cf. Blass-Debrunner, *Grammar*, para 304, pp. 159f.

⁴ What this means is, of course, our question in the next chapter.

⁵ οὖν is emphatic if only because it is the sole occurrence here in the whole Epistle.

⁶ It is not impossible that τοῦ κυρίου here refers to God (cf. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, p. 273 n. 4; Windisch, *Katholische Briefe*, p. 3, cf. 3, 9; 5, 4. But there is no compulsion to take it in this way (cf. Dibelius, *Jakobus*, p. 224; Ropes, *James*, p. 297; Mayor, *James*, p. 157).

⁷ Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, pp. 347f., comments, 'The confusion of things which is now seen in the world will not be perpetual, because the Lord at his coming will reduce things to order . . .'

In 4, 8 ἐγγίσει is used of the relationship of the believer to God and vice versa¹ and the idea is that of accessibility: God is 'ready' for relationship with the humble (v. 6 f.). 5, 8 might perhaps be intended to be understood in a similar way. Or ἤγγικεν may be meant in its temporal sense, in which case the writer is affirming that the Parousia is (temporally) near, but at the same time there is no delimitation of its coming.²

The third expression is ὁ κριτὴς πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν ἕστηκεν v. 9.³ Closer parallels than Bar. 48, 39 and Is. 26, 20 are Is. 3, 13 where God is depicted as standing to judge,⁴ indicating his *readiness*; and Rev. 3, 20 which depicts a present situation of undefined duration. The most significant parallels are Mk. 13, 29; Mtt. 24, 33 par (cf. Acts 5, 9) where nearness is the theme.⁵ This nearness, however, even if understood temporally⁶ is quite undelimited, not ruling out the possibility that the Parousia might remain 'near' without coming for some time.⁷

In 4, 13-17 we find confirmation of this interpretation. James,

¹ In the LXX 'Oft geht das Wort auf das Verhältnis von Gott und den Frommen' (Preisler, in *T.W.N.T.* II, p. 330. cf. Ps. 33, 19; 118, 151; 144, 18).

² Knowling, *James*, p. 130, wants to interpret in terms of the fall of Jerusalem, and therefore gives a very early date for the letter (cf. pp. xxxivff.) which most commentators reject.

³ Whether the Judge is Christ or God is again open to question, cf. 5, 7. Cf. Dibelius, *Jakobus*, *ad loc.*

⁴ In Is. 3, 13 the action of the verse is probably still future (cf. v. 14. 'The Lord will enter into judgement'), but the 'standing' נצב and 'arising' עמד indicate that he is now ready to perform his judgements.

⁵ Jeremias (in *T.W.N.T.* III, p. 174) writes, 'vor der Tür stehen, dh im Begriff stehen einzutreten, ist Ausdruck für grösste Nähe.'

⁶ It is perhaps plausible to suggest that a spatial reference is here intended. Jeremias (in *T.W.N.T.* III, pp. 174f.), arguing for a temporal connotation, says, 'Die Verwendung des räumlichen Bildes als Zeitangabe ist hellenistisch' (authorities op. cit. p. 174, n. 8). The hellenistic origin of the usage here, he thinks, is supported by the plural αἱ Θύραι for the singular (a classical usage). However αἱ Θύραι is not necessarily a hellenistic usage; the plural occurs both with הַלָּד and with פֶּתַח frequently in the O.T. (cf. Jud. 3, 23; 16, 2; Neh. 3, 3; 7, 3) presumably because 'doors were often made with two leaves' (Warren, in *H.D.B.* II, p. 434). In a metaphorical sense, the plural usage is almost invariable; 'the doors of heaven', Ps. 78, 23; cf. Job. 38, 8; 41, 14; etc. It is interesting that the phrase occurs in the N.T. in the plural (excepting where the meaning is obviously influenced by architectural detail, cf. Jn. 20, 26; Acts 5, 19, 5, 23; 16, 26; 27; 21, 30) in just those places where Jewish influence is said to be most present. So perhaps Jeremias' argument is not altogether convincing.

⁷ 5, 3 does not denote a delimited expectation either; ἐν ἑσχαταῖς ἡμέραις is doubtless an expression for the Judgement time.

fulminating against those who take sovereign control of their lives, does not argue 'you say "to-day or to-morrow . . .", but you forget that the Parousia is to come within a year or two!' The uncertainty of 'to-morrow' he connects first with the transitoriness of human life (v. 14),¹ and then with the sovereignty of God (v. 15).

I Peter 4, 7

ἤγγικεν here means that the End is near, but not in a delimited sense; it might come at any moment (thought it might also dealy!) and this 'readiness' to occur is made the basis for an exhortation to soundness of mind and sobriety.² Many interpret it as delimiting the present,³ but without sufficient ground. In favour of our interpretation we may compare I Peter 4, 5, τῷ ἐτοιμῶς ἔχοντι κρῖναι; ἐτοιμῶς is used not infrequently to denote the readiness of the End to break in to the present order.⁴ Further, in 1, 5 it is said that salvation is ἐτοιμὴν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἑσχατῶ.

The Epistle recognises an essential unity between the Parousia on the one hand and the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ on the other (cf. 1, 3f., 1, 14, 1, 19f.) Christ is already exalted as Lord (1, 21; 3, 22) and nothing remains but that he should be 'revealed' (1, 8; 1, 13) or 'manifested' (5, 4). In the meantime, though this revelation is ready and near, and with it judgement and salvation, men are given occasion to repent and believe (1, 7; 13; 22 etc.).⁵

II Peter 3

It is often said that II Peter 3 reflects a crisis provoked by the

¹ Recognising that those addressed may die within a year or two, and before the Parousia occurs.

² Similarly in James 5, 8 nearness is the ground for exhortation to patience; cf. Selwyn, *I Peter*, p. 216; Windisch, *Katholische Briefe*, *ad loc.*; Beare, *I Peter*, p. 158.

³ Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, p. 127, suggested besides the nearness of Christ's return, the nearness of each individual's death; but this seems unlikely as it is not suggested by the context, and *νήφω* is regularly used in the N.T. (cf. I Thess. 5, 6; 5, 8; II Tim. 4, 5; I Pet. 1, 13; 5, 8—the only occurrences besides here) of an attitude appropriate to the nearness of the *End*.

⁴ Cf. Mtt. 22, 4; 8, 24, 44 par., 25, 10; etc.

⁵ This is why the writer can speak (in 1, 20) of the incarnation of Christ as occurring 'at the end of time'. 'That was the climax, the final chapter. All subsequent history is but epilogue, a period in which men have opportunity to come to terms with the meaning of their lives, as it has been revealed in history . . .' Cranfield, *I & II Peter*, p. 112.

'unexpected' Parousia delay.¹ This view, however, receives serious set-back when the chapter is compared with earlier eschatological material, especially II Thess. 2, and Mk. 13. Such comparison suggests that the writer reiterates substantially the same tradition as is already found in the Synoptics and in Paul.²

Käsemann³ argues that the eschatology of II Peter 3 is de-Christologised,⁴ de-ethicised⁵ and de-centralised;⁶ but comparison with the earlier material again shows that the Christology is

¹ Cf. the Commentaries of Knopf, Hauck, Wand and Windisch, *ad. loc.*; and Käsemann, 'Eine Apologie der urchristlichen Eschatologie', in *Z.T.K.* XLIX, 1952, pp. 272ff., etc.

² Mk. 13	II Thess. 2	II Pet. 3
1. Warning to take heed, vv. 5-6, 21-23.	Warning to take heed, vv. 2-3.	Warning to take heed, vv. 1-3.
2. Signs of the end, vv. 7-9, 11-13, 14-20.	Signs of the end, vv. 3-4.	Signs of the end, vv. 2-3.
3. Proclamation of gospel, v. 10.	Proclamation of gospel, ? vv. 6-7.	Proclamation of gospel, v. 9.
4. Final End, vv. 26-27.	Final End, v. 8.	Final End, vv. 9-10.
5. Imminence of End, vv. 28-31.	Imminence of End, v. 7.	Imminence of End, vv. 8-9.
6. Ignorance of date, v. 32.	Ignorance of date (presupposed by vv. 2-3.)	Ignorance of date, v. 8.
7. Exhortation to watch, vv. 33-37.	Exhortation to stand fast, vv. 13ff.	Exhortation to watch, vv. 10-16.

³ In *Z.T.K.*, XLIX, 1952, pp. 272ff.

⁴ The chapter, he argues, 'has a Christological flavour, in that it is Christ who destroys at the judgement; but otherwise the eschatology is thoroughly anthropological.'

⁵ No longer, he says, is it the new resurrection life which is the spur to Christian obedience, but rather the impersonal expectation of reward and punishment to be meted out at the last day.

⁶ Eschatology, he argues, has been made a 'last chapter' of dogmatics, in a manner consistently copied since but actually foreign to the apostolic understanding of eschatology.

parallel,¹ the ethics similarly orientated,² and the place and status of eschatology the same.³

Many critics maintain that a crisis (caused by the Parousia delay) is reflected in the (so-called) new arguments adduced by the writer to 'emphasise the certainty of the end and to account in some measure for the delay'. These arguments are as follows:

1. The witness of the Flood to the coming world destruction,⁴ vv. 5-7. This, however, is already paralleled to some extent by Lk. 17, 26 (Mtt. 24, 37); to be sure the emphasis in Luke (and Matthew) is upon *suddenness*, but the parallelism of imagery remains. If there is an element of newness in the argument, it can be accounted for by the mockers' objections which are being met: they apparently argued from the non-arrival of the Parousia (v. 4) to a denial of salvation-history as such.⁵ It is particularly appropriate in reply to point to a momentous *past* activity of God in the salvation-history which is also a prototype of the momentous act still awaited.

2. The idea of a final world conflagration.⁶ But the prototype of the Flood and the judgement of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire probably gave rise to this imagery. Already fire and judgement are conjoined in the Old Testament,⁷ and II Peter 3, 7. 3, 12-13 connect the End with judgement. Lk. 17 connects the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with the Flood narrative as parallel

¹ The climax of Mk. 13 comes in vv. 26-27 (apart from 'for my sake' in vv. 9 and 13, the only mention of Christ), and II Thess. 2 speaks of 'the Lord Jesus' (v. 8) only in connection with this central phase of the salvation-plan.

² Mk. 13, 13 suggests the ultimate goal of Christian faith as an incentive for obedience; similarly 13, 33-37. In II Thess. 2, the eschatological motive of ethics is not isolated out but is none the less present, cf. vv. 13-15 (cf. similar motivation, Rom. 13, 8-14, Phil. 4, 4-7, I Thess. 5, Heb. 10, 24f., Jam. 5, 7-11, I Pet. 4, 7-11).

³ In the sense that primitive Christianity regarded the hope of the Parousia as something to be 'read off' from the past acts of the salvation-history acknowledged in faith, then hope and its content is derivative—and, in a sense, a 'final chapter'; but this is as true of Mk. 13 and II Thess. 2 as of II Pet. 3.

⁴ Cf. Michel, 'Grundzüge urchristlicher Eschatologie', in *Z.s.T.* 1932, pp. 66off.

⁵ Cf. v. 4, 'All things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.'

⁶ Cf. Knopf, *Petri und Judae*, *ad. loc.*; For the idea of a conflagration outside the N.T., cf. Zeph. 1, 18; 3, 8; Sib. Orac. IV/172f., V/155f., Ps. Sol. 15, 6; II Esdras 13, 10. Qumran Thanksgiving Ps. 3, 19f.

⁷ Cf. e.g. Gen. 19, 24; Ex. 9, 24; 24, 17; Lev. 10, 2. etc.

examples of God's consuming wrath.¹ Also in II Thess. 2, 8 (1, 7) fire and the End judgement are brought together.

3. The impossibility of knowing the date of the End.² But this (v. 8) is precisely the assertion of Mk. 13, 32 (cf. Mtt. 24, 36; Acts 1, 7). It is also presupposed in II Thess. 2, 2-3. The balance of imminence and ignorance found in Mk. 13³ and II Thess. 2⁴ is maintained by the writer here also. Significantly the reminiscence of Ps. 90, 4 is given an unique expansion which 'rules out the possibility of taking the meaning to be merely that God's time is measured on a bigger scale than man's.'⁵ The expansion shows that the writer is concerned to maintain the open possibility of the End coming at any moment; only man is ignorant of the date.⁶ This possibility (emphasised too by the 'sign' of the scoffers' presence),⁷ leads to an exhortation to watchfulness in face of the suddenness of the End, (v. 10).⁸

4. God's patience in allowing time for repentance.⁹ This, v. 9, is but another way of describing the present time as an opportunity for the preaching of the gospel, for which we may compare Mk. 13, 10 (and II Thess. 2; 6-7 if the interpretation adopted above be accepted).¹⁰

5. Repentance and the coming of the End (v. 12).¹¹ Knopf¹²

¹ So cf. Lk. 17, 29 (II Pet. 2, 6). Fire, as a medium of destruction at the end would be readily suggested rather than water (cf. Gen. 9, 8ff. 15).

² Käsemann (in *Z.T.K.* XLIX, 1952, pp. 272ff.) regards it as a speculative argument. Knopf (*Petri und Judae, ad loc.*) as 'ein neuer Gedanke'; Moffatt (*General Epistles, ad loc.*) calls it 'a new application'; Hauck (*Kirchenbriefe, ad loc.*), a tacit abandonment of Mtt. 24, 34.

³ Cf. above, p. 133.

⁴ The μυστήριον τῆς ἀνομιᾶς is 'already at work' pointing to the End; but there is no attempt to determine the date; cf. above, pp. 111ff.

⁵ Cranfield, *I & II Peter*, p. 189; cf. Wand, *General Epistles, ad loc.*; James, *II Peter, ad loc.*

⁶ Ps. 90, 4 would suffice as it stands if the writer were intent only on refuting the suggestion that the Lord delays beyond the appointed time. 'In God's sight—and after all they live in His sight—not only is nearness distance, but distance nearness' (Barth *C.D.* III/2, p. 510).

⁷ Cf. v. 3 ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν. Cf. Jn. 2, 18; II Tim. 3, 1; Jude 18.

⁸ Hence the 'thief' imagery, Mtt. 24, 43; Lk. 12, 39; Rev. 3, 3; 6, 15.

⁹ Cf. Michel, in *Z.s.T.* 1932, pp. 660ff.

¹⁰ The theme of repentance (cf. Ezek. 18, 23; 33, 11; I Tim. 2, 4; Rom. 11, 23; I Clem. 8, 5; etc.) is coupled with that of an imminent End in Lk. 13, 6-9. On the 'grace-character' of the present cf. Flückiger, *Ursprung*, pp. 121ff., and below, chapter 12.

¹¹ Cf. Knopf, *Petri und Judae*, pp. 320ff.

¹² *Petri und Judae*, p. 320.

writes 'Merkwürdig und sehr beachtenswert ist die in σπεύδοντας liegende Anschauung: σπεύδειν kann unmöglich heissen: entgegen-eilen und auch nicht: sehnsüchtig erwarten, sondern σπεύδειν trans. heisst: etwas beschleunigen: schaffen, dass es schneller kommt.' Mauer,¹ however, disputes this, claiming that the intrans. sense of σπεύδειν is preferable here. Even if the trans. sense is taken² there is not necessarily a *direct* correlation of repentance with the End, as though the former effected the latter, but rather the obverse side of v. 9 is made explicit; in this sense Acts 3, 20 can be seen as a clear parallel. In neither case, therefore, is v. 12 entirely novel.

6. The appeal to Paul, vv. 15-16. The essence of the appeal is to support for the teaching given, from outside of the writer's own personal authority. In Mk. 13, 31 a similar appeal to veracity is made³ and again in II Thess. 2, 15. Käsemann argues⁴ that 'faith' is in II Peter 3 made 'acceptance of the Apostolic testimony'—but this is nothing new!⁵

These are the so-called new arguments. A number of scholars further maintain that the number of ideas brought together here reflects the writer's embarrassment at the situation and the views of the mockers (showing what a great problem the community was facing). But vv. 17-18 exhort the community *not* to succumb to the false views of the mockers, implying that it has not yet done so, and it is probable that the writer has brought the full truth to the remembrance⁶ of the community from pastoral concern lest it should fall. It is by no means necessarily embarrassment which leads the pastor to relate the whole case against some evil, but a recognition of the real danger which that evil presents to the faithful.

But further than this, the comparison with earlier tradition shows that the writer has not 'sought out' all the possible arguments against the mockers, but has faithfully reproduced the total

¹ in *T.W.N.T.* VI, p. 726; cf. p. 727 n. 7; similarly Cranfield, *I & II Peter*, p. 191.

² With e.g. Wand, *General Epistles, ad loc.*; Moffatt, *General Epistles, ad loc.*

³ In this case, of course, the appeal does not pass to another speaker, yet corroboration is made in the strongest terms.

⁴ In *Z.T.K.* XLIX, 1952, pp. 272ff.

⁵ Cf. Paul's insistence that he himself 'received' his gospel and that it was this 'tradition' that he preached to others (I Cor. 15, 1; 3. Gal. 1, 9; Phil. 4, 9; II Thess. 3, 6; etc).

⁶ Remembrance is emphasised throughout the epistle; cf. 1, 12; 1, 13; 1, 15; 3, 1; 3, 8.

pattern and particular truths¹ of the primitive tradition. In particular, he has retained the complex pattern of ignorance as to date, imminence of the End, and the grace character of the present.

To be sure, the scoffers present a menace.² But it is one amongst a number of diverse difficulties and dangers which faced the primitive communities.³ Hauck⁴ will see here evidence of the supposed crisis through which the church passed—'Nur unter Schmerzen lernte die Kirche, wie unser Brief zeigt, dass die ursprüngliche Wiederkunftserwartung, welche das Ende ganz nahe glaubte (Mtt. 24, 34; Mk. 9, 1; cf. I Thess. 4, 15 'wir'), nicht zu halten sei. Nur ungern gab man dieser doch notwendigen Einsicht Raum.' We suggest that the whole of our review so far of the New Testament evidence tells against this understanding both of the earliest Christian hope and of the situation addressed in II Peter 3.⁵

I *John* 2, 18; etc.

Are we to understand ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν as evidence, at last, of a delimited expectation?⁶ Or is the meaning here akin to that suggested for I Peter 1, 20; 4, 7; Jam. 5, 8 etc.? A review of the letter⁷ reveals that the writer's chief concern is with the nature of the present period prior to the Parousia,⁸ rather than with its duration.

¹ Naturally, with some variation of order and some alteration of expression.

² Cf. also I Clem. 23, 3f., II Clem. 11, 2 (Sanh 97 re Ps. 89, 50).

³ Cf. Reicke, *Diakonie, Festfreude und Zelos*, pp. 233ff., who traces the connection between the various false views and practices in the early communities; a connection between eschatological impatience, materialism, libertinism, revelry and eucharistic unseemliness and anti-social zealotism.

⁴ *Kirchenbriefe, ad loc.*

⁵ Cf. Cranfield, *I & II Peter*, p. 188, 'It is significant that the author writes not as someone wrestling with his own doubts and perplexity and endeavouring to find a way through them, but as someone who recognises a bogus problem for what it is. It is significant too that the fact that the first generation of Christians has passed away does not lead him to re-formulate it in different terms. On the contrary, he re-iterates, unembarrassed, the primitive message.'

⁶ Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, p. 51, for example, thinks the writer expected the End definitely within 'the remaining years of his own lifetime . . .'

⁷ 1; 5-10 present fellowship. 2; 1-6 present knowledge of this fellowship. 2; 7-11 present possibilities of 'light and dark'. 2; 12-17 nature of truth in the present. 3; 1-12 ambiguous nature of the Christian life. 3; 13-24 present persecution. 4; 1-6 proving the spirits. 4; 7-21 complex character of obedience. 5; 1-12 present possession of eternal life. 5; 13-21 ambiguous nature of the present.

⁸ Bultmann (in 'Die kirchliche Redaktion des ersten Johannes Briefes', in *In Memoriam*, pp. 189ff.) wants to count the references to the Parousia

It seems, therefore, most probable that the expression ἐσχάτη ὥρα (without the article)¹ is intended to reinforce this interest in the general character of the present. Even if we understand ἐσχάτη ὥρα as 'the last hour'² it is arbitrary to suppose that the writer has divided the present into a series of hours and means 'the last period of the interval between the first and second comings of the Christ'.³

The presence of antichrists⁴ is taken by the writer as a sign that the present *is* ἐσχάτη ὥρα; already light shines in the darkness (2, 7-11), darkness παράγεται, antichrist is in the world ἡδη (4, 3). The present contains the open possibility that the Parousia can occur at any moment.⁵

John 21, 20-23

Many⁶ think that the explanation of v. 23 is an early christian apologetic accounting for the Parousia delay. Against this we must notice that the context reaches back to v. 15 where Jesus is represented as commissioning Peter and predicting his death. In contrast to this the saying in v. 22 is solicited and is not directed to the

in this letter (2, 28; 3, 2; 4, 17) as redactional interpolations into the basic eschatology of the Johannine writings which is 'vergeschichtlicht'. Cf. against this, Nauck, *Die Tradition* pp. 121ff., 'der Verfasser des I Joh. ebenso wie seine Tradition neben der gegenwärtigen Heilsgewissheit die Hoffnung auf eine zukünftige Vollendung festhält.' (p. 130).

¹ Gore, *Johannine Epistles*, p. 124 thinks 'the omission can hardly be unintentional.' Westcott, *Johannine Epistles*, p. 55, says the anarthrous phrase 'seems to mark the general character of the period and not its specific relation to "the end".' But Blass-Debrunner, *Grammar* (p. 134 para 256; p. 143 para 276) noting the omission of the article with ordinals and with predicate nouns, say 'I Jn. 2, 18 is understandable.' (p. 134); and Moule, *Idiom*, p. 111, warns against building too much upon the omission of the article (though, unfortunately he does not discuss I Jn. 2; 18, 28).

² With RV, RSV, Moffatt, NEB.

³ Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, p. 51; Cf. Dodd, *Johannine Epistles*, pp. 48ff. This seems to be on a *priori* grounds an unlikely interpretation: would the writer suppose that, some 65 years having already elapsed, another 65 years could not possibly occur because of the presence of 'antichrist's' in the world? Whilst their presence is a sign of the end, the writer would, surely, not be unmindful of their presence in the preceding 65 years.

⁴ The extent to which the writer has 'demythologized' the apocalyptic image of the antichrist is of little consequence here; but it is doubtful whether Dodd (*Fourth Gospel*, p. 50) is justified in saying that here 'the conflict between Christ and Antichrist is fought out upon the field of the mind.'

⁵ Cf. too, ἐάν in 2, 28; 3, 2.

⁶ Cf. Grässer, *Problem*, p. 135; Barrett, *John*, p. 488; Bultmann, *Johannes*, p. 544; Carpenter, *Johannine Writings*, p. 249; Strachan, *Fourth Gospel*, p. 338.

disciple in question but to Peter: we are, therefore, *not* to see two parallel predictions but a continuous dialogue with Peter. It is doubtless Peter's curiosity that prompts his question,¹ and the answer given is not a straightforward one.² It consists of a) a reminder of Peter's proper concern,³ and b) a hypothesis concerning the beloved disciple. This *is* a hypothesis (as the form ἐάν . . . θέλω suggests),⁴ positing a fate as different from that predicted for Peter as may be—μένειν ἕως ἔρχομαι.⁵

The explanation, v. 23, confirms that this *was* but a hypothesis and there is no necessity to suppose 'that the original meaning of the saying . . . was that which it was popularly supposed to have',⁶ nor is there justification for linking the false understanding of v. 22 with Mk. 9, 1.⁷ The repudiation is straightforward and dispassionate,⁸ suggesting no underlying crisis. The passage is evidence that there existed some in the church at that time who held to a false hope, but there is no suggestion that every member of the community or the responsible leaders of the church⁹ were misled.

¹ Cf. Temple, *Readings*, pp. 409; Hoskyns-Davey, *John*, p. 668; Lagrange, *Jean*, p. 533; Calvin, *John*, II, p. 296. But some find here the problem whether martyrdom or life is better; cf. Schlatter, *Johannes*, p. 373; partially, Strachan, *Fourth Gospel*, p. 338.

² Temple, *Readings*, p. 410 sees the real point, 'The Lord does not answer speculative questions or satisfy curiosity.'

³ σὺ is emphatic; cf. e.g. Bernard, *John*, p. 711.

⁴ Bernard, *John*, p. 711 maintains that the emphasis is on ἐάν θέλω; contrast, Bultmann, *Johannes*, p. 554; Barrett, *John*, p. 488.

⁵ This 'abiding' should be referred to the Parousia. It is true that μένειν is regularly used in the 4th Gospel (and the Johannine Epistles) in a spiritual sense (cf. Hauck, in *T.W.N.T.* IV, pp. 578ff.) (hence Westcott, *John*, *ad loc.*; Strachan, *Fourth Gospel*, p. 250; Hoskyns-Davey, *John*, p. 668, interpret μένειν in this way here); but Christ's coming is decisive for the meaning here (and it is thus understood by Carpenter, *Johannine Writings*, p. 249; Lightfoot, *John*, p. 343; Bernard, *John*, p. 711; Barrett, *John*, p. 488). Bernard *John*, p. 711, rightly says of the coming, 'to apply it to the coming of Christ at a disciple's death is a desperate expedient of exegesis.'

⁶ Barrett, *John*, p. 488.

⁷ As Bultmann, *Johannes*, p. 555; Bauer, *Johannes*, p. 239; Barrett, *John*, p. 488; contrast Michaelis, *Verheissung*, pp. 48f. The promise in Mk. 9, 1 is clearly to 'some' (τινες), and there is no evidence that this was ever narrowed down to a single individual; hence Barrett, *John*, p. 488, admits, 'this expectation, however, was possibly local; there seems to be no evidence for it except in John.' Cf. Streeter, *Four Gospels*, pp. 476f.

⁸ Temple, *Readings*, p. 410, can comment, 'Incidentally the recalling of this episode makes it possible to explain and dissipate the rumour . . .'

⁹ ἐξέρχομαι . . . εἰς should probably be understood (with RV) as 'went forth amongst', suggesting simply that the idea went around.

Revelation 1, 1; etc.

Our original question is addressed, finally, to the expressions ἀ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει (1, 1), ἔρχομαι ταχύ (3, 11. 22, 7; 12; 20) and ὁ καιρὸς γὰρ ἐγγύς ἐστιν (22, 10). At the outset we must notice that the present period is evaluated highly as a time of watching¹ and repentance²—and, perhaps, of the proclamation of the gospel;³ so that the place of the present is not underestimated. More important, we must notice that throughout the book there is a note of delay⁴ which militates against the interpretation of the above expressions as delimiting the End. Whilst we suggest that there is here no delimited hope, there *is* the conviction that the End is 'near'.⁵ What this nearness means, or meant for the early church, is now our problem.

¹ 3, 3 is particularly important (cf. Mt. 24, 43 par Lk. 12, 39f., and I Thess. 5, 4). The thought that Jesus will come at an hour unknown is still present (it is not meant that if the church at Sardis watches, then Jesus will come at a moment anticipated!), but rather that he will then not come with the disastrous consequences of a thief in an unprepared household.)

² Cf. 2, 5; 2, 10; 2, 16; 2, 21; 3, 3; 3, 11; 3, 18.

³ Many (e.g. Schmidt, *Aus der Johannes Apokalypse*, p. 18; Lohmeyer, *Offenbarung*, p. 57; Kiddle, *Revelation*, p. 110; Charles, *Revelation*, p. 161.) think that all four horsemen in Rev. 6, 1ff., are to be understood as representing plagues. But recently Cullmann (*Time*, pp. 160ff) has presented a strong case for understanding the rider of the white horse as personifying the preaching of the gospel. We mention in support of this view the following evidence:

a. White, in 1, 14; 2, 17; 3, 4; 3, 5; 3, 18; 4, 4; 6, 11; 7, 9; 7, 13; 14, 14; 19, 11; 19, 14; and 20, 11 (i.e. every reference in Revelation besides 6, 2) is, in this book, a heavenly attribute.

b. νικῶ predominantly has the sense of overcoming by non violent means (cf. 2, 7; 2, 17; 2, 26; 3, 5; 3, 12; 3, 21; 21, 7; contrast 11, 7; 12, 11; 13, 7; 17, 14), and essentially *divine* action is denoted. (Of course the plagues are not regarded as outside of divine control).

c. If the conquering of the first horseman is a plague, it must be that of war—which the second also brings (though there *is* some duplication amongst the other plagues).

d. The parallelism between this horseman and that of 19, 11f. is very striking; sovereignty and warfare concern both. The horseman of 6, 1f. has a bow; in 19, 11f. he has a sharp sword (perhaps 'bow' is mentioned in 6, 2 to differentiate it from the great sword of the second rider, 6, 4). Rev. 1, 16; Eph. 6, 17; Heb. 4, 12 present the idea of the Word of God as a powerful weapon.

e. If thus interpreted, the four 'signs' parallel Mk. 13 par. and II Thess. 2., II Peter, 3, which include amongst the signs of the End, preaching of the gospel.

⁴ Cf. 6, 1, 6, 10, 7, 3, 9, 5; 10, 10, 11, 11, 3, 12, 6; 14, 13, 5.

⁵ Kiddle, *Revelation*, p. xxxi., rightly notes that the sequence of events in Revelation connected by 'then', 'after this', 'does not indicate strict sequence.' cf. further, Rissi, *Zeit und Geschichte in der Offenbarung Johannes*.