HISTORICAL CRITERIA AND THEIR APPLICATION IN THE GOSPEL CRITICISM OF DAVID FRIEDRICH STRAUSS

HISTORICAL CRITERIA AND THEIR APPLICATION IN THE GOSPEL CRITICISM OF DAVID FRIEDRICH STRAUSS

By

BEN WIEBE, B.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

September, 1982

MASTER OF ARTS (1982)
(Religious Studies)

McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Historical Criteria and Their Application in the Gospel Criticism of David Friedrich Strauss

AUTHOR: Ben Wiebe, B.A. (Abilene Christian University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor Ben F. Meyer

NUMBER OF PAGES: 91

DEDICATION

To my wife, Patti

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The question which this thesis proposes to answer is: on what basis did David Friedrich Strauss, in his The Life of Jesus Critically Examined (1835-36), form his judgments on the non-historicity of traditions about Jesus?

Part of the answer is available in Strauss's explicit criteria of non-historicity (e.g., irreconcilability of events with known and universal laws, internal inconsistency, coherence with existing ideas prevailing in the circles from which the narrative came, etc.). Part of it, however, lies in the influence on his gospel criticism of Strauss's ulterior convictions and purposes (e.g., his prior agreements with Hegel, his conception of myth, his practise of the dialectical method of criticism). This requires giving an account of both the formulation of the criteria for judgments of non-historicity and Strauss's actual practise of gospel criticism. The thesis is conceived as a preliminary study pertinent to the contemporary question of adequate criteria for historical-Jesus research.

INTRODUCTION

Certain great literary works so focus the questions of their time that thereafter everyone must deal with them in a new way. The masterwork of David Friedrich Strauss, The Life of Jesus Critically Examined,[1] falls in this category. The book was an object of passionate critique throughout the lifetime of its author.[2] Critics immediately pointed out certain inadequacies, but Strauss's thoroughgoing and comprehensive criticism was not to be set aside. Many condemned its destructive impact. A more thoughtful evaluation came from Strauss's former teacher, Ferdinand Christian Baur, who summed up the work as both negative and necessary.[3] Two generations later, Albert Schweitzer could divide the history of historical-Jesus research into two periods: before and after Strauss.[4]

Today it may not be possible to follow Strauss, but it is still impossible to bypass him. The questions with which he grappled have not passed from the scene. The nature of the gospel accounts and the criteria for evaluating them remain live issues. Strauss's forthright critical theory and comprehensive practise still deserve to be taken account of.

The aim of this inquiry will be to delineate the perspective and the criteria that inform his criticism. Both the critical theory and the relation between theory and practice merit attention. This suggests a study in two parts: (1) the formulation of Strauss's announced criteria for judgments of

non-historicity, and (2) their relation to his actual practice of gospel criticism. To the extent that a certain disparity comes to light between the two, the aim will be to illuminate the source of this disparity.

A. The Context of Strauss's Thought

To understand the path Strauss followed in formulating his criteria of gospel criticism, it is essential to note the influences that formed his thinking. Since he wrote The Life of Jesus at the young age of twenty-six, shortly after completing his formal studies, the book may be seen as the fruition of his educational experience.[5] Strauss had absorbed the new critical directions in which theology was moving in his time. In his book on Jesus he brought together these various lines of criticism as no one had yet done.[6]

Baur had been a formative influence. Strauss was a student under Baur at the Protestant preparatory school at Blaubeuren (1821-1825) and also later, as both student and teacher moved on to Tubingen (1825-1831). Already at Blaubeuren Baur presented his students with material on symbolism and myth in antiquity.[7]

As a student in Tübingen, Strauss pursued a special interest in mysticism and spiritualism, together with a group of friends. It was shortly after this that he read for the first time Schleiermacher's Glaubenslehre; it served as a transition from his mystical interests to the rigor of the Hegelian dialectic. Strauss was introduced to Hegel through a tutor lecturing on

Hegel's thought. He and a number of friends soon formed a small circle and began a thorough study of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit.[9] Indeed, he regarded Hegel's thought with so much esteem that, in order to resolve certain questions for himself, Strauss made plans for a period of study under Hegel. He took steps to do so following the completion of his educational program in Tübingen. As it turned out, Hegel died before he had the opportunity. Strauss, though disappointed, stayed on in Berlin to study with a group of Hegel's disciples. While there he also read critically a transcription of Schleiermacher's lectures on the life of Jesus.[10]

It is evident that these figures -- Baur, Schleiermacher, and Hegel -- were important in the development of the thought of Strauss. This is not yet to indicate the shape of their impact on the intellectual life of Strauss. All three thinkers, chastened by the Age of Reason (1618-1789),[11] represent the all-pervading outlook of idealism. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), by means of his cognitional theory, presented an alternative to the scepticism marking the end of the Age of Reason, and established a new direction for philosophy: the turn to the subject. Truth in idealism is evident, not in events or the actualities of existence, but in the values and in the philosophy with which man views the world.[12]

Strauss received something from each, though the influence of Schleiermacher was more defined than either that of Baur or Hegel. In the basic structure of their thought, these three men

were quite distinct, though at certain points their influence coalesced. That this is so is apparent, for example, respecting their view of the relation between God and the world. For Schleiermacher a pious consciousness is awareness of the Infinite in all that is. Religion is equated with existence in the Infinite, an existence in which the self is mingled with the whole.[13] In his Symbolik und Mythologie Baur speaks of history generally, in its widest sense, as "a revelation of Divinity."[14] Historical process is the revelation or self-realization of God.[15] On the relation of God and the world, Hegel posited ultimate reality as the absolute spirit. History is the absolute spirit's continual revelation of its own nature. This spirit, manifested in all reality, is in process of returning from alienation to unity through progressive moments of self-realization. Absolute spirit not only permeates the world, it is the permeated world. The movement of the spirit toward self-realization takes place in the various facets of society or culture such as the state, art, literature, religion and philosophy.[16]

Though each of these thinkers is original and distinct, they converge in the tendency that would erase the significance of God as both immanent in and transcendent in relation to the world. This is to highlight only one area of thought, but it is enough to indicate what profound implications this thought has for the whole of theology.

B. The Life of Jesus: Plan and Occasion

Strauss's book on the life of Jesus turned out very differently from what he had first planned. Both in the stimulus that impelled Strauss to write, and in the plan or design, his purposes and his approach to the gospels come to light. The plan involved working out the relation of the concept, derived from Hegel, to the gospel history. It comprised three parts: (1) a positive or traditional part, with an account of the life of Jesus according to the gospels, and what this life meant for the faithful, and the mediation of these two aspects in the second article of the Apostles' creed; (2) a negative or critical part which would have "for the most part" annulled the life-story of Jesus as history; (3) a third part, which would re-establish dogmatically what had been destroyed critically. As it turned out the second, or critical, part grew ever more extensive in his preparatory studies and became the substance of the book. Material he had thought to put in the first part he now used in introducing each of the critical sections. Finally, the second article of the Apostle's Creed was used in the concluding dogmatic reflection.[17]

Strauss formed the definite plan for writing The Life of Jesus in the context of his studies of Hegel (1832) and his studies of Schleiermacher's transcribed lectures on the life of Jesus.[18] His critical response to Schleiermacher turned Strauss from mysticism and spiritualism to Hegel's dialectic and gave the final impetus to the writing of his own book. This

period, beginning with the years at Tübingen, through the time of preparation and of actual composition, was one of religious search and struggle for Strauss. He could no longer clearly affirm the faith and practise of the church, but neither could he simply leave. He continued to draw his spiritual sustenance from this source. The focus of his quest was on "a consciousness of the underlying identity of the divine and the human, the infinite and the finite."[19] This background indicates a certain interest or perspective. How did these interests of Strauss give shape to his questions?

Strauss began with the conviction that the gospel accounts were received by the early church as (1) records of events historical in character, and (2) a divine revelation in Jesus Christ.[20] With the aim of upholding this understanding, tight gospel harmonies were often produced in Strauss's day to show the complete agreement of the different gospels. These attempts, often far-fetched, created a sense that the reality must be something other than the representation. The harmonists certainly did not work for a historically intelligible outline of the life of Jesus. This created a breach waiting to be filled.[21] On the other hand, rationalism had grown up as an alternative for interpreting the gospels. The position of rationalism was that the gospels represent history, but a history to be interpreted within the confines of the "natural". Events such as the miracles cannot be interpreted according to the original intention. As events having their source beyond the human, they are ruled out.

Rationalism called for "re-interpretation." Strauss represented both the interpretation of the early church and the rationalistic interpretation as forms of "presupposition" that cannot satisfy the requirements of science.[22] According to Strauss both must be given up, "and the inquiry must first be made whether in fact, and to what extent, the ground on which we stand in the Gospels is historical."[23] The relation between presupposition and interpretation is one thing, the objective he sets is another. Both the criteria he announced and his actual critical practise must be evaluated in their context.

I

FORMULATION OF THE CRITERIA

The criteria, as Strauss gives them, have a notable order and focus. The argument of Strauss is that the record of the events in the gospels does not correspond to actual happening. The question is, by what criteria is this to be determined?[24] (1) "When the narration is irreconcilable with the known and universal laws which govern the course of events." According to these laws, based on "just philosophical conceptions and all credible experience," all events are to be determined within an "aggregate of finite causalities" and their interaction.[25] Strauss includes here the laws of causality, succession (or development), and psychology. (2) "An account which shall be regarded as historically valid, must neither be inconsistent with itself, nor in contradiction with other accounts."[26] Here the issue of contradictions within and between accounts is raised. A further aspect of this is the problem of differences in accounts; this may be variation between accounts in the description of an event, or the variation may be a record of an event given in one account but not in another. (3) If the form of the narrative is poetical or hymnic, and the words of the participants are more skillful and enthusiastic than is indicated by their background, this cannot be historical. (4) "If the content of a narrative strikingly accords with certain ideas existing and prevailing within the circle from which the narrative proceeded" it is more

or less probable that such a narrative is not historical.[27]

According to Strauss himself, a single criterion, by itself, would hardly ever do more than show that a record was possibly or probably unhistorical. It takes the concurrence of several of them to bring about a more definite result. Indeed, it is the concurrence beyond a certain number of these factors that represents the attainment of certainty.[28]

A. Criteria and Ulterior Purpose

What is the meaning of the criteria and how do they correspond to the intention of Strauss in his work? A satisfactory answer would require some elucidation of the background to Strauss's criteria. It is clear from his statement that "philosophical studies" determined his work. A basic matter for Strauss in approaching his work on the life of Jesus was the distinction in philosophy between Vorstellung (image or representation) and Begriff (concept). The contrast is at home in Idealism. The systematic category of "idea" or concept was of central importance in the thought of F. C. Baur.[29] It is formative in his Christology and in his whole understanding of religion. Concept, as an expression or actualization of thought, constitutes the "life" of the Spirit; it is the means by which the Spirit realizes itself. And this is concretely expressed in history. Concept for Baur is not an abstract rational process, but a vital reality that makes possible the relationships of life. In this understanding Baur was influenced by Schleiermacher and Schelling.[30] Strauss learned from Baur; but he also

drank at the fountain of Schelling for himself. After reading Schleiermacher's Glaubenslehre, Strauss found it instructive, yet lacking "scientifically"; he could not accept the reconciliation between theology and philosophy presented in the work. At this point Strauss, with his friends, turned to Hegel. With pre-eminent interest Strauss considered Hegel's distinction between representation (Vorstellung) and concept (Begriff) for the possibilities it offered in understanding the gospel accounts.[31]

Though there remained a certain ambiguity in the distinction between Vorstellung and Begriff in Hegel, there is clarity about the superiority and value of Begriff. It is by means of Begriff that one attains to reality. Indeed, Begriff is reality. Inherent in this philosophical construction is a certain disregard of history as a source of knowledge. Both the dialectical movement of the spirit, and the way in which the spirit realizes itself in the whole, relativizes the meaning of all particular events. It is true that, according to Hegel, the absolute spirit manifests itself in history. But the order that Hegel gives to this manifestation identifies the superiority of concept in contrast to representation. This spriit manifests itself, "first, as art, in the objective form of representation (Vorstellung); lastly, as philosophy, in the absolute form of pure idea or thought (Begriff), wherein the opposition of subject and object was resolved."[33] Religion is the expression of absolute truth by means of "representation". According to Hegel, in the dialectical movement of the spirit, the concept takes up

within itself the essential meaning of the image or representation on a higher and more adequate level.

The issue, as it appeared to Strauss, was, what options does this set for the interpretation of the gospel accounts? In the words of Strauss, "The most important question...concerns the nature of the relation of the historical data of the Bible, especially the Gospels; to the concept. Does the historical character adhere to the content [of Christian faith], thus demanding recognition from the concept [Begriff] as well as the [Vorstellung], since the content is the same for both, or is it reduced to the mere form of imagination, to which conceptual thinking is not bound?"[34] Here Strauss moved beyond Hegel. What was left unclear in Hegel, Strauss brought to a decisive point. On the one hand, Strauss accorded the same ultimate content to the religious image (Vorstellung) and philosophical concept (Begriff); on the other hand, he believed that representation and concept must be kept strictly separate. At the same time, he believed that the latter could replace the former. He inferred that the gospel account was a representation of a truth that could be better expressed in philosophical concepts.[35] By this means Strauss solved his problem with Schleiermacher. Philosophy need not any longer be coordinated with theology, as Schleiermacher had sought to do, but could supersede it. The failure by Schleiermacher to properly hold philosophy and theology together was now to be overcome by means of Hegel's distinction of representation and concept. Strauss inferred, on the basis of Hegel,

that philosophy transcends theology and takes up the essential truth of theology, traditional theology can therefore be left behind.[36] By way of Schelling and the idealists, aided and abetted by Baur, Strauss learned to look for the idea expressed in the myth; now by means of Hegel, he learned to look for the concept in the prepresentation (the gospel accounts).[37]

Another factor crucial for Strauss in his approach to the gospels, and decisive for the whole of this thought, is the philosophy of divine immanence. Here Baur, Schleiermacher, and Hegel converged. There was ultimately no distinction between God and the world, between God and humanity. Gotthold Müller presents this conception in its twofold form as the basis of Strauss's world view.[38] He expresses Strauss's view as a "monistic ac- ceptance of an ultimate unity between God and the world", and as a corresponding element there is a "definite (mystical understanding) immanence of time and eternity."[39] This view of the identity of God and the world flows from a number of thinkers, notably Schelling.[40] And this is then absorbed in important ways by those who influenced Strauss most directly. Not only the intellectual drive of Strauss, but also his ardent religious quest was "for a consciousness of the underlying identity of the divine and the human, the infinite and the finite."[41] The implications of this view were well summed up by Strauss in the concluding dogmatic section.

> When it is said of God that he is a Spirit, and of man that he also is a Spirit, it follows that the two are not essentially distinct. To speak more particularly, it is

> the essential property of a spirit, in the distribution of itself into distinct personalities, to remain identical with itself, to possess itself in another than itself. Hence the recognition of God as a spirit implies, that God does not remain as a fixed and immutable Infinite encompassing the Finite, but enters into it, produces the Finite, Nature, and the human mind, merely as a limited manifestation of himself, from which he eternally returns into unity. As man, considered as a finite spirit, limited to his finite nature, has not truth; so God, considered exclusively as an infinite spirit, shut up in his infinitude, has not reality. The infinite spirit is real only when it discloses itself in finite spirits; as the finite spirit is true only when it merges itself in the infinite. The true and real existence of spirit, therefore, is neither in God by himself, nor in man by himself, but in the God-man; neither in the infinite alone, nor in the finite alone, but in the interchange of impartation and withdrawal between the two, which on the part of God is revelation, on the part of man religion."[42]

Strauss expressed the unity of God and man in Hegelian terms. He viewed God not as the transcendent Creator of the universe, but as the infinite (impersonal) spirit which manifests itself in the finite forms of the natural world and the human spirit.[43] The philosophy of divine immanence acknowledged only one reality. It had direct implications for Christology and the interpretation of the gospel accounts. The immanental theism of Strauss put out of bounds the traditional understanding of the historical Jesus as the incarnate Son of God. The distinction between "concept" and "representation" made possible an interpretation of Christology without dependence on the particular founding events of Christianity.[44]

This new interpretation transformed Christology, effecting the identity of God with humanity. Even the thesis, represented in some lines of Hegelian thought, that the divine-human

unity must once have appeared in an actual historical individual so as to serve as the basis for this ideal in popular consciousness, could only be foreign matter in the system of Strauss. The philosophy that identified God and humanity required that the full manifestation of the divine-human unity not appear in the form of one historical exemplar. Indeed, that full manifestation cannot take place in this singular way.[45] It is worth noting the form the argument takes in Strauss.

> If reality is ascribed to the idea of the unity of the divine and human nature, is this equivalent to the admission that this unity must actually have been once manifested, as it never had been, and never more will be, in one individual?
>
> This is indeed not the mode in which the Idea realizes itself; it is not want to lavish all its fullness on one examplar, and be niggardly towards all others - to express itself perfectly in that one individual, and imperfectly in all the rest: it rather loves to distribute its riches among a multiplicity of exemplars which reciprocally complete each other - in the alternate appearance and suppression of a series of individuals. And is this not true realization of the idea? Is not the idea of the unity of the divine and human natures a real one in a higher sense, when I regard the whole race of mankind as its realization, then when I single out one man as such a realization? Is not an incarnation of God from eternity, a truer one than an incarnation limited to a particular point of time?[46]

In the context of Strauss's immanental theism the central truth for Christianity can only be the divine incarnation in humanity as a whole, not a single historical figure. Thus, the path for Christology, marked out by Strauss, proceeds from the Christ-idea rather than the Christ-event.

In this light, the intention of Strauss comes into view as one to show that Christology, based on the historicity of the

Christ-event, cannot be sustained critically any longer, And it need not be attempted any longer since the truth of the matter lies elsewhere. Accordingly, the real interest for Strauss is not that of analyzing the gospel accounts in order to determine their historical character.[47] Strauss does not deny that there are historical materials to be found in the gospels. But he makes nothing of them. Strauss has no criteria for locating historical materials.[48] The criteria he presents are criteria for non-historicity. And this simply reflects the negative thrust of his work.

What are the antecedents for the way the criteria exclude the possibility of divine action (miracles) as part of history? Strauss refers to laws "agreeing with all just philosophical conceptions and credible experience" in this connection.[49] As well, he makes prominent reference to science; judgment based on science rejects the miraculous.[50] There is the view by Backhaus that a strict scientific method, of a positivist nature, determined his outlook. Natural science and philosophy are closely linked for Strauss.[51] But this does not settle the matter of how Strauss arrived at the formulation of his judgment excluding the miraculous. That science could be appealed to in order to accredit his project was of undoubted importance. But the basic consideration here, once more, appears to be the philosophy of immanence. At this point, also, the influence of Baur, Schleiermacher, and Hegel converged. Accepting the doctrine of divine immanence means rejecting the possibility of transcendent divine

action (miracles) in any traditional sense. Miracle necessarily implies a God independent from creation. Strauss is clear that "miracles are a contradiction...of the divine agency" according to "just philosophical" conceptions.[52] In an extended statement he presents his argument:

> God works directly in the world as a whole, but only indirectly on each individual object in it, through the mediation of his workings in every other individual object, i.e. through the laws of nature. When we take this view, then the verdict on the historical worth of the biblical history is no different from that considered above. The miracles which God works for Moses, Jesus, and through them, are in no way secondary products of his direct working in the whole, but presuppose a direct influence in the individual object and, in so far, are in opposition to the usual kind of divine activity in the world. Now the supernatural view presupposed an exception to this kind of activity, valid only for the sphere of biblical history. That is a presupposition which we with our standpoint (this is the critical research which has no presuppositions - a claim which we make for the present investigation...) cannot share. Our standpoint allows the same laws to hold sway in every sphere of being and activity; and therefore where a narrative runs contrary to the laws of nature, it must be regarded as unhistorical."[53]

This makes it apparent that the point of departure is Hegelian philosophy and the conception of divine immanence. The appeal to science is made in order to give "objective" basis to the inquiry; it is also used to discount the validity of other views. The view of Strauss that all reality is the development of the immanent divine spirit allowed for no divine action, such as miracles, in the traditional Christian sense.[54]

In the view of the way Strauss puts the issues, the area of interest is that of presupposition. The formulaton of the criteria itself raises this issue of presupposition in relation

to interpretation. According to Strauss, presuppositions are simply negative, a barrier to understanding. In this connection, Strauss saw himself as especially fitted for his task. The main requirement is to work without presupposition (according to science). Without this "no amount of learning will suffice to achieve anything in the domain of criticism."[55] Specifically this means "the internal liberation of the feelings and intellect from certain religious and dogmatical presuppositons; and this the author early attained by means of philosophical studies."[56] Strauss is concise in making his point, "If theologians regard this absence of presupposition from his work as unchristian, he regards the believing presuppositions of theirs as unscientific."[57] To conclude, he says that he will treat some of the same subjects theologians treat; still, he will "nowhere depart from the seriousness of science."[58]

The contention that in his work Strauss proceeds without presupposition bears examination. This is part of the whole issue of the relation of presupposition to interpretation. To the extent that this is a recognition that presuppositions held rigidly or unwittingly may be a barrier to understanding this consideration is important. Insofar as it represents a call for tested methods, appropriate to the matter to be known, Strauss has a point. At the same time, the conjunction between these methods and techniques with the purposes and interests of those using them must be kept in mind.

Examination of the function of presupposition can begin with the nature of inquiry itself, by taking account of how it proceeds. Any inquiry calls for the asking and answering of certain kinds of questions; this is the nature of historical inquiry. The process is one of moving from the known to the unknown. The knowns are selected as they provide the means of an approach to the unknown. In turn the unknown is selected for the sake of some gain in knowledge with the view of converting the unknown into the known.[59] This applies whether the question is about the identity of some historical figure or the date of a New Testament book. What must not be missed is that the selection of the unknown to be known is a result of purpose. This purpose maybe of any kind; in the history of the inquiry about the historical Jesus the purposes have widely varied. Relative to the pursuit of this kind of historical inquiry, such purposes are presuppositions.[60]

A second aspect of this consideration involves the answering of questions. This takes place by the forming of hypotheses or possible answers. The range of hypotheses or possible answers "is established and limited by what the historian conceives as possible. The judgments of possibility are presuppositions."[61] On both counts, it is clear, Strauss proceeds on the basis of presupposition: First, he moves forward in search of answers to questions on the basis of certain matters he presupposes as knowns; these knowns are set out in relation to the unknown to be known as knowns. Second, by his criteria he pre-

scribes the limits of his inquiry:[62] it is not without significance that the criteria are criteria of non-historicity. From still another standpoint the criteria place definite limits on a range of that which is conceived as possible within the scope of his inquiry.

Before proceeding further, a definition of the function of two phrases used by Strauss in the first criterion are in order. First, the definite anterior understanding of what is historically possible is closely correlated with "scientic truth". Particularly in the first criterion the appeal to "the known and universal laws which govern the course of events," and the appeal to "all credible experience", are assumed by Strauss as generally accepted postulates. Inasmuch as they refer to the dependable regularity, which makes science itself possible, the appeal to "universal laws" has evident validity. The problem comes in settling the function of these laws; is this a way of referring to the origin of events or to the regularity of events? It appears that unless the starting point is that the universe is a closed system, they have no bearing on the origin of events. They do not produce events; rather, they prescribe the pattern to which events must conform. The meaning of miracle is not the suspension of the pattern to which events conform; but of introducing new events into that pattern. Without the presupposition that the universe is a closed system, miracles need not be seen as "arbitrary" as Strauss views them, but can be seen to express the unity of reality at some deeper and more comprehensive level.

The second element, according to Strauss, that precludes the possibility of miracles is "all credible human experience." Related to the statement about "universal laws", this judgment appears to be based once more on the presupposition that the universe is a closed system. It is clear that all reports of miracles are false if it is already established that miracles cannot occur. The argument moves in a circle.

This becomes a matter of how experience shall be evaluated; what shall count as "credible human experience?" But this evaluation only has a point if pre-judgments are not allowed to foreclose investigation. Strauss presents what, for him is a crucial consideration in the introduction to his project. Referring to Christian as well as other sacred writings, he says, "the fundamental ideas and opinions in these early writings fail to be commensurate with a more advanced civilization."[64] Fundamentally, it comes down to a difference in awareness between a history in scripture of events in which the divine enters without "intermediation" into the human, and a growing recognition of a "chain of causes and effects connecting natural phenomena with each other."[65] The view of Strauss is represented in the statement that the scriptures are "the production of an infant and scientific age; and treat, without reserve of divine interventions, in accordance with the conceptions and phraseology of that early period."[66] The condition of "impartial" interpretation, according to Strauss, can only be combined with the awareness of this difference in perspective between writer and interpreter,

between culture then and now. "The Christian consciousness ... means nothing else than the advanced religious culture of our age, which cannot appropriate the antiquated ideas of the Bible."[67]

This makes it apparent that the standard for what can be accepted or regarded as credible is modern "enlightened," human experience.[68] In this, of course, Strauss was simply participating in the Enlightenment perspective. In the context of the Enlightenment, the concept of the historical and what is historically possible, developed on the basis of man and his ability to calculate and make history.[69] It is an understanding that operates on the basis of analogy; probability for a past event is recognized on the basis of what presently happens or can be experienced.

As an instrument in the learning process, and as a methodological principle of historical research, analogy has a place of evident importance. Analogy, in confronting a matter difficult of understanding, comparatively opaque, allows the matter to be conceived and understood by the investigator in terms of what may be presently known; is present knowledge merely a matter of sense experience? Thus, analogy cannot ultimately avoid the question of the nature of knowledge, and what it is that grounds analogy. In any case, analogies with which the investigator seeks to understand the content of the past "as an expression of possible human behavior always arise out of an already given world of expressions in which the historian is at home, and never

from a value-free sense experience."[71]

The principle of analogy itself provides the capability of overcoming a constriction in inquiry about the past. For access in knowledge by analogy need not be merely by recognizing only the similar and common elements amid the dissimilarities in events and expressions of life. Real advance in knowledge is more than a recognition of correlations in events and phenomena; it is also the recognition of the dissimilar and the new. In this way analogy provides certain footholds, on the basis of something already illuminated "with respect to the thing in question during the process of knowing, to the structure of something which had remained in the dark until then."[72] The constriction of historical-critical inquiry takes place if analogy, instead of being used appropriately from case to case, is brought into conjunction with a world view that postulates a homogeneity of all reality (in which the universe is viewed as a closed system). This leads of itself to the whole question of the relation of Strauss's criteria and his view of science.

It cannot be said that science was actually the basis for his world view;[73] nevertheless, for Strauss science and philosophy have equality of value and stand in direct correlation.[74] Strauss considered scientific knowledge to be the absolute truth, coincident with reality as a whole.[75] This means if there is a place for theology, it is as part of this whole circumscribed by the truth of science. The question that arises is how Christian faith can still proceed on the basis of its own truth. This sets

up what may be called the modern Chrstian dilemma: "the incompatibility between intellectual honesty and traditional Christian faith. For the heritage of Christian belief affirms as indispensable what the heritage of modern culture excludes as impossible."[76] If the alternatives are accepted as they are represented in Strauss, Christian theology is reduced to a series of a salvage operations.[77] But if, contrary to Strauss, this scientific knowledge has its own history, limited both by the finitude of the observer and by its communication as knowledge, then other possibilities present themselves.

What Pannenberg says about the eighteenth century is true of Strauss in the nineteenth, the awareness is not present that these truths of reason (philosophy) of its own age are themselves also historically conditioned.[78] There is a failure in recognizing the limits of knowledge and of science. Kant's critique of reason already showed that the insight that reason gains is determined by the scope of a "plan" of its own, providing access to answers limited according to the questions posed by reason.[79]

The result is that the objective truth of science only becomes possible when reason constructs a preliminary definition of an horizon, a course of questioning in which a certain entity is brought to light as object under a particular aspect. What has already been said about presupposition in relation to inquiry is true here. The plan, or the hypothesis, sets the limits for the questioning which nature must answer, while setting aside other questions as irrelavent (to this particular plan). The

objectivity of the perception and judgment is thus always relative to the perspective under which a piece of reality is studied. It becomes apparent that the method cannot really be separated from the subject.[80] For scientific reasons as well as ethical reaons, to qoute Jürgen Moltmann, "the identification of the objective truth of a particular perspective with absolute truth has shown itself to be an error - an error over the conditions of the possibility of scientific objectivity. Objective truth remains objective truth, but it is objectively demonstrable that objective truth is not absolute truth, but rather a conditioned truth."[81]

This breaks open the dilemma represented in Strauss; the contrast between the encompassing "objective truth of science" and Christian faith as "presupposition." It is evident that the approach which questions the substance of Christian faith always brings a certain historical view of the world to bear in the questioning. The latter must be subjected to questioning in the process of understanding as surely as the Christian faith is subjected to historical questioning.

B. The Function and Meaning of Myth

If the gospel accounts are not to be interpreted according to their original intention, the issue still remains, how are they to be interpreted? Strauss was quite clear, "the matters narrated in these books must be viewed in a light altogether different from that in which they were regarded by the authors themselves."[82] With the absolute distinction between what Jesus said and did and what the gospels report him to have said and done, the stage is set for a reformulation of the meaning of these accounts. Both the supernaturalists and the rationalists maintained an historical basis for their interpretation of the gospels. The differences between them came to focus in the understanding of the miracles. The supernaturalists interpreted them as instances of immediate divine action, the rationalists interpreted accounts of the miraculous as misapprehensions by the original witnesses; miracles, according to the rationalists, were in any case to be explained on a naturalistic basis. According to Strauss, the first interpretation was extreme and lacked the credentials of reason (while leaving the accounts intact); the second was tendentious, often descending to the level of the absurd.[83] The method of Strauss is to move through the supernaturalistic and the rationalistic interpretation of each incident in the gospels. In the process, he uses one interpretation against the other in order to show that both are impossible. Strauss presents the mythical interpretation as the way around the impasse.[84] In this move, Strauss went beyond contem-

porary tradition both in Hegelianism and the prevailing systems of interpretation. Interpretation is to be concerned, not with the substance of the account, but with the form of the account. The critical significance of Strauss's move was to shift the issue from event to account. In the words of Strauss, "we have neither miracles to wonder at, on the one hand, nor deceptions to unmask on the other; but simply the language of a former age to translate into that of our own day."[85]

From the standpoint of Strauss, the advantages of the mythical interpretation are: (1) in this way the narratives can be maintained;[86] and (2) by means of the Hegelian distinction of representation and concept, the mythical can be transcended and the "idea which resides in them, and which alone constitutes their vitality and spirit," can be preserved.[87]

Strauss saw no clear way of distinguishing myth from history in the gospels; at the same time, myth is used to signify the unhistorical.[88] Strauss sought to define the category of myth more closely by providing a classification of types of myths.

(1) Evangelical myth is the product of an idea. These ideas as the basis for myth may be messianic ideas or expectations. In its "pure" form the idea is the substance of the narrative (i.e. unrelated to Jesus). Or myth may be modified by a general impression left by Jesus.

(2) Historical myth is the result of development from individual facts. "Pure" myths are a direct expression of

religious imagination, "historical" myths are expressions of religious imagination, but influenced to a greater or lesser extent by historical events and persons.

(3) Those narratives which are indefinite, with no clear connection, and bearing the marks of long oral tradition, or again, those narratives which are vivid and pictorial in nature are more appropriately viewed as legend.[89]

Strauss was certainly not the first to make use of the category of myth in interpreting scripture. Myth was on the horizon as an important option for interpretation. Speaking for his time Strauss can say, "mythology, now become far more general and more prolific in its results, exerted an increasing influence on the views taken of biblical history."[90] Strauss, in summary form, presents a history of the use of myth as a category in interpretation.[91] Strauss traces the various stages in the use of myth in interpretation as they are associated with noted scholars in the fields of philology, philosophy, and theology.[92] The more general investigations of myth by C. G. Heyne formed the basis of J. G. Eichhorn's early investigation of the biblical narrative. J. P. Gabler further developed the mythical interpretation, providing a more thorough grounding. But it was G. L. Bauer that provided the clearest exposition of the mythical view. Strauss largely followed him in the delineation and classification of types of myth.[93] Another person with significant in-

fluence on Strauss was de Wette, with his insistence on the futility of the effort to separate the historical element from the mythical in a narrative (myth usually has non-historical basis).[94] They were important precursors who established myth as a central category of critical Biblical studies.[95] But the position of Strauss is not simply to be derived from theirs. They were largely concerned with individual myths. Strauss is concerned with the mythical principle. Strauss is dintinct in the way he derives the gospel narratives from the Old Testament stories by means of a mythologizing process. Thus certain theologians, including Schleiermacher, emphasized mythical elements in the gospels, such as the birth and infancy stories. But they did not deal with the question of how these stories originated.[96] From the first, in his acquaintance with the writings of Hegel, the basic issue was the correlation of myth with Vorstellung (representation or image). This provided the basis for a comprehensive conception of myth. The actual elements of the formation of myth Strauss derived from other sources. Several developments point the way to the final position Strauss adopted. An article in Henke's Magazin makes the point, in dealing with the story of the virgin birth, that it was derived from Is. 7:14 (in an atmosphere in which the belief was common that the Messiah was to be born of a virgin). An anonymous work, probably by J.C.A. Grohmann, entitled Revelation and Mythology (1799), emphasized the expectations and opinions of the common people according to which the gospel accounts were formed. But a more important

factor was a short anonymous article appearing in 1816.[97] In it ideas only cautiously expressed before were given free reign. The author would have nothing to do with half-measures in the applications of the mythical principle, demanding a consistent carrying through of mythical interpretation in the New Testament.[98] Myth was presented as the key to the interpretation of the Biblical narrative. This provided a clear standard for Strauss to interpret the entire gospel narrative by means of the mythical principle.

As for the actual formation of myth, Strauss provides some insight into his understanding of the process.[99] Strauss sees both Judaism and Christianity alike possessing a mythical character. It is part of the inherent nature of religion defined as perception of truth in images (representation). It is only among the most primitive peoples that this religious feeling is still confined subjectively; as it becomes more definite the feelings are expressed objectively. Objects of the sensible world, sun, moon, and mountains come to be revered. In this development "a new world of mere imagination is created, a sphere of divine existences whose relations to one another, actions, and influences, can be represented only after human analogy, and therefore as temporal and historical."[100] And even if God is conceived as a unity, his being and power are considered in terms of a series of actions; events and human actions only attain a religious significance "by the admission of divine interpositions and miracles."[101] Myth, then, is the expression of a common

consciousness in which the ideal combines with poetry to take the form of narration.[102] Myth is the "necessary vehicle of expression for the first efforts of the human mind."[103]

Including the Old and New Testament in the category of myth, Strauss begins by noting that the earliest records of all peoples are mythical. Certainly the scriptures cannot be regarded as an exception.[104] At first this may appear to bar myth from the New Testament, since myth is identified with the primitive period before written records existed. But this is obviated by the consideration that for long there were no written records of the gospel. So stories arose and were embellished in the process of time. What is more, as Strauss sees it, the basis for the gospel accounts is not simply the period from the death of Jesus to the written gospels, their foundation is already laid in the Old Testament. In this way Strauss allotted a space of centuries for the development of messianic legends; legends which are then transferred and adapted to Jesus by the early Christian community. The gospels are viewed as the result of a lengthy process; formed out of narratives that were fashioned by degrees, a process that can no longer be traced.[105]

The task still remains to locate the precise meaning of myth within the scope of Strauss's thought. First, in the understanding of myth there is a direct link to the Enlightenment. In the seventeenth-century French Enlightenment the concept of myth was born, and in the eighteenth-century German Enlightenment it was first appropriated into Biblical studies. Beyond chronology,

the concept of myth is appropriately identified with the Enlightenment because it expresses so clearly the Enlightenent spirit: man's understanding of his past as discontinuous with the life of reason he knows in the present.[106] In announcing the criteria for non-historicity, Strauss plainly equates myth with the unhistorical.[107] This is to say that myth is apprehended, in essence and by definition, as a false form of knowledge of reality. Of course the issue is not simply one of false knowledge, but the falseness of the knowledge is understood to be inherent in the underdeveloped capacity for knowing characteristic of man at a certain stage of history.[108] Briefly, myth is a primitive mode of thought (pre-rational and pre-critical) expressing a pre-scientific (pre-Enlightenment) view of the world. Enlightenment man is the mature man. This marks the turning point of history itself, for in it the Age of Reason was born. There is little wonder "that the past uncovered by the Enlightenment historian and designated by the concept of myth was a past essentially alien to the rational man of the Enlightenment".[109]

The essential mark of myth is its false view of the world; a world of gods and demons, a world above all of miracles caused by supernatural powers acting in unexpected ways. It is a view of the world which is the result of primitive man's projection of feelings on one hand, and absence of knowledge of the laws of nature on the other.[110] The foundation for this formulation of myth consists of three fundamental presuppositions:

(1) A developmental philosphy of history. Myth is related to history as childhood is related to maturity.

(2) A theory of primitive mentality. This is regarded as a mentality universally present in the history of man, the source for the generation of myths.

(3) A scientific view of reality as a unified cause-effect continium. The primitive stage of human history, defined according to its antithesis with a scientific world-view, is accepted as the essential criterion for the definition of myth.[111]

This threefold character of myth is present in Fontenelle. But it is with Eichhorn and Strauss that this Enlightenment understanding is systematically applied in the interpretation of the Biblical materials. Thus, according to Strauss, out of the projection of the primitive myth-making mind, the world of the supernatural and miraculous is born.[112] The whole process by which myth comes into being is the result of a certain underdeveloped condition determinative for a particular stage of human history.[113] Again, for Strauss it is the understanding of science that provides the criterion for the recognition of myth. These "scientific" laws, Strauss declares are "supreme in every sphere of being and action." And "therefore every narrative which offends against these laws is to be recognized as so far unhistorical.[114] According to Strauss, there is no true understanding of history "without a perception of the inviolability of the chain of finite causes, and the impossibility of mir-

acles."[115] The criteria for judgments of non-historicity (myth) then are but a more specific formulation of the basic thesis. And it is this scientific law-connected view of reality that provides the basis for Strauss's mythical interpretation of the gospel accounts.[116] Strauss acknowledges that the mythological accounts of the divine of other peoples are not to be equated with the accounts of the divine in scripture; the concept of myth, therefore cannot be applied to the Bible on the basis of its conformity to "heathen mythology."[117] This makes it evident that the use of the concept of myth does not really have its origin in this comparison of scripture and mythology. "It is rather, the modern scientific view of reality that is being used as the criterion for the determination of the mythical, and in is in light of this standard that the concept is used in biblical studies.[118]

At this point the further question arises, how does the concept of myth stand in relation to Hegelian philosophy? Harris sees it as completely independent of this philosophy. Strauss, he says, was concerned with the historical process in which myths arose. He recognizes that Strauss thought of myth in Hegelian terms "as one of the forms in which the idea expresses itself in the world, but this view plays no part in the critical section of the book." The mythical principle, he says, and the Hegelian philosophy are related "only in that both are ultimately dependent upon the same underlying presupposition - the denial of a transcendent personal God."[119] Hodgson agrees that to describe

Strauss's historical method as "empirical-rational" is correct as far as it goes. But he makes the further point that such a method has a philosophical basis just as clearly as another.[120] To cite only one instance from the critical section of the book, Strauss has this to say about the advantage of mythical interpretation: by renouncing the historical body of the gospel narratives it "rescues and preserves the idea which resides in them, and which alone constitutes their vitality and spirit."[121] This alone bears out the importance to Strauss of Hegelian philosophy, especially the distinction between the concept and the representation. And it does not appear wide of the mark to say that for Strauss the theology of immanence and the rational-critical formulation coalesced.[122] Hegelian philosophy is part of the firm ground from which the whole project of Strauss develops.

The adequacy of the understanding of the function and meaning of myth can be questioned from a number of standpoints. Only a few will here be briefly noted. The most basic consideration is the way that this understanding of myth depends on a particular view of reason and knowledge. This limits the understanding of the scope of myth in its original setting, and leads to an uncritical application of the category to the gospel narrative. How could the single category of myth be adequate to take account of the various genre that characterize the New Testament (history and hymns, parable and poetry, apocalyptic and biography)? The difference between myth and the way in which religious faith relates to God needs to be examined (is all rel-

igious expression to be equated with myth?). This would, of course, mean that the issue of God as both transcendent and immanent in relation to the world cannot be foreclosed. Is myth to be equated with false knowledge? If not then how does myth express reality? The meaning of myth and how it figures in the interpretation of scripture is clearly an important matter.

II

APPLICATION OF THE CRITERIA

The substance of the work of Strauss consists of the detailed criticism of the gospel accounts. Indeed, Strauss rested the weight of his case on this application of criticism to particular cases: "the credibility of the narratives should not be concluded from the assumed origin of the book which contains them, but on the contary, our judgment of the book must be founded on the nature of the particular narratives."[1] In evaluating Strauss's criticism of the gospel accounts, what is the relation of the criteria for judgments of non-historicity to his actual practise of criticism? An account of this criticism will take two forms: first, a survey of how each of Strauss's criteria is concretely applied; second, a study of how Strauss deals with complete narratives in the gospels.

A. How Each Criterion is Concretely Applied

Strauss often applies a number of criteria to a particular instance. All the same, there is point in examining the application of all the criteria in order. The first criterion marks as unhistorical all narration not in harmony "with known and universal laws," and all narration not in harmony with the recognition that "the absolute cause never disturbs the chain of secondary causes by single arbitrary acts of interposition." Let the birth narrative of Jesus serve as an example. The recognition by Simeon and Anna of the Christ child in the temple is very

close to ordinary, non-miraculous discernment, yet only possible, according to the narrative, by inspiration of the Spirit. In his criticism, Strauss refers first to "general reasons against the credibility of the miracles."[2] But this case presents for Strauss a special difficulty against the admission of miracle: there is "no worthy object for an extra-ordinary manifestation of divine power." A worthy object would be the communication of the messiahship of Jesus to a wider circle; of this there is no indication. It is not credible that such a revelation should be vouchsafed to Simeon and Anna. This kind of event would be contrary to divine agency; according to Strauss, "that miracles should be ordained for such occasional and isolated objects, is not reconcilable with just ideas of divine providence."[3]

Two main aspects of the first criterion, the universal laws and the nature of the divine agency, form the basis for this conclusion. But fundamentally what discredits the point of the narrative is the judgment of Strauss that it has no worthy object. The account of Jesus calming the sea receives a like treatment. Strauss refers to "original law," in affirming that storms and tempests are part of the whole of nature and, as such, have their "necessary place and beneficial influence." His question is: what purpose then could Jesus' power over nature have? "As a means of awakening faith in him, it was inadequate and superfluous because Jesus found individual adherents without any demonstration of a power of this kind, and general acceptance even this did not procure him."[4] At first sight Strauss sees

much in the account that might be accepted without objection. But, since the command of Jesus that is reported to bring the calm has such authoritative form, the account probably began to be propagated in connection with an anecdote. The inducement to attribute this action to Jesus arose from instances in the Old Testament where under God's action (as in the case of Moses) the sea was affected by command.[5] To establish one part of a narrative as mythical is an almost certain indication that the whole is mythical. In the present case this means that even the reference to Jesus being asleep before calming the storm has only a one in nine chance of being historical.[6]

Here the conception of the universe as a closed system, God acting only through the whole, is evident. But the criticism is once more that this is an event without purpose. Thus, in terms of the first criterion, it is basic for Strauss that any time there is an "intermixing °of§ a supernatural cause °this§ enables us to prejudge it as unhistorical."[7] But the criterion is associated with other particular criticisms that are designed to make an event appear incredible.

The "law of succession," as a criterion, is featured significantly in the criticism of Strauss. First, it is on this basis that a purely natural explanation of the intellectual development of Jesus can now be obtained, owing to the "enlightened culture of modern times."[8] Strauss, correctly, points out the way in which Jesus was nurtured by the Hebrew scriptures; ideas in the Psalms, Isaiah, and Daniel seemed to have particul-

arly for Jesus. Next, Strauss makes reference to the three sects, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, by which Jesus was affected in different ways (perhaps most positively by the Essenes). Strauss also observes that growing up in a largely Gentile area, such as Galilee, would serve to widen the intellectual horizon of Jesus. Beyond all this is the originality of Jesus' own mind.[9]

Application of the criterion of the law of succession is the basis for judgments in specific cases. For example, Strauss affirms that John the Baptist did not recognize Jesus as the Messih as the gospels report.

> How could the man of the wilderness, the stern ascetic, who fed on locusts and wild honey, and prescribed severe fasts to his disciples, the gloomy, threatening preacher of repentance, animated with the spirit of Elias - how could he form a friendship with Jesus, in everything his opposite? He must assuredly, with his disciples - have stumbled at the liberal manners of Jesus,and have been hindered by them from recognizing him as the Messiah.[10]

Where Strauss learned of the severity of the fast John required, or the extent of his gloom, is not clear; but the complete contrast between John and Jesus is crucial. At the same time, in another context Strauss recognizes a link between the message of John and Jesus.[11] His criticism that the gospel narratives that portray John as recognizing Jesus are mythical depends on the criterion of the law of succession.

Strauss also applies this criterion in criticism of the call of the disciples. The call of Jesus to come follow him, in which the disciples directly respond, is judged to be unhistori-

p. 40 follows p. 41

they can be seen to supplement each other at many points; but the marked differences between them can also be a reason for setting them in opposition. Strauss represented these differences, in many cases, as contradictions. He also set the synoptic gospels against one another. Indeed, his procedure is to criticize individual narratives, and discount them by charging contradiction. Beginning with the application of this criterion on the largest scale, Strauss brings into clear relief the difference between the synoptics and John with reference to the locale of Jesus' ministry. John mentions a number of journeys by Jesus to Jerusalem during his ministry; much of Jesus' teaching and many of his works took place there. These are not recorded in the synoptic accounts. At first this may be seen simply as a difference. According to Strauss, these journeys of Jesus to Jerusalem are so important that it is impossible to explain why they are omitted by the Synoptics if they knew of them. If John is right then the first three evangelists knew nothing of an essential part of Jesus' ministry. On the other hand, if the synoptics are right then a large part of John is no more than fabrication.[14] According to Strauss, all the synoptic writers convey the understanding that, until the last journey Galilee was the chosen field of Jesus' labors, and Jesus left it only occasionally and briefly; John on the contrary is written with the supposition that Jesus would have taught solely in Judea except for occasions when prudence demanded he leave. The conclusion according to Strauss: "Of these two representations, one only can

cal. What is said of the call of the disciples in general is said in particular of the call of Matthew. "Such is not the course of real life, nor the procedure of a man who, like Jesus, respects the laws and formalities of human society; it is the procedure of legend and poetry, which loves contrasts and effective scenes, which aim to give a graphic conception of a man's exit from an old sphere of life."[12] It is granted that there may be a particle of history to this story (legend) in that Jesus actually had tax-collectors among his disciples. In other instances Strauss emphasizes the difference between first century culture and the modern culture; but in this case that is not even a consideration. The criterion is applied to the first century setting without considering the possibility of factors distinctive to it. The possibility of prior anticipation or a prior degree of awareness by the disciples of Jesus is simply dismissed. The decisive issue of how complete or inclusive these accounts are intended to be is not examined. The criterion of the law of succession demands that as the narrative stands it cannot be historical.

The second criterion, as listed by Strauss, deals with contradictions and differences within and between accounts.[13] It is the criterion that corresponds directly to Strauss's dialectical method of criticism.

The long-discerned difference between the synoptics and John, like a branding mark, characterizes his criticism. The relationship between John and the synoptic gospels is complex,

be true."[15] On the one hand, Strauss notes that John's account shows more signs of being developed from legend. On the other hand, it is hard to account for certain events in the synoptics themselves if the last is the only journey of Jesus to Jerusalem. How account for the deep hostility by the ruling party in Jerusalem if Jesus has only spent one feast day there? And Jesus' expression referring to his repeated desire to gather the people of Jerusalem to himself, like a hen her chicks, also speaks for a time of teaching and ministry in the capital (Matt: 23:37).[16] In this case, though one account must be wrong, beyond that Strauss leaves the matter on open question.

The application Strauss makes of this criterion is very evident in the narratives of Jesus' birth, where Strauss can only see contradiction between Matthew and Luke. Here the difference in content between Matthew and Luke, though they are narrating the same event, is remarkable. The difference beween Matthew and Luke as to the original residence of Mary and Joseph may serve to highlight the style of Strauss's critique. He has a very low estimation for the credibility of the gospel narratives. The birth narratives taken separately, he says, "contain much that will not bear historical interpretation." What is more, "the parallel narratives of Matthew and Luke exclude each other, so that it is impossible for both to be true, and one must necessarily be false; this imputation however may attach to either, and consequently to both.'[17] As this relates to the original residence of the parents of Jesus, Strauss remarks that Luke, from

the beginning, gives Nazareth as their home (Luke 26; 2:4,39). In Matthew it is not stated in the first instance where Joseph and Mary resided. It is simply recorded that Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1). No mention is made of any special circumstances that brought the parents to Bethlehem. Strauss infers that Matthew supposed them to have been originally resident in Bethlehem. On the return from the flight into Egypt, Joseph is only deterred from again seeking out a place in Judea by special divine guidance (Matt. 2:22). This renders it certain, says Strauss, that Matthew supposes Bethlehem to have been the dwelling place of the parents, in contrast to Luke. The difficulty, making impossible a reconciliation between Matthew and Luke, rests on the fact that they could not have considered a second time returning to Bethlehem unless it had formerly been their home. As they stand, the narratives of both Matthew and Luke are judged to be improbable. In the case of Matthew, the change of residence is made to depend on the visit of the magi, the massacre of the infants, visions and dreams; these events, according to Strauss, by their evident unhistorical character disqualify them as a basis for a change of residence.[18] But then in Luke the cause for the change in residence from Nazareth to Bethleham is attributed to the census, also considered by Strauss to be unhistorical. Without this there is no adequate reason to believe the journey to Bethlehem took place at this particularly difficult time.

The position of the two evangelists relative to this

point is summed up as follows: each account is partly correct and partly incorrect; Luke is right in maintaining the identity of residence, before and after the birth, of Jesus parents, and in this Matthew is wrong. In contrast, Matthew is right in maintaining the birth place of Jesus as the home of the parents; in this Luke is in error. Luke is judged to be correct in recording that the parents lived in Nazareth before, as well as after the birth of Jesus. In this Matthew has only half the truth, namely, that they lived there after the birth; but in the statement that Jesus was born in Bethlehem both are clearly wrong. The source of their error, according to Strauss, "is the Jewish opinion with which they fell in, that the Messiah must be born in Bethlehem;" the source of their truth "is the fact which lay before them, that he always passed for a Nazaarene." The confusion in the narratives resulted from the different emphasis each gives to Bethlehem as the birth place of Jesus, in accord with prophecy.[19]

It is evident that much in the application of this criterion depends on the scope within which it is applied. In the application of the criterion, Strauss often proceeds from silence (i.e. an author, had he known a particular detail of an event, would have mentioned it, etc.). The way Strauss has applied it he can, and does, set the gospel accounts in opposition on nearly all the episodes which are common to two or more of them. This appears to be simply the polar opposite of the harmonists finding a way neatly to harmonize all accounts. Both extremes operate

without a defined scope within which contradiction or consistency can be assessed. As F. C. Baur already recognized in his criticism of Strauss, to examine individual narratives historically, they must first be considered in the context in which they are found.[20] If the gospels are not haphazard collections, then it is a matter of crucial importance to take into account the intent or purpose of the author in determining the meaning of the part in relation to the whole. The result will be that differences are accounted for not in an abstract or atomistic fashion, but within the scope of their historical context.[21]

It is apparent from this example that Strauss has attributed a decisive function to the criterion of dissimilarity. The criterion is a keystone in conjunction with the other criteria, and basic to the mythical interpretation of Strauss. Strauss gives the criticism a positive form, using it to attain negative results. "If the contents of a narrative strikingly accord with certain ideas existing and prevailing within the circle from which the narrative proceeded...it is more or less probable, according to circumstances, that such a narrative is of mythical origin."[22]

The force of this criterion is evident in the following application of it. On this basis Strauss discounts the pre-existence of Jesus. What can be said for or against the understanding of the pre-existence of Christ on other grounds is not the issue. But simply on the basis of this criterion, Strauss can say, "we are not warranted in adopting this view, unless it

can be shown that neither was the idea of the pre-existence of the Messiah extant among the Jews of Palestine before the time of Jesus, nor is it probable that Jesus attained such a notion independently of the ideas peculiar to his age and nation."[23]

The application of this criterion serves to discount Bethlehem as the birth place of Jesus. The statement in Matthew and Luke stating that he was born there, is based on an expectation, originating in a prophetic passage (Matt. 2:5,6). This Strauss refers to as a dangerous support, "which they who wish to retain as historical the gospel statement, that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, will do well to renounce." Continuity with the past through an expectation originating in the Old Testament is regarded as decisive in ruling out the account as historical. "For wherever we find a narrative which recounts the accomplishment of a long expected event, a strong suspicion must arise, that the narrative owes its origin solely to the pre-existent belief that that event would be accomplished."[24] What is more, as Strauss sees it, since in this case the conviction that Jesus was born in Bethlehem is groundless, the alleged issue resulted in a false interpretation of a prophetic passage.[25]

This kind of application of the criterion lent great scope to Strauss's "mythical interpretation." Any reference to the Old Testament presented as an anticipation of an event in the New Testament may become the basis for affirming the report of such an event as myth. Strauss puts the case for myth in the narrative of Jesus' birth from the virgin concisely. In conform-

ity with the passage of Isaiah 7:14 the belief prevailed that Jesus, as the Messiah, should be born of a virgin through divine agency. It was therefore taken for granted that what was to be actually did occur; thus originated the myth concerning the birth of Jesus.[26] What holds for the birth, is also true of the life and death of Jesus. Even the exclamation on the cross about being forsaken by God, with all the difficulty it has presented for Christian understanding and interpretation, is set aside as without historical foundation because it is based on a reference to Psalm 22. Strauss makes use of this criterion even in a case where the New Testament makes no use of the Old Testament to refer to an event. Jesus calling of the disciples is a case in point. Strauss finds the authoritative call by Jesus and the direct response by the disciples difficult. If there is a way to show how the call might have been contructed on the basis of traditional material this is decisive in assigning a mythical interpretation. Strauss refers first, to the notion of Jesus, the searcher of hearts, as a basis for the formation of such a myth. Second, there is a type of the apostles' vocation set forth (I Kings 19:19-21) in the way in which Elijah called Elisha.[27]

No more needs here to be said than that this application of the criterion is not critically applied; in the end applied without clear limits it becomes incredible.[28] Concerning the birth narrative, Strauss makes no mention of the fact that in the more extensive account of Luke no reference is made to the prophetic passage in associating the birth of Jesus with Bethlehem.

It is incongruous that a non-event should be bound up with so many historical persons, places, and circumstances that have no point apart from the actuality of the event. Further, the criterion of dissimilarity in appropriate cases has a necessary place; but used by itself, and so misapplied, it proves to be self-reversing. In this case, since events are normally interpreted in relation to past experience or tradition, the criterion cannot establish the non-historicity of the narrative. This matter will be more fully considered in the conclusion.

B. Application of Criteria to Complete Narratives

To examine the criteria in relation to complete units in Strauss's work provides further precision in understanding his application of the criteria. It is also a way to discover more clearly the weight that Strauss gives to particular criteria. Not just individual aspects, but the landscape of Strauss's procedure and criticism should, in this way, become visible. A unit of Strauss's work "cures of lepers" in the section on miracles, will be considered. It is best to examine this unit in relation to what Strauss has to say in opening the section. The miracles allowed Strauss full scope for criticism. If the special manifestation of the divine is the essence of myth, then this is not surprising.[30]

In characteristic dialectical fashion Strauss begins with the supernatural positon, then then takes up the natural position, and finally turns for a solution to the mythical interpretation.[31] In opening the section on miracles, Strauss briefly

considers Jesus as a miracle worker. According to Strauss, miracles were the naturally expected thing of the Messiah by the Jewish people; as the second Moses and greatest of the prophets he must excell in this area. It was in the light of the miracles that the people were led to consider Jesus as the Messiah (Matt. 12:23; 11:23; 11:2ff; John 7:31). Not only miracles in general were expected, but also particular kinds of miracles. Here Strauss refers to miraculous happenings, such as the special provision of food and drink to the people under Moses (Ex. 16:17); also the opening of eyes and raising of the dead under Elisha and Elizah (2 Kings 6; I Kings 17: II Kings 4). Among the prophecies, Isaiah 35:5,6 (Comp. Matt. 11:5) is viewed as especially important. From Strauss's viewpoint, in sofaras Jesus presented himself as the Messiah, and was believed to be the Messiah, he was required to meet this expectation. (Matt. 12:38; 16:1; John 2:18; 6:30).[32] Jesus more than satisfied this demand as reported by the gospels. But Strauss, in dialectical fashion, sets account against account, and brings this testimony to the miracles into question. He does it on the basis of Jesus' statement to the Pharisees in Mark 8:12, "I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation;" a reference that is joined with statements by Jesus to the effect that no sign shall be given but "the sign of the prophet Jonah" (Matt. 12:39ff; 16:4; Lk.29f). After consideration of some possible alternatives, Strauss concludes, "Nothing therefore remains but...that...Jesus would appear to have here repudiated the working of miracles in gen-

eral."[33] As Strauss views the matter, this is hard to reconcile with the numerous accounts of miracles in the gospels; but it accords fully with the fact that in Acts and the epistles, with a few exceptions, the miracles appear to be unknown.[34] So Strauss poses the dilemma: On the basis of the gospel accounts of miracles should the statement of Jesus be explained away; or should one not, rather, on the strength of Jesus' statement (and the silence of apostolic writings), become distrustful of the numerous histories of miracles in the gospels?

In considering the miracle accounts preference is given by Strauss to the healing of demoniacs; advancement in knowledge provided a greater understanding of these cases, and they allowed a greater scope for Strauss's psychological explanation. Therefore in these cases reports of healing at Jesus' word need not be altogether illusory.[35]

In the unit on cures of lepers, Strauss begins by noting the prominence these healings have in narratives of the miracles. He takes as an example the account common to the three synoptics; the man who comes, and falling on his knees before Jesus, entreats that he be cleansed of leprosy (Matt. 8:1ff; Mk. 1:40ff; Lk. 5:12ff).[36] According to the supernatural interpretation, Jesus effects this by a touch, and in accordance with the law, tells him to go show himself to the priest. Matthew and Mark describe him simply as a "leper," but Luke more strongly, as a man "full of leprosy". At this point, Strauss refers to the natural explanation in which this is an indication of, and a

stage in, the healing process. The leper then is seen as asking for an examination by Jesus. And after Jesus' affirmative diagnosis the leprosy did indeed quickly disappear. This cannot make sense of the present language in the text; Strauss recognized it as completely foreign to the passage. According to the natural interpretation, the ordinary and regular is to be presupposed wherever possible. Strauss replies that the rule leaves undecided the difference in what would be ordinary and regular to a modern person, and the author of the writings to be explained. There the supernatural is a matter of course.[37] The verdict of Strauss: the natural interpretation is nonsensical and the supernatural interpretation impossible. Leprosy is the most obstinate and malignant of diseases. That a person with such a malady should by word or touch become instantly cured is so inconceivable "that everyone who is free from certain prejudices (as a critic ought always to be) must involuntarily be reminded by it of the realm of fable."[38]

Strauss remarks that in the fabulous region ofthe Orient, and particularly in Jewish legend, the sudden appearance and disappearance of leprosy is a primary cause of wonder and legend. Strauss makes reference to accounts in the Old Testament dealing with leprosy and the healing of leprosy (Ex. 4:6,7; Num 12:10ff; 2 Kings 5). On the basis of these accounts,, Strauss says "I know not what we ought to need beyond these Old Testament narratives to account for the origin of the evangelical anecdotes"[39] This can be said on the supposition that what the first deliverer

(Moses) did, the second (Jesus) must surely accomplish. This was included in the Jewish idea of Messiah, and Christians who believed inducement to glorify his history by such traits."[40]

In concluding this unit on the cures of lepers, Strauss takes up the narrative of the healing of the ten lepers in Luke 17:12ff. He observes that the rationalists have more of a case in this instance. The lepers do not explicitly ask to be cured, their plea is simply, "Have mercy on us". Nor does Jesus speak a word or do anything to effect a cleansing. They are merely enjoined to go show themselves to the priest. From this the rationalists drew the conclusion that Jesus, after ascertaining their condition, told them to go and be examined by the priests, and this resulted in their being pronounced clean. Jesus is then seen as giving sound advice. But Strauss's question is, how does this explain the ardent gratitude of the Samaritan who returned? This part of the narrative, including Jesus' response, makes the natural explanation impossible.

But Strauss does see in this narrative a peculiarity which distinguishes it from the first. In the present instance, the narrative seems to have been composed for the sake of the instruction conveyed. That the one who is a model of thankfulness is a Samritan is not without significance. Again, it is Luke alone who has the parable of the Good Samaritan. Strauss infers that, since the sudden cure of these lepers cannot be historical, a parable is involved in the formation of this narrative. Jesus told a parable in which he, Jesus, represented

gratitude, just as, in the other parable, he represented compassion. The only difficulty is that Jesus did not normally make himself the object of his parables. Strauss concludes that interpretation must reckon with the combination of a healing legend (of lepers) and an element from the parables of Jesus that Christian legend has woven into this narrative.[41]

One element, basic in Strauss's criticism, but not present in the review of this unit, is the law dealing with contradiction as it applies to differences between accounts. The next unit in the section on miracles, a unit dealing with cures of the blind, features this aspect prominently. The the first part, Strauss gives a criticism of the difference between Matthew and the two other synoptics on the healing of blindness outside Jericho. According to Matthew, there were two men. Mark and Luke only speak of one man. In Matthew and Mark the healing takes place as they leave Jericho; in Luke as they draw near to the city (Matt. 20;29-34; Mk. 10:46-52; Lk. 18:35-43). Strauss lists the desperate attempts of the harmonists to bring these accounts into a unity. Neither the supernatural nor the natural interpretation of this incident can put the accounts together. From both standpoints the narratives are seen to be discredited. According to Strauss, the only viable solution is to presuppose that legend has been at work.[42] In the last part of the unit, Strauss deals with the healing of the blind man in John 9:1ff. The obstacles in the natural interpretation are first recorded. Then Strauss proceeds to criticize the narrative on the basis of

its absence in the synoptic accounts. His criticism is that if in the formation of apostolic tradition, in the selection of miracles, any reason was exercised, it must have been in the form of the following two rules: first, to choose the greater miracles before those less important; second, those miracles with which edifying discourses were connected, before those not serving this end. On both counts the healing of the man born blind has priority. It would have admirably suited the purpose of the first three evangelists. If it had been present in the tradition from which they drew, they could not have failed to introduce it in their accounts. And since it is not to be found in "the common evangelical tradition; the suspicion arises that it perhaps never did occur."[43] Thus the account of John is discredited on basis of the silence of the synoptics.

The aim in this section has been to delineate Strauss's application of the criteria in the context of his criticism. It becomes apparent that the dialectial procedure is dominent in Strauss's criticism; this gives the work its telling impact. The announced criteria are not directly or systematically applied. The announced criteria are not directly or systematically applied. The impression Strauss gives is that he rejects both supernatural and rationalism: yet when he finds it inappropriate to make use of the mythical interpretation, he invariably resorts to the rationalist explanation. The use of psychology in the interpretation of the miracles is a prime example of a refined rationalism.[44] There is also an arbitrary rationalism in

the judgment on statements in the gospels that will be accepted as historical and those not so accepted. The reasoning has at least three stages:

(1) Any given statement in the gospels may be taken to reflect historical fact.

(2) The statement may be isolated from its meaning in the gospel's own context.

(3) Nothing in the gospels that fails to correspond to the freshly established statement may be taken to reflect historical fact.[45]

In stage one the selection of the statement is made, i.e., "no sign shall be given to this generation." No examination is made of how the word sign is used in the different contexts. Sign is clearly not used to refer to miracles in the synoptics.[46] The possibility that a quite specific reality is envisioned by the word sign is entertained just long enough to be dismissed. Further, this statement is isolated from its context. In the very chapter (Mk. 8) in which this statement occurs, it is preceded by the miraculous feeding of the four thousand, followed by a discussion of Jesus with the disciples about the meaning of particular miracles, followed by the miracle of the healing of a blind man. Certainly the meaning of the statement in Mark is not to negate these narratives. Inherent in Strauss's dialectical procedure is this atomistic criticism in which no account is given of the gospels as they are.

Another aspect of Strauss's criticism is the way in which certainties are derived from suppositions. The vital cause in the production of miracle narratives is the expectation by the people of the Messiah. It is a supposition to be examined, but it is and remains, no more than a supposition without being tested and shown to be valid. Strauss was quite right to point out the gaps in the reconciliations of gospel accounts produced by the harmonists. There are certainly some real difficulties in reconciling the gospel accounts; some differences, at least on the basis of present information, are impossible to reconcile. For criticism of gospel narratives, more than the categories the know (historical) and the false (unhistorical) are needed; the needed category is that of the unknown. Strauss's dialectical form of criticism may often be dramatic, but it is also often arbitrary.

C. Disparity Between Criteria and Actual Critical Practise

In his criticism Strauss goes far beyond the judgments of non-historicity required by the application of the criteria. This may be demonstrated by the addition, to what has already been observed, by typical examples that are dispersed through the book. In the appearance of the angel to Mary, Strauss says, "the real angel Gabriel would hardly have proclaimed the advent of the Messiah in a phraseology so strictly Jewish."[47] If an angel were to communicate to a Jewish woman the situation would indeed be absurd if the angel sought to do so in a non-Jewish way (the problem is, rather, that the event is not seriously considered to be within the realm of possibility). In other cases miracles are discounted because they have "no worthy object," i.e. that Simeon and Anna should be enabled to discern the messianic child is such an occasional and isolated object for miracles that it cannot be reconciled "with just ideas of the divine providence."[48] A similar kind of judgment is related to the healing of the deaf man in Mark 7:34ff. The occasion is not appropriate for Jesus to have sighed before the healing, as he is reported to have done. Strauss also refers to Mark's use of the original Aramaic words in this instance, and in the raising of the daughter of Jairus (Mk. 5:41). These words, which Mark explains, prove "that he must have attributed to this original form special significance, which, as it appears from the context, can only have been a magical one." (Why are they not rather an indication of original tradition?)[49] The readiness of John the Baptist to give pre-

cedence to Jesus, though reported by all four gospels, is inconceivable on the basis of human nature, according to Strauss, and is therefore declared unhistorical.[50] The incident of some disciples turning to Jesus at John's direction is judged to be "a free version of the sending of the two disciples by John from prison."[51] But that the two disciples actually had access to John in prison and were sent by him is, in turn, considered improbable.[52] The arbitrary character of critical judgments depending on the dialectical procedure is well illustrated in the case of the healing of the paralytic as recorded by the synoptics (Matt. 9:1-8); Mk. 2:1-12; Lk. 5:17-26). On any account the substance of the reports is the same; the details that are reported vary; Matthew gives an abbreviated account, while Mark and Luke give about equally full accounts. On the basis of this kind of difference Strauss discounts the credibility of the narrative.[53] Further, Strauss makes stringent application of the criterion of dissimilarity to exclude any narrative in the New Testament as unhistorical that makes direct use of an Old Testament prophetic reference. At the same time, in another connection he emphasized that Jesus is only properly perceived historically in relation to his context.[54] Reading the scriptures in relation to present events was part of that context.

Strauss, in the preface to his work put the issue to be decided in the following way: "whether, in fact, and to what extent, the ground on which we stand in the gospels is historical." More precisely, in announcing the criteria he set as an

aim the determination of the various forms of the unhistorical in the gospels, and not to renounce "the historical which they may likewise contain." In the closing dogmatic section he concluded the gospel narratives are to be regarded "for the most part as mere myth."[55] His work compelled the facing of certain matters in new ways; this gained for it a measure of enduring significance. With the criteria framed to determine non-historicity, it is not surprising that nothing is made of the historical, and that the result is fundamentally negative. In the process a certain disparity between the theory and the practise of criticism becomes evident between the formulation of the criteria and their application. Sometimes simply by means of the dialectical procedure statements are ruled out as impossible; judgments unrelated to the criteria are the result.

What is the vital source of this disparity? Strauss provides the answer in the preface to his book. First, there is the claim that he, above other critical scholars, possessed the advantage the inner emancipation of thought and feeling from certain religious and dogmatic presuppositions as a result of his philosophical studies. Second, there is his perception of the gospel accounts as primitive and outdated. "It appeared to the author of this work...that it was time to substitute a new mode of considering the life of Jesus, in place of the antiquated systems of supranaturalism and naturalism."[56] Seeing Christianity as an anachronism generated in Strauss a certain animus. Since the supposed historicity must be shown up for what it is,

what is required is the demolition of obsolete or traditional Christianity so that a new adequate, interpretation of Christianity, along Hegelian lines, might take its place. Of course, as Strauss saw the issue, it was a matter of intellectual honesty. As noted, on the basis of Hegel's distinction between representation and concept Strauss concluded that philosophy supersedes religion; a conclusion that was all the easier because Strauss viewed Chrstianity essentially as a set of dogmas.[57] Once he had identified the ultimate truth of Christianity as the unity of God and man, he had located the idea in the image, and therefore the latter could be abandoned for the former. In accord with Hegel, the spirit was expressing itself in a new and definitive way, incorporating past truth while transcending it, in the era in which philosophy revealed the identity of God and man.[58] Strauss sums up this point concisely,

> Thus if we know the incarnation, death and resurrection, the duplex negatioz affirmat, as the eternal circulation, the infinitely repeated pulsation of the divine life; what special importance can attach to a single fact, which is but a mere sensible image of this unending process? Our age demands to be led in Christology to the idea in the fact, to the race in the individual: a theology which, in its doctrines on the Christ, stops short at him as an individual, is not properly theology, but a homily."[59]

If this is the ultimate sense of Christology, the great universal process in which the Spirit moves inexorably toward the goal of the final absorption in the infinite, then there is little significance in a particular historical event (any event can only be a small moment in the great process).[60]

This leads of itself to the recogniton that Strauss's inner emancipation through philosophical studies does not result in simple objectivity, but a remote relation to New Testament perspectives. Through hundreds of pages of analysis, Strauss remains impervious to the basic themes and concerns of gospel literature.[61] This remoteness is part of the reason for the atomistic form of his criticism. The requirement of understanding the gospel accounts in their own right, for the purpose of historical understanding, is not attained. Strauss finds a category like redemption no longer tenable. It requires particular divine action; an immanent God who actualizes himself in the whole constituted by the world and mankind is no longer a God of redemption and judgment. Consciousness of redemption implies a consciousness of sin; Strauss lacked a consciousness of sin and a sense of empathy with those who had it (not to say anything about a sense of solidarity with the downtrodden and the exploited.[62] Neither his own bitter experience nor the upheavals of his time caused him to "reflect theologically on the nature of man; it was enough to blame stupidity and prejudice. Though he could speak of religion as the consciousness of unity between the infinite and the finite, human finitude apparently presented him with no deep moral problems which called for some form of redemption."[63] Strauss inevitably had an optimistic view of man, based on his philosophy and the meaning of the modern technological world. With no real plight to which redemption is an alternative, it s meaningless to speak of a redeemer.[64] Thus, the disparity between

the theory and practise of criticism in Strauss rests on the twin pillars of attachment to Hegelian philosophy on the one hand, and antagonism to traditional Christianity on the other.

CONCLUSION AND APPRAISAL

An evaluation of Strauss's gospel criticism may well begin with the impact of that criticism. Though what he accomplished never matched what he originally intended, in his more limited role Strauss was devastatingly effective. The impact of Strauss may be summed up in relation to four areas: (1) His work revealed the confusion and ambiguity with which the task of criticism had been done; all previous attempts by both rationalists and supernaturalists to give historical account of the founding events of the Christian faith were superseded.[1] This brought criticism to a crossroad. One direction, followed in the wake of Strauss, is to welcome the results as demonstrating the necessary independence of Christian faith from any form of historical correlation. Another direction represents the attempt to show the inadequacies of Strauss's critical method, and consequently the inaccurate and inadequate result. (2) The consequence of Strauss's work leads to a fresh consideration of the gospel accounts; both form criticism and redaction criticism gained their first impetus from the work of Strauss.[2] (3) Strauss compells a deeper and more precise reflection on the relation of faith to events narrated in the gospels, and the relation of presupposition to criticism. (4) The radical theology of immanence, proposed by Strauss as both a critique of and alternative to the transcendent, separated, deity of orthodox

theology, demands renewed consideration of the nature of God and his relation to the world.

The immanental theology of Strauss unavoidably raises the issue of presupposition in criticism. The difficulty was made more complex by Strauss in that he identified his philosophical standpoint with the possibility of critical (scientific) and historical research. Historical investigation was to be without presupposition, and it was to be so on the basis of its exclusion of miraculous divine action.[3] The difficulty was hidden under the cover of neutrality or objectivity. The crucial issue in the work of Strauss, therefore, is that of presupposition. With the passage of time, it has become clear that pre-understanding (presupposition) is a given as part of language and understanding.[4] At the same time not every presupposition is equally arbitrary. The question is whether the text will be able to speak what is new. What is called for is that the interpreter remain open to the meaning of the text; then its content may come into play and decide the appropriate way of inquiring into it.[5] As part of his philosophical stance, Strauss accepted as his own the position assumed by philosophers since the Enlightenment, ruling out the possibility of particular divine action such as revelation or miracle. In doing so he followed the path, not of the atheist, but the path of the immanental theist: "God acts upon the world as a whole immediately, but on each part only by means of his action on every other part, that is to say, by the laws of nature."[6] As miracle comes to be defined in the contro-

versy between naturalism and supernaturalism, a false dichotomy is developed. It involves an absolute distinction between the miraculous and the natural, as if the natural can simply be considered on its own. Divine action, then, is perceived as foreign to the natural. It involves a mechanical view of nature (in contrast to the view of nature as an organism), set in motion by external force and cohering in purely external relations of cause and effect.[7] Immanental theism cannot really avoid these difficulties. The confusion of God and man creates its own problems and provides no real alternative. On the basis of Chrstian theism it can be affirmed that God is involved and acts in history, without denying that he is also independent and distinct. If God is understood as truly transcendent, then he can also be understood as truly immanent in particular historical events or persons. Only in these terms are both the freedom (contingency) and unity of history preserved. An interpretation of history in which history as a whole is viewed as development in the strict sense (the immanental world view) does not do justice to the openness of all things to the future. This makes it inadequate on theological as well as historical grounds.[8] "The God who by the transcendence of his freedom is the origin of contingency in the world, is also the ground of the unity which comprises the contingencies as history."[9] The reality of God is not exhausted by his being the origin of the world, that is, of normal, ever repeating, processes and events. As the living (transcendent) God he can initiate new events in the course of

his creation. This certainty that God again and again performs new acts forms the basis for an understanding of history, which in God's faithfulness moves toward a goal of fulfillment.[10] In this way the mysteries of history can be seen to be ultimately rational and meaningful because God orders the genuine contingency and novelty of history to his own appropriate purposes. There may even be reference to "necessity" in history, when events are viewed as past rather than present or future; "but necessity does not derive from God's necessary ingredience in the historical process. It derives rather from his lordship in and over the contingencies of history."[11]

In accord with immanental theology, in which he sought a path between atheism and supernaturalism, Strauss raised the question of the nature of the gospel accounts in a new way. Attention to the gospels on their own terms, i.e. genre and purpose, could have saved Strauss long discussions about their historicity. Interpretation of the gospel accounts need not be limited to the alternatives: either mythical or historical. Strauss simply misses the vital character of the gospel accounts. The gospels are not written from the perspective of disinterested recorders but by committed witnesses; the gospels are not simply or directly the narration of history.[13] At the same time as heralds of the gospel, these witnesses do not stand in isolation, "but rather speak of events in which God has acted or will act, and whose language is heard through the biblical witness insofar as this formulates the inherent meaning of these events."[14]

Thus, the historical basis of gospel proclamation is not to be overlooked; it is this which gives it binding validity.

A critical limitation in Strauss is that he framed his project within too narrow a compass. The category of myth is not the only alternative to direct description. The use of imagery (metaphor) and the language of evaluation may be combined in a statement which in purely descriptive terms would constitute contradiction. The application of the term "Son of God" is an example of this. As early as the Arian controversy the chronological implications of the word "son" were recognized not to be applicable to the relation between Christ and God.[15] This corresponds to the recognition that certain realities are not adequately encompassed in terms simply of description.

To evaluate Strauss on his own ground, the definiton of myth must be examined. The problem in Strauss is that categories not proper to the subject are imposed upon it. The phenomenon of myth is not approached and defined in terms of its own character. Myth represents a whole understanding of reality in which the supernatural elements do not stand alone.[16] In its original setting myth is a way of ordering the particulars of experience into a unified whole. The ordering of experience involves the personalizing of forces in nature; elemental impressions of nature are transfomed into stories about gods. The order of the world is never taken for granted, it has its true basis in a primeval event which determines the present structure of things.[17] Myth, then, is not defined by the criterion used in

the nineteenth century, nor is it limited merely to the subjective.

Further, the links between the Bible and myth need clarification. Fundamentally, the evidence is that in Israel the understanding of reality stands in contrast to the mythical.[18] In Israel, all magical ceremonies, all conjuring of spirits, all gaurantees secured through divine power are taken from man; nature, as the creation of God, is not revered or identified as something divine.[19] At the same time, the language of myth is used at many points; Brevard Childs refers to this as "broken myth", performing a service in the Old Testament as part of its own witness. It serves as extended figure of speech; it is also used to picture the reality of the eschatological age.[20] What happens is that typological application is made of historical experiences of salvation, directed towards the future and at the same time surpassing the event used as a type (it is no mere repetition of its model). This means typological thought is dintinct from mythical thought, which knows of no future that surpasses and so supersedes the mythical primal age.[21]

Thus, the Old Testament view, while adapting at certain points terms and images from a mythical setting, stands in contrast to the mythical view of reality.[22] What is true for the Old Testament is certainly true for the New. There is a new vitality in the images and words of Jesus and his followers that quickened and changed existing ways of thought; these are images and words meant to portray the real nature of things and the

course of existence so far as human speech can convey such realities.[23] Basic conceptions such as judgment of the dead and resurrection of the dead, related to general human concerns and questions, have a place in myth; but they are not mythical in themselves, because they are not necessarily the repetition of mythical primeval events (having neither a mythical origin or structure).[24] The idea of incarnation of the Son of God itself, viewed fom the standpoint of myth, takes on a very odd character. For the understanding is not merely that God appeared in human form, but that he became identical with a human being who actually lived, and even suffered and died as that person. There are, in Hellenism, various legends telling of epiphanies of heavenly beings in human or other forms, but never to the point of indissoluble identity with an historical person. This breaks through the form of myth and is contrary to the nature of myth itself.[25] For what is historically unique is in direct contrast to myth, which expresses what is archetypal and timeless. Therefore, it can be said that the characteristic elements of Biblical thought can best be seen in contrast to mythical thought.[26]

An essential element in Strauss's criticism is the way he relates the Old Testament to the New. As noted, according to Strauss the reference by the gospel writers to the Old Testament is normally decisive in the determination of an account as mythical. This, in large part, is how Strauss accounts for the mythologizing process on the part of the early church. It represents the use of a form of the criterion of dissimilarity, as it has

come to be known, to determine myth. Strauss makes use of the criterion in characteristic either/or form. The application of the criterion implies that either Jesus is new and original at every point, where this is not so myth is to be affirmed. On the face of it, it is odd, not to say impossible, to be told on the one hand that Jesus can only be understood in the context of his Jewish setting and on the other to read that a saying or an event cannot historically be true of Jesus because it is in direct continuity with the Jewish tradition. Of course, it should be clear that anticipation by itself does not decide the reality or non-reality of an event.

The actual pattern in which the Old Testament is referred to in giving account of Jesus, is the decisive test of Strauss's criticism at this point. First, that the event of Jesus should be interpreted in continuity with the Old Testament is to be expected. In the Old Testament itself there is the pattern of understanding present events by reference to God-effected history. Indeed, inherent in understanding is "the placing of oneself within a process of tradition, in which past and present are constantly fused."[27] Tradition does not stand over against understanding, but is the horizon within which understanding takes place. This does not mean that tradition is appropriated uncritically. But without this continuity there is nothing on which the new can be predicated, and so it cannot be appropriated. That is why, in truth, the new is never wholly new. It is preceded by an anticipation, or by a promise, otherwise it

could not be grasped or accepted, and it could not be effective in history. This provides the basis for an affirmative evaluation of the continuity between Jesus and the Jewish tradition. In this perspective the thesis of Strauss that the Jewish expectation (drawn from the Old Testament) is the source out of which the gospel image of Jesus is sculpted can now be more closely examined.

Strauss takes note of the new and original understanding of the Old Testament by the gospel writers. He can only see this use as arbitrary and be offended. But this new significance seen by Christians is itself a pointer to the fact that it is the event of Christ that is determinative; in the light of these overwhelming happenings Christians turned with fresh eyes to the Old Testament scriptures. This is confirmed from another direction. In the New Testament Jesus is recognized to be more authoritative than scripture; he fulfills and at the same time transcends scripture. The way in which this happens can be illuminated by the reference to Jesus as the Messiah. It is interesting that Strauss should accept as historical Jesus' understanding of himself as the Messiah. The term is important in the Old Testament and is very much an aspect of Jewish expectation. But what in the world would lead Christians to find the king of Israel in Jesus of Nazareth? There is continuity but there is also a surprising newness associated with Jesus as the Messiah. "It was not only Jesus own use of scripture, but also his person, his character, and the mighty work of God in him that

gave a new coherence to scripture and led to a new use of it."[28] Strauss is offended because the meaning discovered in particular passages seldom coincides with that which it had in its original setting. If the event of Christ is the controlling factor than something more than a mere repetition of Old Testament textsis to be expected; the Old Testament texts are placed in relation to the present events of Jesus and the fulfillment of God's purpose in him.

As a consequence, in the New Testament, there are different levels of reference to the Old Testament; a distinction between typology (events of parallel character i.e. Matt. 2:15) and the use of prophetic (future) references is helpful. "The main line of interpretation of the Old Testament exemplified in the New is not only consistent and intelligent in itself, but also founded upon a genuinely historical understanding of the process of the religious...history of Israel as a whole."[29] And Jesus of Nazareth is the culmination of this history of God's dealings with his people, so putting into effect his saving purpose. The remoteness of his perspective and the atomistic character of his criticism prevent Strauss from seeing anything more than a mythologiziing process in the continuity between Old and New Testament.

Definite consequences follow from this examination of myth. Strauss's equation of gospel narrative with myth rests on a faulty definition of myth; he is off-base in identifying myth with the Biblical view of reality; and his account of the mytho-

logizing process by the early church is self-reversing. Lacking the category of myth, Strauss is left without the basic criterion by which to account for the gospel narratives.

One who endures Strauss's Life of Jesus to the end will encounter critical insights about Jesus, but hardly a portrayal that accounts for him. The reason, the adaptation of the Hegelian distinction between representation and concept. By this means certain truths taught by Jesus can be validated while Jesus himself may be allowed to disappear into historical obscurity. Issue can be taken with the Hegelian formulation itself. Truth is not to be reduced to a matter of concepts, but has a broader base in experience and reality.[30] A final dichotomy between the truth of reason and truth of history cannot be upheld. This is to say that the relationship between faith and the content of faith is an historically mediated relationship. Involved in the basis of faith is the question of whether faith in Jesus Christ is true and in accord with Jesus himself. In this way faith proceeds to distinguish itself from mere credulity or unbelief, seeking the truth of Jesus himself. This is only accomplished along historical lines; but the investigation cannot be allowed to be diverted from its own ends. The presumption that committed witness precludes accountability to Jesus and the tradition about him is one such diversion.

It is impossible even as an historian to write history without personal involvement. One narrating an historical event must choose between what is important and what appears to be

merely of secondary importance. To do so one must understand to some extent the nature of the event itself. Where this understanding is not present a superficial, not to say distorted, account will be the result. For this reason it is not wide of the mark to say, "The effect of methodical scepticism has been to stifle historical investigation."[31]

From the perspective of Christian faith, historical criticism is, therefore, both desirable and inevitable. The crucial issue with Strauss is the relation of presupposition to criticism. Beyond that, it is important to consider the effect of the criteria in Strauss's criticism. That effect expressed itself in the prescription that what must not be cannot be. If it is improper to argue that since Jesus was the Son of God this saying or that deed is historical, the same holds in arguing that Jesus cannot have been the Son of God and therefore a particular saying or deed must be mythical. The question remains to be settled by a sifting of the evidence and a judgment on the basis of that evidence. Neither mere scepticism or credulity is appropriate or constructive. That is, criteria, whether negative or affirmative, cannot be used preemptively without warrant in a particular context. The validity of the criteria remains to be established, and the application of them must be justified from context to context. The criteria whether negative or affirmative, stand on an equal footing: "If I want to declare something to be historical, I must prove it. If I want to declare something to be unhistorical, I must prove that too."[32] Strauss is an example of

attention to detail in his criticism. The formulation of specific criteria, attention to distance between the New Testament and the modern world, and attention to the nature of the gospel narratives may be counted as gains. Negatively, he is also instructive in exemplifying the way that ideology and presupposition may combine to short-circuit interpretation of the gospel accounts on their own terms.

FOOTNOTES

Introduction and Chapter 1

[1]Originally in 2 volumes Das Leben Jesu Kritisch bearbeitet, Tubingen: Osiander, 1835-36. ET of fourth edition by George Elliot, The Life of Jesus Critically Examined, (London: Chapman, 1846.) Reissued with new Introduction by Peter C. Hodgson, (London: SCM Press, 1973).

[2]See Chapter 9 in Horton Harris's Strauss and His Theology, (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), pp. 66-84.

[3]This evaluation appears in the book on F. C. Baur by Peter C. Hodgson, The Formation of Historical Theology, (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), p. 76.

[4]Albert Schweitzer, Von Reimarus Zu Wrede 1906, trans. by W. Montgomery, The Quest of the Hisorical Jesus (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968), p. 10.

[5]Hans J. Hillerbrand, A fellowship of Discontent (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers), p. 133.

[6]This is a point made by Leander Keck in his introduction to the book by D. F. Strauss, The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History: A Critique of Schleiermacher's The Life Of Jesus, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p. xxvii.

[7]Ibid., p. xxi.

[8]In this circle Strauss studied intensively the writings of J. G. Fichte and especially the nature philosophy of F. Schelling, Through the latter he became familiar with Jacob Boehme and the earlier mystical tradition. Through C. A. Eschenmayer, who later fiercely opposed Strauss, he was introduced to clairvoyance and hypnotism. The Life of Jesus Critically Examined, p. xx.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., p. xxii.

[11]These are the dates included in the title of G. R. Cragg's book, The Church and the Age of Reason 1648-1789 (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1960).

[12]Ben F. Meyer, The Aims of Jesus (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1979), p. 31. William J. Brazill, The Young Hegelians (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 30.

[13]Friedrich Schleiermacher, On Religion, trans. John Oman, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), pp. 36,43.

[14]Hodgson, The Formation of Historical Theology, p. 146.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Brazill, The Young Hegelians, p. 34.

[17]Strauss, Life of Jesus, pp. 23-24.

[18]Strauss, The Christ of Faith, p. xxiv.

[19]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. xvi. Hodgson refers to a statement by Strauss in his doctoral dissertation, "We believe in a restoration of all things because everything, each in its own place, is an object of divine beneficence and is a melodious voice in the great harmony that praise the creator." Hodgson comments that there was a romantic seeking "for the presence of and participation in the divine, a pathos born in part of the experience of God's absence."

[20]Strauss, Ibid. In the words of Strauss, "The exegesis of the ancient church set out from the double presupposition: first, that the Gospels contained a history, and secondly, that this history was a supernatural one.", p. 1.

[21]Schweitzer, Von Reimarus Zu Wrede, p. 10.

[22]Hillerbrand, A Fellowship of Discontent, p. 1. Richard S. Cromwell, David Friedrich Strauss and His Place in Modern Thought (Fair Lawn, New Jersey: R. E. Burdick, Inc. 1974), p. 52.

[23]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. li.

[24]Ibid., p. 87.

[25]Ibid., p. 88.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid., p. 89.

[28]Ibid., pp. 89-90.

[29]Hodgson, Formation of Historical Theology, p. 92.

[30]Ibid., pp. 92-93. Gotthold Muller, Identitat and Immanenz: Zur Genese der Theologie von David Friedrich Strauss, (Zurich: Evz-Verlag, 1968), p. 181.

[31]Muller, Ibid. p. 182.

[32]Ibid., p. 246.

[33]Meyer, The Aims of Jesus, p. 31.

[34]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. xxiii.

[35]Muller, Identitat und Immanenz, p. 27. Keck in Strauss, The Christ of Faith, p. lvif.

[36]Keck, Ibid., p. lvi.

[37]Ibid., p. lvii.

[38]Müller, Identität und Immanenz, p. 252.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid., pp. 252-254. Muller also refers here to the philosophers and thinkers such as Spinoza, Jacob Boehme Fichte.

[41]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. xvi.

[42]Ibid., p. 777.

[43]Brazill, The Young Hegelians, p. 47,53. Harris, Strauss and His Theology, p. 53.

[44]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. xxxiv. In the preface Strauss gives the assurance "that the essence of the Christian faith is perfectly independent of...criticism. The supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths, whatever doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts.", p.lii.

[45]Ibid., p. xxxiv.

[46]Ibid., pp. 779-780.

[47]Keck, Strauss's Christ of Faith, pp. lviii, lix.

[48]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. xxvii.

[49]Ibid., p. 88.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Backhaus, Kerygma und Mythos bie David Friedrich Strauss Und Rudolf Bultmann (Hamburg-Bergstedt: Reich, 1956), p. 36.

[52]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. xxvii.

[53]This is taken from Horton Harris, p. 42 as reproduced from Strauss's Life of Jesus (2nd edition) i, pp. 86-87.

[54]Brazill, The Young Hegelians, pp. 108-109.

[55]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. lii.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Meyer, Aims of Jesus, p. 14. Hans-Georg Godamer, Truth and Method (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p. 333.

[60]Meyer, Ibid.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Hodgson has a brief discussion of this. See Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. xxviiif.

[63]They reflect particularly the stamp of David Hume's dictum against miracles. "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined." Concerning Human Understanding Vol. XXXV, Great Books of the Western World, ed. Robert Hutchins, 54 Vols; (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britiannica, Inc., 1937), p. 491. It might further be said that this simply reflects the strength of the cultural continuum issuing from the Enlightment, in which this presupposition is widely shared. Strauss need not argue for it, he can simply argue from it.

[64]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. 39.

[65]Ibid.

[66]Ibid., pp. 48, 74-75.

[67]Ibid., pp. 40, 459.

[68]This appeal to modernity as the standard for either accepting certain things or rejecting others in the gospel narratives is present repeatedly in Strauss, Ibid., pp. 98, 203, 322, 459.

[69]Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope, (London: SCM Press, 1967), p. 174.

[70]Wolfhart Pannenberg, Basic Questions in Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), Vol. 1, p. 43.

[71]Ibid., p. 70. Meyer, Aims of Jesus, p. 100ff.

[72]Pannenberg, Ibid., p. 45.

[73]Brazill, The Young Hegelians, p. 108.

[74]Backhaus, Kerygma und Mythos, p. 36.

[75]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. 758,796.

[76]Meyer, Aims of Jesus, p. 15.

[77]Van Austin Harvey, The Historian and the Believer (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1966), p. 104.

[78]Pannenberg, Basic Questions in Theology, p. 142. Hans-Georg Godamer maintains the claim to objective knowledge but says "Its virtue cannot consist in its really being 'absolute knowledge' in Hegel's sense, i.e. in its uniting, in a present self-consciousness, the whole of mind's becoming. The claim of the philosophical consciousness, to contain within itself the whole truth of the history of the mind, is questioned precisely by the historical experience is necessary; human consciousness is not an infinite intellect for which everything exists, contemporary and co-present. The absolute identity of consciousness and object simply cannot be achieved by finite, historical consciousness. It always remains involved in the historical context.", Truth and Method, p. 207.

[79]Jürgen Moltmann, Hope and Planning (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1971), p. 208.

[80]Ibid., p. 208-210. Moltmann refers to the crisis in Modern physics in which new phenomena are met which "themselves compel reflection on the conditions and limitations of the traditional plan...One thus gains insight into the hypothetical character of that plan which was at first held to be universal.", p. 209.

[81]Ibid.

[82]Ibid., p. 40. Leander E. Keck, A Future of the Historical Jesus (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), pp. 18-19.

[83]Strauss, Life of Jesus, pp. 55-57, 140.

[84]Ibid., pp. 130-140, cf. p. xxviii.

[85]Ibid., pp. 48,56. cf. Meyer, Aims of Jesus, p. 32. As Meyer notes, the shocks from this move of Strauss were far-reaching. "On the philosophical front he provoked a bitter split among the industrious Hegelians of Berlin. On the exegetical front he delivered the coup de grace to the school of Rationalism. In the larger world of Christian conservatism (which included conservatives of the universities) Strauss became a byword. The storm unleashed by his Leban Jesu cost him his academic career." p. 32.

[86]Strauss, Life of Jesus. As Strauss put it, "if the mythical view be once admitted, the innumerable, and never otherwise to be harmonized, discrepencies and chronological contradictions in the gospel histories disappear, as it were at a stroke.", pp. 56-57.

[87]Ibid. It is well to have his whole statement, the natural system of interpretation he says, seeking to preserve the historical certainty of the narratives, "loses their ideal truth-sacrifices the essence to the form: whereas the mythical interpretation, by renouncing the historical body of such narratives, rescues and preserves the idea which resides in them, and which alone constitutes their vitality and spirit.",p. 546.

[88]Ibid., pp. 61,87.

[89]Ibid., pp. xxvi, 86,87.

[90]Ibid., p. 52.

[91]Ibid., pp. 39ff. Prominent reference is made by Strauss to C. G. Heyne (1729-1812). J. G. Eichhorn (1752-1827), J. P. Gabler (1753-1826), G. L. Bauer (1755-1806), and W. M. L. de Wette (1780-1849). Harris, Strauss and His Theology., p. 259f.

[92]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. 39f.

[93]Ibid., pp. 52-53. Harris, Ibid., p. 263. His understanding of myth was the counterpart of his understanding of science; basically a rationalistic standpoint.

[94]Strauss, Ibid., pp. 55,61. Harris, Ibid., pp. 264,265.

[95]Roger A. Johnson, The Origins of Demythologizing (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), p. 130.

[96]Harris, Strauss and His Theology, pp. 265, 46. Harris is probably overstating the influence of these latter works in the formation of Strauss's concept of Myth. c.f. Keck's discussion of this point in Strauss, Christ of Faith, p. xxvii, 47.

[97]The article appearing in a German theological journal was entitled, "The different aspects in which and for which the biographer of Jesus can work". Ibid., p. 268.

[98]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. 64. Harris, Ibid.

[99]Ibid., p. 80ff.

[100]Ibid.

[101]Ibid.

[102]Ibid., p. 81.

[103]Ibid., p. 52.

[104]Ibid.

[105]Ibid., pp. 52-53, 58, 84-86.

[106]Johnson, The Origins of Demythologizing, p. 127.

[107]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. 89.

[108]Johnson, op. cit.

[109]Ibid. Johnson singles out the French Bernard Fontenelle as the first one to develop this formulation of myth (he used the word "fable") as an "integral and essential moment in the development of man." As early as Fontenelle there is a unified and complete theory of myth. (1681)

[110]Ibid., p. 135. Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. 88.

[111]Johnson, Ibid., p. 131. F. C. Baur taught that Myth formed a key element in religious thought. Hegel also held that mythical representations characterized the early development of spirit. Brazill, The Young Hegelians, p. 100. Indeed he set out a three-phase history: primitive (Oriental) religions, "in which God was an objective power in nature, the religions of Jews, Greeks, and Romans, in which he was subjective individuality, and Christianity or the 'absolute religion' in which God was Spirit." Meyer, The Aims of Jesus, p. 78f.

[112]Johnson, Ibid., p. 136. Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. 78f.

[113]Johnson, Ibid., p. 138,139. Strauss, Ibid., p. 48.

[114]Strauss, Ibid., p. 80.

[115]Ibid., pp. 74-75.

[116]Johnson, op. cit., p. 141.

[117]Strauss, op. cit., p. 77.

[118]Johnson, op. cit., p. 141. Strauss, op. cit., p. 80.

[119]Harris, Strauss and His Theology, p. 271.

[120]Strauss, op. cit., p. xxix. Hodgson goes on to say, "it is misleading to suggest that rationalism offers the only valid presupposition for scientific historical scholorship" (as Hartlich and Sachs had done).

[121]Ibid., p. 546.

[122]Brazill puts it this way, Strauss's "Philosophical view that all reality is the development of the immanent divine spirit allowed for no miraculous divine intervention in the traditional Christian sense. The rejection of miracles stemmed from his idealism, not from positivism.", p. 109.

Chapter II

[1]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. 461. In the programatic section, Strauss had declared his aim: "To investigate the internal grounds of credibility in relation to each detail given in the Gospels, (for it is with them alone we are here concerned) and to test the probability or improbability of their being the production of eye-witnesses, or of competently informed writers, is the sole object of the present work.", p. 70.

[2]Ibid., p. 182.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p. 496.

[5]Ibid., p. 498.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., p. 234.

[8]Ibid., p. 203.

[9]Ibid., pp. 204-205.

[10]Ibid., p. 227.

[11]Ibid., pp. 227,233.

[12]Ibid., pp. 311, 320-321.

[13]Ibid., p. 90.

[14]Ibid., pp. 266-267.

[15]Ibid., p. 268.

[16]Ibid., p. 271.

[17]Ibid., p. 184.

[18]Ibid., pp. 186-187.

[19]Ibid., pp. 189-190.

[20]Hodgson, The Formation of Historical Theology, p. 80.

[21]Ibid. What Baur says of other gospel critics also has application to the atomistic form of criticism by Strauss: "The general deficiency of these...theories is that they move only in the narrow circle of a self-made, abstract representation, and do not know how to transpose themselves into the objective reality and truth of the concrete life of history.", p. 156.

[22]Strauss, op. cit., p. 89.

[23]Ibid., p. 291.

[24]Ibid., p. 189.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid., p. 140.

[27]Ibid., p 688.

[28]Ibid., pp. 311-312.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid., p. xxvii.

[31]Ibid. The first unit of the book is specifically set out in this order, and this remains the procedure of his criticism., p. 95ff.

[32]Ibid., p. 414.

[33]Ibid. p. 415.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid., p. 422.

[36]Ibid., p. 437.

[37]Ibid., p. 439.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid., pp. 439-440.

[40]Ibid., p. 440.

[41]Ibid., pp. 440-441.

[42]Ibid., pp. 443-445,

[43]Ibid., pp. 450-541.

[44]Ibid., p. xxvi, pp. 419,461. Schweitzer, Von Reimarus Zu Wrede, p. 84.

[45]See Ben F. Meyer's book for the basic formulation of the point in relation to other gospel critics., p. 43.

[46]The special character of John includes the word "sign" to refer to miracles. But this usage does not occur at all in the synoptics, except once in the long ending of Mark (16:17-18).

[47]Strauss, op. cit., p. 126.

[48]Ibid., pp. 182, 158.

[49]Ibid., pp. 448-449.

[50]Ibid., p. 227.

[51]Ibid., p. 228.

[52]Ibid., p. 229.

[53]Ibid., pp. 455-457.

[54]Ibid., p. 359.

[55]Ibid., pp. li, 87, 872.

[56]Ibid., pp. li, lii.

[57]See Leander Keck's statement of this in Strauss's The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History, p. lxxxiii.

[58]Strauss, Christ of Faith, p. lxxxiii.

[59]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. 781.

[60]Harris, op. cit., p. 56.

[61]Meyer, op. cit., pp. 55,98.

[62]Keck in Strauss, The Christ of Faith, p. lxxxviii.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Ibid., p. lxxxix.

Conclusion and Appraisal

[1]Hodgson, op. cit., p. xvii.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Harris makes the point that "All historical criticism not sharing this view was henceforth to be labelled as unscientific, and this was the false step which dogged the whole programme of critical research for the remainder of the century and even beyond.", p. 89.

[4]Bernard Lonergan, speaking in regard to this matter, says that one cannot approach the Biblical text on "the principle of the empty head" and expect to discover its meaning. This approach is simply naive. And this is evident as soon as one considers what the "empty head" will in practise discern. "There is just a series of signs. Anything over and above a re-issue of the same signs in the same order will be mediated by the experience, intelligence, and judgment of the interpreter. The less that experience, the less cultivated that intelligence, the less formed that judgment, the greater the likelihood that the interpreter will impute to the author an opinion that the author never entertained." Method in Theology, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 157.

[5]Godamer, Truth and Method, p. 138. Pannenberg, Basic Questions in Theology, Vol. I, p. 151.

[6]Strauss, Life of Jesus, p. 79.

[7]Hodgson, op. cit., p. 190.

[8]Pannenberg, op. cit., p. 42. Hodgson, Ibid., p. 269.

[9]Pannenberg, Ibid., p. 75. Hodgson, Ibid., p. 150.

[10]Pannenberg, Ibid., p. 18. Pannenberg confirms the recognition by Hegel of understanding history on the basis of the whole. The problem is Hegel does not yet stand at the point where the whole can be comprehended. According to Pannenberg, it is the anticipated end of history in the event of Christ that provides a provisional understanding of history. Vol. II, p. 22; Vol. I, pp. 36-37.

[11]Hodgson, op. cit., p. 150.

[12]Meyer, op. cit., p. 32.

[13]Meyer makes reference to the evolving epistematogical ideal as the setting for offense by critics such as Strauss. The dogmatic character of the gospels seemed to contradict this ideal and the critics disapproved. Different options were followed in dealing with this. Dogma may be regarded as frauds and rejected (Reimarus), or it may be neutralized by interpretation (Strauss), or located and skirted around (Holtzmann and the liberals), confronted directly and consigned to the superseded past (Schweitzer). Meyer, The Aims of Jesus, p. 25. Implicit in this offense at the "dogmatic" Jesus is the assumption that the "real" Jesus will be an ordinary human being (without the traditional elements found in the gospel picture of him).

[14]Pannenberg, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 85.

[15]A. C. Thiselton, The Two Horizons, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Col, 1980), pp. 14, 18.

[16]Brevard S. Childs, Myth and Reality in the Old Testament, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1960), pp. 14,18.

[17]Ibid., p. 18. Contrary to Strauss, Pannenberg makes the point that myth "neither presupposes ignorance in every case of the true relationship between cause and effect, nor is it comprehensive as a consequence of such ignorance. Rather, such a way of looking at things expresses the basic religious expience which apprehends the individual phenomenon not only in its association with other finite events and circumstances, but with reference to the "powers" which determine reality as a whole." Vol. III., p. 15.

[18]Ibid., p. 83. William F. Albright speaks to the same effect, "It may confidently be stated that there is no true mythology anywhere in the Hebrew Bible. What we have consists of vestiges - what may be called the 'debris' of a past religious culture." Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan (London: The Athlone Press, 1968), p. 161.

[19]Eduard Schweizer, Jesus, trans, David E. Green (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1971), p. 45.

[20]Childs, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

[21]Pannenberg, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 60.

[22]Ibid., p. 25. Pannenberg points out that there is "doubtful justification for including belief in miracles in general in the mythical world view, or even of claiming that it is particularly characteristic of it. It is perfectly possible for a belief in miracles to be neither indispensable as a typical structural element of an allegedly mythical aetiology, nor to be conditioned by it in its turn." p. 26.

[23]Amos N. Wilder, Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1964), pp. 133-135.

[24]Pannenberg, op. cit., Vol 3, pp. 62-63.

[25]Ibid., pp. 71ff. Arthur Darby Nock makes a similar point in his Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenistic Background, (New York: Harper and Row, Inc., 1964), pp. 106-107.

[26]Childs, op. cit., pp. 72, 95-96.

[27]Godamer, op. cit., p. 258.

[28]C.F.D. Moule, The Birth of the New Testament, (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1962), pp. 69ff.

[29]C. H. Dodd, According to the Scriptures (London: James Nisbet and Co. Ltd., 1952), p. 133.

[30]Gadamer, op. cit., pp. 94,110

[31]Meyer, op. cit., p. 84.

[32]Willi Marxsen. The Beginnings of Christology: A Study in its Problems (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 8.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Backhaus, G. Kerygma und Mythos bei David Friedrich Strauss und Rudolf Bultmann. Hamburg-Bergstedt; Reich, 1956.

Brazill, W. J. The Young Hegelians. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.

Childs, B. S. Myth and Reality in the Old Testament. London: SCM Press, 1960.

Cromwell, R. S. David Friedrich Strauss and His Place in Modern Thought. Fair Lawn, New Jersey: R. E. Burdick, Inc., 1974.

Harris, H. Strauss and His Theology. Cambridge: University Press, 1973.

Hillerbrand, H. J. A Fellowship of Discontent. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.

Hodgson, P. C. The Formation of Historical Theology. New York: New York: Harper and Row, 1966.

Johnson, R. A. The Origins of Demythologizing. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974.

Meyer, B. F. The Aims of Jesus. London: SCM Press, 1979.

Müller, G. Identität und Immanenz: Zur Genese der Theologie Von David Friedrich Strauss. Zurich: Evz-Verlag, 1968.

Schweitzer, A. The Quest of the Historical Jesus. Trans. W. Montgomery. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968.

Strauss, D. F. The Life of Jesus Critically Examined. Trans. George Elliot, with new introduction by Peter C. Hodson. London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1973.

_____. The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History: A Critique of Schleiermacher's The Life of Jesus. Introduction by Leander Keck. Trans. Leander Keck. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.

Selected Sources:

Albright, W. F. Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan. London: The Athelone Press, 1968.

Cragg, G. R. The Church and the Age of Reason. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1960.

Dodd, C.H. According to the Scriptures. London: James Nisbet and Co., 1952.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. Truth and Method. New York: Seabury Press, 1975.

Harvey, Van A. The Historian and the Believer. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1966.

Hume, David. Concerning Human Understanding. Vol. XXXV of Great Books of the Western World. (ed. Robert Hutchins). Chicago: Encyclopedia Britiannica, Inc., 1937.

Keck, L. E. A Future for the Historical Jesus. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971.

Lonergan, B. Method in Theology. New York: Herder and Herder, 1972.

Marxsen, W. The Beginnings of Christology: A study in its Problems. Trans. Paul J. Achtemeier. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969.

Moltmann, J. Theology of Hope. Trans. James W. Leitch. London: SCM Press, 1967.

_____. Hope and Planning. Trans. M. Clarkson. London: SCM Press, 1971.

Moule, C. F. D. The Birth of the New Testament. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1962.

Nock, A. D. Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenistic Background. New York: Harper and Row Inc., 1964.

Pannenberg, W. Basic Questions in Theology. Trans. G. H. Kehm. Vols I and II. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970, 1971. Vol. III. Trans. R. A. Wilson. London: SCM Press, 1973.

Schleiermacher, F. D. E. On Religion. Trans. John Oman. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958.

Schweizer, E. Jesus. Trans. D. E. Green. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1971.

Thiselton, A. C. The Two Horizons. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980.

Wilder, A. N. Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel. London: SCM Press, 1964.