

A Look at "The Jesus of History and the Church"  
by  
Randolph Crump Miller

His Contribution to "What is Essential in the Christian Religion"  
at the first session of the Pacific Coast Theological Society in 1939

Dr. Randolph Crump Miller (b. 1910). Episcopalian priest. Now an acknowledged elder statesman of the religious education community, he was an advocate for theological integration of the Bible into Mainline Protestant religious education. His basic tenet: "Theology in the background, grace and faith in the foreground." Churchman, professor, author, speaker, and editor, his active career enabled him to impact religious education throughout the latter half of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st. No other religious educator of the middle of the twentieth-century deserves acclaim equal to Randolph Crump Miller (1910- ). What he established in the 1950's and 1960's as precedents, in both theology and education, are today foundational assumptions. In short, over the course of his professional career Miller has moved from the trend setter to the elder statesman of Christian religious education. Burgess (1996, 10) describes Miller as representing a "mid-century mainline model," voicing a moderate alternative between the extreme poles of the "liberal" and "evangelical/kerygmatic" models of religious education. His impact and influence on a generation of Christian educators is self evident; from mainline Protestant educators, e.g. Sara Little (who studied with him at Yale), to evangelical educators, e.g. Larry Richards. In his earlier volume, Burgess (1975, 94-97) labeled Miller as "the most influential theorist" in the category of "Contemporary Theological Theoretical Approach to Religious Education," which has as its antecedents Horace Bushnell and John Dewey. In short, in the history of contemporary Christian education, Miller is one of its founding fathers.

### **Obituary**

Randolph Crump Miller, retired professor of divinity at Yale University, died of cancer on June 13, 2002 in Hamden, Connecticut. Mr. Miller was the Horace Bushnell Professor Emeritus of Christian Nurture at the Yale Divinity School, where he taught for 29 years. Born in 1910 in Fresno, California, he was the son of the Reverend Ray Oakley Miller and Laura Belle Crump Miller. He earned his B.A. degree from Pomona College in 1931 and his Ph.D. in philosophy from Yale in 1936. He studied at the Episcopal Theological School and was ordained in the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1935. After teaching at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific and serving as vicar and rector of St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Albany, California, Professor Miller joined the Yale faculty in 1952, where he remained until his retirement in 1981. A jazz enthusiast and expert, Professor Miller spoke widely on the theology of jazz, as well as on topics in theology and Christian education. From 1958-1978 he was editor of the interfaith journal, *Religious Education*, published by the Religious Education Association. His books include "What We Can Believe," "Biblical Theology and Christian Education," "Christian Nurture and the Church," "Your Child's Religion: A Practical Guide for Parents," "The American Spirit in Theology," "This We Can Believe," and several others. His 1950 book, "The Clue to Christian Education," was highly influential in the field of religious instruction. Professor Miller was a member of the Episcopal Evangelical Fellowship and the Religious Education Association. He was a trustee of the periodicals *The Churchman* and the *Anglican Theological Review*, and served as a consultant in Christian education for the National Council of Protestant Episcopal Churches. He served as director of Christian education at Trinity Church on the Green in New Haven from 1961-1971. Professor Miller is survived by his wife, Elizabeth, of Hamden, CT; daughters Barbara Miller and

Phyllis Symonds, both of Weeki Wachee, FL; Carol Rand of Sharon, CT; Rives Carroll of Washington, DC; and Muriel Merenda of Terryville, CT; 17 grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. He is also survived by a sister, Nancy Stratford of San Diego, CA; and a brother, Richard Miller, of Los Angeles. He is predeceased by his son, Frank Fowlkes.

**“The Jesus of History and the Church,”**

by

**Randolph Crump Miller**

Dr. Miller's 1939 essay is a synthesis of reading a few contemporary books on Jesus, the religion of the New Testament, and the Church of the New Testament, by American and French biblical scholars and Early Church historians. They include: Cadbury, Parsons, Enslin, Guignebert, McCown, McIntosh, Major, Loisy, Grant, Riddle, McGiffert, Bernardin, and Filson. He claims no original research, and early in his paper acknowledges, “Whatever persuasion the conclusions of this paper may have must rest on the value of the authorities quoted, and not on my personal expertness.” He recognizes the indispensability of the historical critical method in sifting through the textual sources and evaluating them “in as unprejudiced manner as possible, but also adds “These sources cannot be handled entirely without bias.” Writing about Jesus, based on the NT gospels, is essentially an undertaking in “modernizing Jesus,” and he cites Henry Cadbury's reminder, that that is a process that began when the first words were written about Jesus. The Synoptic gospels, especially Mark and Q, are accepted as the sources for “the primary data,” but they must not be treated primarily as history:

“They are interpretations aimed to convert mankind to the 'good news' of Christianity. They see Jesus through the eyes of the church, in the light of theological development, and through the dynamic resurrection experiences of the early apostles.”

Accordingly, as Miller acknowledges, the gospels “express a point of view quite removed from that of Jesus of Nazareth.” He offers four critical viewpoints of the early church that distance the gospels from the historical Jesus:

1. their messianic interpretation
2. a fore-telling of Jesus' death and resurrection
3. the church is taken for granted.
4. There is a confusion of the eschatology of Jesus and that of the primitive church.

Miller appears to have extracted the most valid criteria for the quest of the historical Jesus from his various readings. Right into our present day quest of the historical Jesus, these four remain vital issues of ongoing research and debate in this domain of NT scholarship.

Two eschatological expectations are acknowledged to be intrinsic to the religious environment in which Jesus lived and worked, and “they ranged side by side:” “the arrival of a political messiah,” and “the intervention of Yahweh himself through means of a supernatural messiah.” Of the two, the latter is believed to have developed under the influence of Persian dualism, but its distinctive eschatology is ignored. Post-exilic Jewish apocalypticism and its eschatology of “the kingdom of God” are not drawn into his synthesis. There is no intimation that he is familiar with the scholarship of Johannes Weiss, specifically his book, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1900). There is no reference to Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. To what extent German scholarship

was being read and debated here in 1939 is indeterminable. In any case, this absence of German scholarship and its investigation of the historical Jesus in the light of post-exilic apocalypticism accentuates the inadequacy of Miller's synthesis and the sources he employed for his essay.

Miller views Jesus in terms of the practices of the synagogue that he inherited, but he does not state what they may have been. He emphasizes “the duties of the law, and the ethical demands of prophetic religion” and personalizes it psychologically as he portrays Jesus with “a sensitive spirit to delve more deeply into reality than other men.” That, according to Miller, gives us “the background of Jesus' teaching, and mission.”

The dates he offers for Jesus' ministry are drawn from his readings: it moved as a rapid pace, beginning in 28 and ending with his crucifixion in the spring of 29. Jesus wandered all over Galilee with a small band, “teaching and preaching and perhaps performing some miracles.” His motivation and message were centered on the coming of the kingdom of God, and he may have anticipated its arrival at the time of his celebration of the Passover in Jerusalem. He did not expect to be put to death.

There is attempt to determine the character and content of “the kingdom of God.” Although Miller places Jesus in the religious environment of two eschatological expectations, the coming of a political messiah, and God's intervention through a supernatural messiah, he accepts the judgment of his scholarly sources that Jesus rejected a self-identification with both of these messianic types. Consequently, he never states the objective of “the kingdom of God,” nor explains why Jesus was motivated to proclaim it.

Nevertheless, he finds that there are still two options that may draw the content of Jesus' ministry into some kind of unified, meaningful activity that may also account for his death by crucifixion. Jesus “may have established himself as a suffering servant,” or “he may have been simply a prophet.” But he withdraws from the first alternative, “Jesus as a suffering servant,” because it is more critically attributable to the christological interpretation of the early church. The solution that offers him the least difficulty is Jesus' belief that “he was called by God to a special mission: the pronouncement of the imminence of the kingdom, and the means [repentance] for entering into it.” “Jesus,” Miller states, “is typically prophetic in making the prerequisite to membership in the kingdom a moral rather than a national one.” The distinctiveness of Jesus' ministry is “his ethical emphasis,” but an emphasis that is universal rather than ethnic.

It is here in his characterization of Jesus' ethics that Miller discloses his liberal rather than his evangelical orientation. Jesus has “a higher regard for persons and their potentialities than many of his followers.” Although he was aware of “the sinful aspects of man's nature,” “he never taught that men were inherently evil.” The constant factor in Jesus' ethics is the attitude or the intention of the human being: “Once man's intentions were right, he could be counted on to make external conditions correct.” “Men,” Miller says, “are judged by their attitudes.” It is particularly obvious here that he ignores the text of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel in which deeds and not attitudes are stressed.

Salvation, according to Miller, “does not depend on any transactional scheme of redemption, but on what one does about one's own sins.” Sacrificial redemption is a development of the Early Church's theologizing. The parable of the Prodigal Son best expresses Jesus' own understanding of salvation.

Miller offers two factors that differentiate Jesus' situation from our own. (1) As a member of a minority group, there was little chance of military success. (2) There was the hope that God would intervene. “Today,” he maintains, “powerful democracies are strong enough to save the world. They have already done it once, without unqualified success. We are sure there will be no supernatural intervention.”

Finally, the events of Holy Week are so thoroughly affected by OT images and motifs, which

the process of theologizing has woven into the story. that it is profoundly difficult to extract historical elements. Miller quotes Guignebert, who “doubts practically all the events, except that 'Jesus was arrested by the Roman police, judged and condemned by the Roman procurator, Pilate, or someone else.” The crucifixion stories in the gospels are inconsistent; the legends of the burial, resurrection and ascension are inevitable. As for the resurrection, Miller appears to rely on his citation of Major:

“The belief of the resurrection of Jesus was created not by an objective experience of his disciples after his crucifixion, but by a subjective experience created by the impact of His personality upon their personalities in the preceding period.”

Miller adds, “This experience of Jesus revitalized the broken little group, and they returned to Jerusalem with joy and confidence that he would return again as a supernatural messiah.”

Miller's essay reflects the liberal, epistemological perspective in American biblical scholarship in 1939. But virtually everything that he has synthesized from his sources begs questions, and many, if not most of them, were pursued anew by the second and third quests of the historical Jesus after World War II, but from new perspectives innovated by philosophical theories, such as “the New Hermeneutic” drawing on “the later Heidegger,” and methodologies, such as social scientific criticism.

Miller's paper synthesized various contributions to the quest of the historical Jesus and to the problems of the Early Church, but without entering into the underlying issue of eschatology in an effort to answer the thematic question of that first session of PCTS: “What is Essential in the Christian Religion?” Eschatology is foundationally relevant to the quest and the beginnings of the Christ movement, the Church, involving the fundamental issues of “the kingdom of God,” “the Son of Man” and Jesus' resurrection from the dead. I want to explore these aspects of eschatology not only as a critique of Miller's 1939 essay, but to probe beneath this quest by examining its orientation toward epistemology and ontology and, beyond that, by offering another perspective.

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Eschatology, a forthtelling of things to come, grounded in realities of the present and, accordingly, the foundational perspective of biblical prophecy, was recovered for the interpretation of the Bible by the correspondence theory of truth, the subject/object hermeneutics of biblical scholarship during the 19<sup>th</sup> century quest of the historical Jesus. Albert Schweitzer, in his magnum opus, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, identifies Hermann Samuel Reimarus as “the first, and indeed, before Johannes Weiss, the only writer who recognized and pointed out that the preaching of Jesus was purely eschatological.”<sup>1</sup> Reimarus' Fragment, “The Aims of Jesus and His Disciples,” interprets Jesus' messianic expectations and its relation to “the coming kingdom of God” entirely in terms of a Davidic

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1 Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (New York; Macmillan 1954), 241.

messiahship that was directed toward the liberation of the Jewish people.<sup>2</sup> He also acknowledged “another messianic expectation which transferred everything to the supernatural sphere,” namely the apocalypses, Justin's “Dialogue with Trypho,” and certain Rabbinic sayings.<sup>3</sup> That eschatology Reimarus considered to be the second *systema* which Jesus' disciples appropriated from the apocalyptic writings in order to project a second coming, the Parousia, but only after they had interpreted his death as a spiritual redemption and invented his resurrection from the dead. But, “The whole movement of theology,” from Reimarus down to Johannes Weiss, Schweitzer declared, “appears retrograde.”<sup>4</sup>

Coincidentally Schweitzer contends that “the general conception of the Kingdom was first rightly grasped by Weiss,” who maintained that the kingdom of God is entirely oriented to the future, it is purely supra-mundane, and has nothing to do with political expectations.<sup>5</sup> Jesus himself expressed no “messianic functions.” His work of casting out demons signifies nothing more than the kingdom throwing its shadow on the earth. His ministry was no different than that of John the Baptist; both were waiting for God to actualize the kingdom by supernatural means. What differentiated Jesus from John was his consciousness of being the Messiah, a self-understanding equivalent to that of “the Son of Man” that was awakened in him at his baptism, but would not be fulfilled during his ministry. Weiss' interpretation of Jesus' preaching was focused entirely on “the Son of Man” christology and its relationship to the apocalypses of the Old Testament. Jesus' messianic consciousness, as expressed in the title “the Son of Man,” “shares in the transcendental apocalyptic character of his idea of the Kingdom of God and cannot be separated from that idea.”<sup>6</sup> His preaching of the coming kingdom, however, failed to arouse repentance among his people that was worthy of the coming kingdom, and, therefore, if it were to come at all, their guilt would have to be put away by the ransom price of his death. Jesus, according to Weiss, deliberately went to Jerusalem to die, but in his consciousness he believed that after his death he would exercise his messiahship as “the Son of Man” to establish the kingdom that he had proclaimed throughout his ministry.

Schweitzer's apocalyptically oriented Jesus is the culmination and termination of the first quest of the historical Jesus. Like Weiss, his perspective on eschatology is drawn from the apocalyptic tradition of post-exilic Judaism, and focuses entirely on the kingdom of God and “the Son of Man.” Jesus' eschatology is “dogmatic history,” history shaped by his theological beliefs “which breaks in upon the natural course of history and abrogates it.”<sup>7</sup> His call to his contemporaries, “Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand,” is the only message of his public ministry and the only message he committed to his disciples when he set them forth into the “cities of Israel.”<sup>8</sup> Jesus himself is not engaged in founding the kingdom; like the Baptist, he is simply waiting. He is anticipating that the repentance to which they are summoning the people will compel God to actualize the kingdom, so that it may come at any moment. His parables express the miraculous character of the kingdom's arrival by the power and purpose of God. Consequently, the course of history is not determined by outward events, “but by the decisions of Jesus, and these were set by his dogmatic, eschatological

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2 Schweitzer, *Quest*, 16-24.

3 Schweitzer, *Quest*, 20.

4 Schweitzer, *Quest*, 23.

5 Schweitzer, *Quest*, 239. See Johannes Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1892, 67 pages; 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. 1900, 210 pages; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. published by Ferdinand Hahn, with an accompanying word by Rudolf Bultmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964). Johannes Weiss, *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God*, trans. & ed. with an Introduction by Richard Hyde Hiers & David Larrimore Holland (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

6 Schweitzer, *Quest*, 240.

7 Schweitzer, *Quest*, 351.

8 Schweitzer, *Quest*, 354.

considerations.”<sup>9</sup>

When Jesus sends out his disciples to summon Israel to repentance, according to Schweitzer's interpretation of Matt. 10:23, he is anticipating that before they return his coming as “the Son of Man” will have taken place. For Schweitzer the Parousia of “the Son of Man” is identical to the dawn of God's kingdom. When, however, the disciples return, and the Parousia has not occurred, as Jesus anticipated, he terminates his period of “waiting” for the kingdom to come, and begins to find a way to coerce its arrival. By entering Jerusalem and handing himself over to suffering, death and resurrection, he acts according to his theologically-determined “dogmatic history” to end the present age and inaugurate the anticipated conditions of the kingdom. Schweitzer's eloquent summary of his life of Jesus is worth citing in this context.

There is silence all around. The Baptist appears, and cries, “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” Soon after that comes Jesus, and in the knowledge that He is the coming Son of Man lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution which is to bring all ordinary history to a close. It refuses to turn, and He throws Himself upon it. Then it does turn; and crushes Him. Instead of bringing in the eschatological conditions, He has destroyed them. The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great Man, who was strong enough to think of Himself as the spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to His purpose, is hanging upon it still. That is His victory and His reign.<sup>10</sup>

“What is essential to the Christian Religion?” It cannot be the perspective of eschatology that emerged from the First Quest, either that of Davidic messiahship or that of apocalyptic eschatology, for virtually nothing emerged from that century long scientific investigation that produced an *essence* of the Christian religion, neither theologically nor ethically. For Weiss “the kingdom of God” is wholly future. Jesus cannot preach an ethic of “the kingdom of God,” only an ethic that frees people from the world. And his death appears to have no eschatological significance for the Christian faith. Schweitzer's more radical “thoroughgoing eschatology,” as he imposed it on Matthew's Jesus in the form of a dogmatic apocalypticism, discloses a fanatical Jesus, a madman, who at best may arise spiritually within human beings to influence their lives and enable them to overcome the world.

The names in which men expressed their recognition of Him as such, Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God, have become for us historical parables. We can find no distinction which expresses what He is for us.<sup>11</sup>

Eschatology at this point, as it was conveyed by these christological titles in their bearing on Jesus and his proclamation of “the kingdom of God,” is unable to have any meaningful effect on the disposition and content of the Christian faith.

Rudolf Bultmann

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9 Schweitzer, *Quest*, 358.

10 Schweitzer, *Quest*, 370-371. Schweitzer's scholarship appears to have been determined by Kant's critiques, for after he had completed his first doctoral dissertation, published under the title, *The Religious Philosophy of Kant from the “Critique of Pure Reason” to “Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason*, he turned to theology and specifically the problems of the life of Jesus.

11 Schweitzer, *Quest*, 403.

Eschatology, however, was not abandoned by biblical scholarship and biblical theology. Rudolf Bultmann, a student of Johannes Weiss as well as of Wilhelm Herrmann and Adolf von Harnack, and including especially Martin Heidegger, the Neo-Kantianism of Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp, Karl Barth and the Lutheranism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as sources of effective influence, authored a little book entitled *Jesus* that offers his own response to the quest of the historical Jesus. Printed in 1926, it was translated into English and published under the title *Jesus and the Word* in 1958.<sup>12</sup>

A Neo-Kantian dualism appears at the very beginning of Bultmann's Introduction of *Jesus*. "The relationship of the human being to *Geschichte* [not *Historie*] is wholly different from our relation to nature [*Natur*]." <sup>13</sup> He does not refer to *Historie* in this context, but in other writings he relegates it, along with nature, to the causal nexus of the empirical world and therefore also to the realm of scientific study in which knowledge is pursued in order to apprehend Being. Knowledge, according to Paul Natorp, is acquired by the conscious processes of thinking, and thinking engages in objectification on the basis of universal laws. <sup>14</sup> "To know is to objectify in accordance with the principle of law."<sup>15</sup> Bultmann judges this Neo-Kantian presupposition in relation to his 19<sup>th</sup> century Lutheranism, and he determines that this pursuit of knowledge by the objectification of thought in accordance with universal laws belongs to the realm of works and therefore cannot be reconciled to the doctrine of justification by faith. <sup>16</sup> God, as a consequence, would become objectified along with the laws of nature and therefore be at the disposal of human beings as a general truth.

Weiss and Schweitzer derived the eschatology of Jesus from their investigations of the gospels under the presupposition of *Historie* as an objectified concatenation of events divorced from meaning. Bultmann identified Jesus and his proclamation of the eschatological reality of kingdom of God with *Geschichte*, the inward subjective domain of human being, the domain of meaning, which is prior to the hermeneutical mode of subject/object *a posteriori* investigation. <sup>17</sup> In his book *Jesus* he is engaged in "a continuous *dialogue with Geschichte*; the only encounter with "history" that human beings can have. <sup>18</sup> But "This dialogue is not a *geistreiches Spiel der Subjektivität des Betrachters*." It is not, if I understand what he is saying, the ego of consciousness that involves itself in a spiritually rich game with *Geschichte*; it is the "phenomenological Ego," the "pure ego" of Neo-Kantian transcendentalism.

If the Ego, as naturally immersed in the world, experiencingly and otherwise, is called

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12 Rudolf Bultmann *Jesus* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1926. English: *Jesus and the Word*, trans. by Louise Pettibone Smith and Ermine Huntress Lantero (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

13 Bultmann, *Jesus*, 7; *Jesus and the Word*, 3.

14 Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 209-210, quoting Paul Natorp, *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der Humanität* (Leipzig: Mohr, 1894) 39.

15 Thiselton, *The Two Horizons*, 210, citing R.A. Johnson, *The Origins of Demythologizing: Philosophy and Historiography in the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann* (Brill: Leiden, 1974) 49-50.

16 Thiselton, *Two Horizons*, 211.

17 In his book, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958) 80, Rudolf Bultmann says, "In faith I deny the closed connection of the worldly events, the chain of cause and effect as it presents itself to the neutral observer. I deny the interconnection of the worldly events not as mythology does, which by breaking the connection places supernatural events into the chain of natural events; I deny the worldly connection as a whole when I speak of God. I deny the worldly connection of events when I speak of myself, for in this connection of worldly events, my self, my personal experience, my own personal life, is no more visible and capable of proof that is God as acting." Is it faith or simply a rational denial of cause and effect that enables Bultmann to bracket that metaphysical reality?

18 Bultmann, *Jesus*, 8; *Jesus and the Word*, 4. The italics are Bultmann's.

“interested” in the world,, then the phenomenologically altered – and, as so altered, continually maintained – attitude consists in a splitting of the Ego: in that the phenomenological Ego establishes itself as “disinterested onlooker,” above the naively interested Ego. That this takes place is then itself accessible by means of a new reflection, which as transcendental, likewise demands the very same attitude of looking on “disinterestedly” – the Ego's sole remaining interest being to see and to describe adequately what he sees, purely as seen, as what is seen and seen in such and such a manner.<sup>19</sup>

Bultmann is offering his reader “a highly personal encounter with history”<sup>20</sup> It is the “highly personal encounter” of his transcendental Ego that enables him to gain access into history as *Geschichte* and thereby to engage in a new reflection. This enables him, as the *Geschichtsschreiber* of *Jesus* to hear what *Geschichte* is communicating. Desperate to avoid “objectivity in an ordinary sense,” he nevertheless claims that his presentation “in another sense is all the more objective, for it refrains from *Prädikate zu erteilen*, namely giving predicates or “pronouncing value judgments.”<sup>21</sup> As a “disinterested onlooker,” Bultmann, by avoiding all predicates and value judgments in order to find a place inside the *Geschichte* of the teaching of Jesus is finally able, through new reflection, to establish knowledge, indeed, knowledge beyond the subject/object dichotomy.

The *Geschichte*, however, is not the teaching of Jesus that is embedded in the oldest layer of the gospel tradition, but the teaching of Jesus that Bultmann has extracted from the Synoptic gospels through his form-critical analysis, and, as he also acknowledges, there is no certainty that the words of Jesus in this oldest layer were really spoken by Jesus.<sup>22</sup>

To facilitate “a highly personal encounter with *Geschichte*,” Bultmann, as a “disinterested onlooker” wants to engage in a real *interrogation* of *Geschichte* [*ein wirkliches Befragen der Geschichte*] in which the *Geschichtsschreiber* (the writer of history as *Geschichte*) puts his own subjectivity in question in order to be addressed by the authority of *Geschichte*.<sup>23</sup>

... Whatever is relative to the observer – namely all the presuppositions which he brings with him out of his own time and schooling and his individual position within them – must be given up (*soll preisgegeben werden*), so that *Geschichte* may actually speak.<sup>24</sup>

But how can it be an interrogation of *Geschichte*, if *Geschichte* is addressing the *Geschichtsschreiber*? And whose *Geschichte* is speaking? If *Geschichte* is able to speak, it must have a being of its own, independently of the historian as *Geschichtsschreiber*, that can interact with the *Geschichtsschreiber* as he or she enters into dialogue with it. But it is a *Geschichte* that the *Geschichtsschreiber* himself has established within Enlightenment's subject/object dualism. Who, then, is being interrogated, if *Geschichte* is the authority that is addressing the *Geschichtsschreiber*?

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19 Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999) 35. The italics are his.

20 Bultmann, *Jesus*, 10; *Jesus and the Word*, 6-7.

21 Bultmann, *Jesus*, 10; *Jesus and the Word*, 7.

22 Bultmann, *Jesus*, 14; *Jesus and the Word*, 13.

23 Bultmann, *Jesus*, 8; *Jesus and the Word*, 4. The italics are Bultmann's. The phrase, “*ein wirkliches Befragen der Geschichte*” echoes Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) 24, in which he says, “So in addition to what is asked about, an inquiry has *that which is interrogated* [*ein Befragtes*].” The italics are Heidegger's.

24 My own translation of Bultmann, *Jesus*, 8.



Evidently, the Ego of Bultmann, on the one hand, the form critic, and, on the other hand as the “disinterested onlooker” of the *Geschichtsschreiber* of *Jesus*, is able to transcend the subjectivity of his *a priori* understanding in order, as to dialogue with *Geschichte*. Accordingly, therefore, after a subject/object investigation of the Synoptic tradition to establish *Geschichte*, Bultmann's pure disinterested Ego has succeeded in escaping Enlightenment's subject/object dualism into a pure transcendental Ego.

The *Geschichte* that Bultmann is engaging in dialogue is not the faith-constituted *Geschichte* of the earliest post-Easter community of Jesus' disciples. What he is confronting or what is confronting him in his “subjectivity-bracketed” interrogation of *Geschichte*, is the *Geschichte* of the oldest layer of the Synoptic tradition that he himself objectified by the employment of critically-determined scientific methodology of the subject/object correspondence theory of truth? Bultmann, as a pure Ego, is engaging in a “subjectivity-bracketed” dialogue with the *Geschichte* of the earliest interpretation of Jesus that he himself formed through his own supposedly objective form-critical analysis that he published in his *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*.

The *Geschichte* of Bultmann's encounter is:

The message of Jesus as an eschatological gospel. It is the proclamation that now the fulfillment of the promise is at hand, that now the Kingdom of God begins.”<sup>25</sup>

Jesus himself and his activity are the sign of its presence. Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons, but most of the miracles in the gospels are legendary wonder tales. Yet they were miracles in his own mind, attributable to a supernatural divine cause. At the end of his ministry he entered Jerusalem with his followers to take possession of the temple and to cleanse it for the coming kingship of God. His last meal with them is his celebration that the kingdom is coming. All the signs indicate that it is the last hour, and he himself understood and proclaimed his hour as the last hour.<sup>26</sup> And when the kingdom arrives, when the Judge of the world, the “Son of Man appears,” he, Jesus, will be justified, for his message is self-accrediting.<sup>27</sup> To establish that Jesus differentiated himself from “the eschatological Son of Man,” Bultmann cites Lk. 12:8, “Whoever acknowledges me before human beings, him/her the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God.” The *Geschichte* of the coming of the eschatological kingdom of God that Jesus is preaching and teaching confronts Bultmann with the stark reality of the last hour and requires of him the necessity of decision, a decision for or against Jesus.<sup>28</sup> The repentance that arises out of a decision for Jesus involves him, as an imperatival act of will, in the complete renunciation of all things.<sup>29</sup>

But the historicity of this *Geschichte* that is speaking to Bultmann is a Neo-Kantian transcendental reality; it is not Heidegger's historicity of “Being-in-the-world” in actual time as event. For Bultmann the kingdom of God is eschatological deliverance which ends everything earthly, and being eschatological it is wholly supernatural, superhistorical. It is “the absolute wonder” (das “Wunderbare” schlechthin), opposed to all that is here and now; it is “wholly other,” heavenly.<sup>30</sup>

“So ist doch der Geist der Führer!” “*The Spirit is still the leader*, and the life of the soul, das

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25 Bultmann, *Jesus*, 27; *Jesus and the Word*, 27.

26 Bultmann, *Jesus*, 47; *Jesus and the Word*, 52.

27 Bultmann, *Jesus*, 29; *Jesus and the Word*, 30.

28 Bultmann, *Jesus*, 29-30; *Jesus and the Word*, 30

29 Bultmann, *Jesus*, 32; *Jesus and the Word*, 33.

30 Bultmann, *Jesus*, 35; *Jesus and the Word*, 37-38

Erleben (the experience of living), is the true sense of human existence.”<sup>31</sup> But there is no thought of a development of human capacities and nothing worthwhile in the human being as such that he perceives in the teaching of Jesus; and, as support, he quotes Mk. 8:36, “What will it profit a human being to gain the whole world and forfeit his/her *soul* (*psychē*)?” His interpretation of *psychē* as *Leben* (life), however, is inadequate!<sup>32</sup> Ontologically the *psychē* is the domain of the human being's possibility and infinitude, and as such it constitutes the other half of the duality of human being, namely, the *sōma* (body). Bultmann's analysis of *sōma* (body), however, is deficient because the *sōma* (body) is analyzed independently of the *psychē* (soul) as though they were independent of each other. It is very evident when he enunciates in *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, “I deny the worldly connection of events when I speak of myself.”<sup>33</sup> His dualistic opposition between *Geschichte* and *Historie*, and *Geschichte* and *Natur*, corresponds to the opposition between his highly personal, transcendental Ego, (which somehow can be divorced from his subjectivity) and his physical body, which, in its identification with the realm of nature, is subject to the law of causality and therefore, does not participate in his transcendental dialogue with *Geschichte* and cannot be affected by it. Bultmann's spiritualized eschatology of the kingdom of God and his demythologized, existentially interpreted teaching of Jesus is completely unable to engage in the transformation of the world.

The preaching and teaching of Jesus, as Bultmann reconstructed it, was continued by the Church, and Jesus continued to be viewed as a teacher and a prophet. At the same time the Proclaimer also became the Proclaimed! He was acknowledged as the Messiah, yet not the Messiah of his past ministry; he was the Messiah as the coming Son of Man.

Of course, if God has raised from the dead Jesus of Nazareth, the teacher and prophet crucified by the Romans, and made him Messiah, exalted him to be the Son of Man who is to come on the clouds of heaven to hold judgment and to bring in the salvation of God's Reign, then the indefinite mythical figure, Messiah, has become concrete and visible. The myth has been transferred to a concrete man, and the consequence will be that trust in it will have been immeasurably strengthened.<sup>34</sup>

Jesus did not actualize the kingdom of God, nor was it established by his resurrection from the dead. Concomitantly, there has been no change in the ontological structure of the world. The mythology utilized to interpret Jesus' death and resurrection must be demythologized and to some extent that already has been undertaken by the Apostle Paul and the author of the Fourth Gospel. Consequentially, the resulting process of historicization engenders an immeasurable strengthening of trust in the gospel of Jesus. This is explicitly expressed in Bultmann's interpretation of the Easter narratives of John 20. They are “signs,” like the “miracles of Jesus” which the Fourth Gospel designates as “signs.” Jesus' reprimand of Thomas at the conclusion of the gospel in 20:29 is “a warning against taking the Easter stories for more than they are able to be: signs and pictures of the Easter faith – or perhaps still better,

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31 Bultmann, *Jesus*, 48; *Jesus and the Word*, 53.

32 See Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951) I, 204-205; on p. 205, he says, “... 'body and spirit' are evidently intended as a summary designation of the totality of a human being.” The totality is the duality of *psychē* and *sōma*.

33 Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, 80.

34 Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951) I, 33-34.

confessions of faith in it.”<sup>35</sup> Jesus rose from the dead into the *kerygma*, the proclamation of the gospel, and, wherever it continues to be preached, his resurrection occurs within those who hear it. That it is entirely God's action is a matter of faith (Glaube). To experience the reality of the Spirit in life, and to have a certainty about its reality, so that in the doing and having done God is proven to be present, there is only one possibility that lies beyond the gifts of the Spirit. It is agapē!<sup>36</sup>

Welches aber ist die Seinsweise des so gestellten Menschen, in der er sich als Glaubender verständlich wird? Die agapē! ...in ihr wird das unerhörte eschatologische Geschehen wirklich, so fern in ihr (die Seinsweise) die agapē wirklich wird.<sup>37</sup>

This, in my judgment, is the only reality of incarnation that Bultmann acknowledges in his existential interpretation of the eschatology of the gospel. But to what extent God's agapē affects human life beyond the inward reality of the soul, the *nephesh*, is not made explicit but may perhaps be presupposed.

Nevertheless, the salvation that the kingdom of God brings remains a future reality, actually indeed, a transcendent reality. To quote Bultmann again:

For Jesus' importance as Messiah-Son-of-Man lies not at all in what he did in the past, but entirely in what is expected of him in the future. And once this expectation is fulfilled by the eschatological drama, that event will never become, like the crossing of the Red Sea, a past to which one could look back thankfully, drawing confidence from it, but it will be God's last deed of all, by which he puts history to an end.<sup>38</sup>

The far-reaching influence of Neo-Kantian philosophy and 19<sup>th</sup> century Lutheranism drove Bultmann out of epistemology into ontology, the ontology of his existential demythologization of Jesus' eschatology of the kingdom of God. Perhaps it was the influence of sitting in on Heidegger's lectures at Marburg during the 1920's that were published as BEING AND TIME. Yet, at the same time, his ontology was overpowered by the Neo-Kantian effort to find a way beyond the subject/object dualism to establish absolute knowledge by the activity of the transcendental Ego. Nevertheless, that movement into ontology and then back into transcendental epistemology destroyed the dialectic of being, the dialectic of the Hebrew duality of *nephesh* and *basar*, soul and flesh. The eschatology of the kingdom of God was reduced to one dimension of that duality, the *nephesh*, the consciousness of the soul, and beyond that its transcendental Ego. The other dimension of that duality of being, the body of flesh and blood and its relationship to the physical world in which it exists, and with it the realities of justice and peace, was vitiated.

## Karl Barth

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35 Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955) II, 57.

36 Rudolf Bultmann, *Glauben und Verstehen* I, “Karl Barth, 'Die Auferstehung der Toten,’” (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1954, 50. In this essay Bultmann contends that 1 Cor. 13 is the culmination of Paul's letter – in contrast to Karl Barth's insistence that it is 1 Cor. 15.

37 Bultmann, “Karl Barth, “Die Auferstehung der Toten,” 50-51.

38 Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, I, 36. Bultmann wants human beings to have security in this world, and he attempts to give it to them as a transcendent presence of eternity, divorced from the empirical realities of *Historie*.

Karl Barth, like Rudolf Bultmann, was a student of Wilhelm Herrmann, and, Barth, like Bultmann, remained captive to the Enlightenment and its oppositional subject/object dualism. The view of history that he espouses in his commentary on Romans, differentiates two kinds of history: the empirical realm of human affairs and events that is subject to the cause and effect nexus of nature-history and the world of revelation.

In so far as our world is touched in Jesus by the other world, it ceases to be capable of direct observation as history, time, or thing. Jesus has been – **declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Holy Spirit, through his resurrection from the dead.** In this declaration and appointment – which are beyond historical definition – lies the true significance of Jesus. Jesus as the Christ, as the Messiah, is the End of History; and can be comprehended only as Paradox (Kierkegaard), as Victor (Blumhardt), as Primal History (Overbeck). As Christ, Jesus is the plane which lies beyond our comprehension. The plane which is known to us, He intersects vertically, from above. Within history, Jesus as the Christ can be understood only as Problem or Myth. As the Christ, He brings the world of the Father. But we who stand in this concrete world know nothing, and are incapable of knowing anything of that other world.<sup>39</sup>

In this separation of time and eternity, our world and the other world, Barth's dualism appears to be determined by the Marburger Neo-Kantians, Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp, mediated through his teacher, Wilhelm Herrmann.<sup>40</sup> If all thinking is the objectifying of consciousness, an objectifying that constitutes being, God's revelation cannot be the product of human knowledge. It is *sui generis*!

“The resurrection is the revelation ...”<sup>41</sup>

In the resurrection the new world of the Holy Spirit touches the old world of the flesh, but touches it as a tangent touches a circle, that is, without touching it. And precisely because it does not touch it, it touches it as a frontier – as the new world. The resurrection is therefore an occurrence in history, which took place outside the gates of Jerusalem in the year A.D. 30, in as much as it there 'came to pass,' was discovered and recognized. But inasmuch as the occurrence was conditioned by the Resurrection, in so far, that is, as it was not the 'coming to pass', or the discovery, or the recognition, which conditioned its necessity and appearance and revelation, the Resurrection is not an event in history at all.<sup>42</sup>

By this oppositional disposition of the resurrection as an occurrence in history and the resurrection as conditioning the necessity of its occurrence, Barth has severed the dialectic of being, the duality of possibility and necessity, and terminated their dynamic interactive movement. He speaks of

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39 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans from the sixth edition by Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1953) 29-30.

40 Roger A. Johnson, *The Origins of Demythologizing: Philosophy and Historiography in the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann* (Leiden: Brill, 1974) 40-41, says, “For the philosophical roots of mid-twentieth century theology are firmly embedded in Marburg Neo-Kantianism. I refer here not only to Bultmann's theology, but also to Karl Barth and the religious philosophy of Martin Buber.”

41 Barth, *Romans*, 30

42 Barth, *Romans*, 30.

resurrection as an occurrence, and, as such, it is anticipated that it should be something that is empirically verifiable. What he does not acknowledge is the *a priori* reality of being, specifically the Being-in-the-world of Jesus' disciples who experienced that occurrence. It is not the occurrence that experienced it; it was not the occurrence that was conditioned by the revelation, but the disciples who, as divinely in-breathed *nepshesh/psyche* beings, are naturally disposed to the possibility of infinitude, and who, therefore, experienced the necessity of the revelation as their own-most possibility and therefore as an historical event. It was first and foremost a “being event,” a disclosure, a showing of the risen Jesus himself who initiated the revelation to individuals who, like all human beings, are endowed with the dialectic of being as the synthesis of *nepshesh* and *basar*, possibility and necessity.

Barth distinguished two kinds of history, and in the massive *Church Dogmatics* he refers to them as “creaturely history” and “non-historical history” (somewhat comparable to Bultmann's differentiation between *Historie* and *Geschichte*).<sup>43</sup> Both kinds of history are involved in his interpretation of the Scriptures. The human agencies that God employs and whatever they might achieve are relegated to the cause and effect nexus of “creaturely history,” what he called “mere history,” history as “brute facts” in which event and meaning are divorced from each other.<sup>44</sup> God's actions in history, such as the creation, belong to the realm of “non-historical history,” beyond causality. The objective reality of *real history* is God's domain.<sup>45</sup> “This history is from the theological standpoint *the* history.”<sup>46</sup> “The history of salvation is *the* history.”<sup>47</sup> This *real history*, however, is nothing less than metahistory, and it is the domain within which Barth interprets the New Testament according to the early confessions of the Church, particularly the Nicene and the Chalcedonian Creeds, and concomitantly also the realm within which he reads his confessions-oriented interpretation of the New Testament into the Old Testament. Barth's *real history* is the sacred history of God's objective revelation in the Scriptures, and, as a *sui generis* supersensible reality, it transcends the empirical realm of *phenomena*. This is the knowledge of faith!

It is when we understand faith as knowledge that we understand it as man's orientation to God as an object. It was previously our second point that the positive relationship of man to God is created and established by God becoming and being its object of faith. But this takes the first and central place in the faith that is understood as knowledge.<sup>48</sup>

But what kind of knowledge is this faith that is directed toward God as an object? Barth's captivity to Enlightenment epistemology emerges here very clearly. Knowledge is the principle objective!

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43 See Barth's dialectical discussion of eternity as the source of time that is supreme and absolute: “His eternity is the prototype of time.” On the other hand, “... our time, relative time, itself created, is the form of existence of the creature.” *Church Dogmatics*, Volume III, Part I, *The Doctrine of Creation*; editors: G.W. Bromily and T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1958) 65-79; but especially 78-79. See also Richard R. Niebuhr, *Resurrection and Historical Reason: A Study of Theological Method* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957) 84-87.

44 *Church Dogmatics*, Volume III, Part I, *The Doctrine of Creation*, 79. Barth appears to have been affected by Kant's judgment that an investigation of past events can never attain to objective validity, for their being is dependent on testimony and not on immediate experience conceptualized by the categories of understanding.

45 *Church Dogmatics*, Volume III, Part II, *The Doctrine of Creation*, 536. “More than that, God's eternity is the eternity in which He did what was necessary for our being, for our deliverance and preservation, for securing us against destruction.”

46 *Church Dogmatics*, Volume III, Part I, *The Doctrine of Creation*, 59. The italics are Barth's.

47 *Church Dogmatics*, Volume III, Part I, *The Doctrine of Creation*, 60. The italics are Barth's.

48 *Church Dogmatics*, Volume II, Part I, *The Doctrine of God*, 13.

“Inasmuch as faith rests upon God's objectivity it is itself knowledge of God.”<sup>49</sup>

Miracles belong to this “non-historical history,” above all the resurrection of Jesus. “The Easter story (with, if you like, the story of the transfiguration and the story of the conversion of Saul as prologue and epilogue respectively) actually speaks of a present without any future, of an eternal presence of God in time. So it does not speak eschatologically.”<sup>50</sup> Jesus' resurrection does not signal the creation of anything new; as an event of revelation, it is simply “the pure presence of God.” “His [Jesus'] crucifixion is the event in which both the new time is established and the old fulfilled.”<sup>51</sup>

There is no eschatology in Barth's theology. Eschatology belongs to the realm of being. Barth has replaced eschatology by a Neo-Kantian orientation to knowledge. But it is not knowledge as the product of human thought, not knowledge as human consciousness has formed it through objectification. It is the objective knowledge that God has inspired in the Scriptures by the holy Spirit, an objective knowledge that is opposed to the human capacity of understanding. The world of the Bible is a “strange new world,” and upon entering it, one encounters an objective reality of truth in its content that is God's thoughts about human beings and not human thoughts about God.”

Specifically the church could and can in no sense of this concept [“of the rule of truth”] give itself the canon [of Scripture]. She cannot create it, as theologians occasionally have stated. She can only establish it as an already created and a subsequently given-to-her canon, according to the best knowledge and conscience, and in the risk and obedience of a faith judgment, but also in the entire relativity of a human knowledge of truth that God opened to human beings.<sup>52</sup>

The Bible, therefore, is directly and objectively the Word of God, and no hermeneutical theory is required for its interpretation. Inspired by God's Spirit, it can only be interpreted through the mediation of God's Spirit.

Barth's theology of revelation, culminating in the “pure presence of God” in the Easter event, appears to be an heroic effort to move the Christian faith from the domain of Enlightenment philosophy.<sup>53</sup> Ironically, however, this “non-historical history,” supposedly *real history* and differentiated from Kant's metaphysical *noumena* of practical reason, is nevertheless a metaphysical reality. Divorced from the realities of the objective world, Christianity is secured as the objective revelation of God to which human beings must subordinate themselves in order to escape eternal damnation. In other words, Barth has replaced the Enlightenment's subject/object dichotomy with a divinely-ordained subject/object dichotomy in which God inaugurates God's revelation as the Object by which human beings are constituted as the subject.<sup>54</sup>

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49 *Church Dogmatics*, Volume II, Part I, *The Doctrine of God*, 14.

50 *Church Dogmatics*, Volume I, Part II, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 114.

51 *Church Dogmatics*, Volume I, Part II, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 106.

52 *Church Dogmatics*, Volume I, Part II, *Die Lehre vom Wort Gottes*, 524. My translation of: Gerade die Kirche konnte und kann sich den Kanon in keinem Sinn dieses Begriffs selber geben. Sie kann ihn nicht “schaffen,” wie theologisch unbedachte Historiker wohl gelegentlich gesagt haben. Sie kann ihn nur als schon geschaffenen und ihr gegebenen Kanon nachträglich nach bestem Wissen und Gewissen, im Wagnis und im Gehorsam eines Glaubensurteils, aber auch in der ganzen Relativität einer menschlichen Erkenntnis der den Menschen von Gott eröffneten Wahrheit feststellen.

53 Barth's efforts to overcome Enlightenment philosophy in the face of Neo-Kantian epistemology and the subject/object breach are especially evident in *Church Dogmatics*, Volume II, Part I, in “The Knowledge of God,” 3-62 and “The Knowability of God,” 63-128.

54 See Klaus Rosenthal, *Die Überwindung des Subjekt-Objekt-Denkens als philosophisches und theologisches*

In his book, *Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert*, Barth faults Albrecht Ritschl for not succeeding in overcoming the Enlightenment.<sup>55</sup> Unlike Barth himself, he never seems to have experienced unrest (Unruhe) or anxiety in the context of the Enlightenment dominated philosophy and science. According to Barth's characterization, "Er steht – der Urtyp des national-liberalen deutschen Bürgers im Zeitalter Bismarcks – in unerhörter Eindeutigkeit und Sicherheit (wirklich mit beiden Füßen!) auf den Boden seines 'Lebensideals'."<sup>56</sup> But then how is Barth to be judged? To what extent did he succeed in overcoming the Enlightenment? In contrast to his predecessors who subjected the reality of the objective world to the subject, he subjected the subject to the objective reality of God's revelation.

Both Bultmann and Barth are guilty of subverting the dialectic of being. Bultmann prioritized the infinitude of the soul, divorcing it from the finitude of the body and its orientation to objectivity. Barth posited a transcendental Word of God that the infinitude of the soul and its capacities of possibility are unable to understand and that consequently require the mediating activity of the holy Spirit for intelligent comprehension. Neither of them escaped the Enlightenment's oppositional dualism of subject/object and its dialectical relationship to truth.

### **Beyond Bultmann and Barth**

According to the anthropology of the First Testament, human beings are a union of *nephesh* and *basar*, soul and flesh, and together in this indivisible duality they constitute the dialectic of being. Both ontology and epistemology are subject to this dialectic and to the ongoing dialogue of soul and flesh and their individual domains of possibility and necessity. Ontology, however, is prior to epistemology; being precedes knowing. The truth that is communicated by the writings of the New Testament, above all the four gospels and the seven letters of the Apostle Paul, is initiated by the ontological dialectic of being, and it has significant consequences for the interpretation of the eschatological realities of the kingdom of God, the Son of Man, and the Easter event of Jesus rising from the dead.

In any and every pyramidally constituted political economy, regardless of whatever form of government may establish it, the dialectic of being is acted upon in all who participate in it. Each individual in the social stratification of society is affected by his/her specific location within the descending order of power and privilege that determines the relative degree of possibility and necessity that will be experienced. Higher locations within its hierarchical structures offer greater power and privilege and therefore increase the measure of possibility while decreasing the realities of necessity. As power and privilege decrease in the descending socio-economic locations of a political economy, possibility diminishes and the burdens of necessity are intensified. When the Psalmist, reflecting on the glory of the creation, inquires, "What are human beings that you [God] are mindful of them?" the answer that is given is universal in its application to every human being,

You have made them little less than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You

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*Problem* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970) 103, for his analysis of Barth's endeavors to resolve the subject/object dichotomy. "Gott wird nicht Gegenstand als das Ergebnis der Objektivationsversuche des Menschen, sondern er schafft das Subjektsein des Menschen, in dem er sich selbst in seiner Offenbarung zum Gegenstand der Erkenntnis des Menschen macht."

55 Karl Barth, *Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert: Ihre Vorgeschichte und ihre Geschichte* (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1952) 599. Translation: "He stands – the original type of the national-liberal German citizen of the age of Bismarck – in the unheard of unambiguity and certainty (indeed with both feet!) on the ground of his life's ideal."

56 Barth, *Die protestantische Theologie*, 599.

have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet. (Psa. 8:5-6)

Societies subjected to and dispossessed by the powers of empire are divested of their sovereignty and power, and the majority of its individual members are profoundly diminished in their dialectic of being, robbed of their freedom to integrate the domains of the *nephesh* and the *basar* for a wholesome relationship of possibility and necessity. In the context of the succeeding empires of Assyria, Babylonia and Persia, Israel's inability to overthrow or repel the powers of empire evokes the cry of the apocalyptic prophet.

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence – as when fire kindles brushwood and causes water to boil – to make known your name to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence. (Isa. 64:1-2)

In this continuous succession of empire and empire power Jewish apocalypticism formulated its eschatological visions of “the kingdom of God” and “one like a human being who rides a cloud into heaven to be presented before the Ancient One” in order to receive “dominion, glory and kingship.” Resurrection is the eschatological complement of “the kingdom of God” and “the Son of Man.” Freedom, justice, peace, and equality are the objective of “the kingdom of God” and its divinely empowered community of “the Son of Man.”

In all four gospels Jesus is featured as “the Son of Man” actualizing this apocalyptic vision of “the kingdom of God” and drawing his disciples into these eschatological realities as his successors. The culminating event of Jesus rising from the dead and appearing to his disciples to commission them as the corporate community of “the Son of Man” to engage in a world-wide expansion of “the kingdom of God” is essentially an ontological reality. It is intimated in the tradition of the post-Easter appearances that Paul delivers to the Corinthian church in 1 Cor. 15:3-8

Christ died on behalf of our sins according to the Scriptures and he was buried and he has been resurrected on the third day according to the Scriptures, and he was seen (*ōphthē*) to Cephas, next to the Twelve; thereupon he was seen (*ōphthē*) to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, of whom the majority remain until now, but some fell asleep. Thereupon he was seen (*ōphthē*) to James, next to all the apostles; *and/but* (*de*) last of all, as being so to speak a miscarriage (a birth that violates the normal period of gestation: in the sense of “an untimely birth”) he was seen (*ōphthē*) to me.

The NRSV translates the aorist passive of *horan* (to see empirically), *ōphthē*, as “he appeared to,” but that does not convey the meaning of the aorist passive adequately. “He appeared to” rightly places the emphasis of the verb on the subject, the risen Jesus who initiates the events of appearances. But “appearances” in a Kantian or Post-Kantian age denote “things as they are in themselves;” they are not phenomena but “noumena” that transcend experience, and a priori synthetic judgments cannot apprehend them. Accordingly, the risen Jesus, as a being in itself, is a transcendent reality and cannot be grasped by Kantian principles of pure understanding. On the issue of appearing and appearance, Heidegger states,



Appearing is a *not-showing-itself*. But the 'not' we find here is by no means to be confused with the privative “not” which we used in defining the structure of semblance. What appears does *not* show itself; and anything which thus fails to show itself, is also something which can never be seen.<sup>57</sup>

The aorist passive *ōphthē* does not presuppose an objective experience that is organized by the epistemologically directed a priori concepts of pure reason, such as individual, substance, causality, etc. That epistemology establishes the subject, the observer of the experience, as the absolute originator of knowledge. At the same time, Heidegger's “Dasein” is not constitutive of the dialectic of being.

*Ōphthē*, followed by the names in the dative case, conveys a self-disclosure of Jesus. He is not merely a spirit or a ghost; the dualism of Greek anthropology cannot be presupposed here. It must necessarily be an unveiling in terms of the dialectic of being that is disclosed in the anthropology of the First Testament. The risen Jesus is showing himself as the constituted duality of *nephesh* (soul) and *sōma* (body) – to use Paul's term in 1 Cor. 15:35-44. It is not the former duality of *nephesh* and *basar* (soul and flesh), but the being of a duality that is discontinuous with the physical duality of Jesus of Nazareth before his death. The disciples are present in this self-disclosure of the risen Jesus in the duality of their dialectic of being. The risen Jesus in the dialectic of his being is the object of the disciples' experience, but he is activating it by showing himself to them. They are having an experience of Jesus' being, not the being of an object that is simply “present-at-hand,” but the being of a human being who was crucified and who, according to the law of Deut. 21:22-23 is cursed. Their experience of him is a priori in the sense that he, as the object of their experience, is originating it to them as the subjects of his self-revelation. He is showing himself to them by making them, the subjects, as the objects of his self-disclosure. As the subjects of this experience of unveiling, but at the same time also the object of its revelation, the disciples must necessarily be able to apprehend it in terms of the infinitude of their powers of possibility that is theirs as *nephesh*.

What the duality of Jesus' being, discontinuous with the former duality of his soul and body, was like is not revealed, but it must have been of a kind that enabled his disciples to recognize him. The problem of identity and recognition that it raises becomes a critical issue for subsequent generations, and it is particularly Lk. 24 that intimates that the act of breaking bread to the Emmaus disciples and the eating of a fish in the presence of all the disciples establishes the identity of the risen Jesus with the Jesus they had accompanied during his ministry.<sup>58</sup>

This ontological event of the risen Jesus' self-disclosure can only be given objectivity and become truth knowledge through its flesh and blood embodiment in the dialectic of being of the lives of those to whom Jesus showed himself. The four gospels presuppose it to occur in and through the corporate anthropological-christological reality of “the Son of Man” that Jesus embodied as he committed himself to actualizing the eschatological reality of “the kingdom of God” to begin the gradual termination of empire and empire power. As the gospels also lucidly communicate, Jesus, as “the Son of Man,” drew his disciples into its community identity in order to insure the continuation of the actualization of “the kingdom of God” throughout the world for the ultimate end of empires and the concomitant establishment of justice, love, and reconciliation (Matt. 28:16-20).

Consequently, what has been called “Christianity” for two thousand years should not have become a new religion and originally was never intended to be a new religion, separate from Judaism.

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57 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. By John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) 52.

58 See Niebuhr, *Resurrection and Historical Reason*, 172-181.

It is the history of two thousand years of “Christianity” that has destroyed so much of what the Second Testament proclaims and teaches. As the fulfillment of the First Testament, it is presupposed to be God's New Israel that is divinely willed to include the humanity of the whole world.