

THE EXERCISES OF OSCAR CULLMANN

THE EXEGETICAL METHOD
OF
OSCAR CULLMANN

by
EDWIN BOYD HEAVEN, B.A., S.T.B.

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AUTHOR: Edwin Boyd Heaven, B.A. (McMaster University)
S.T.B. (Trinity College, Toronto)

SUPERVISOR: Professor Eugene Combs

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: A critical examination of two of Oscar Cullmann's books to determine the extent to which his exegetical work is adversely affected by his theological presuppositions. Cullmann's presuppositions are isolated and described. Then a critical examination reveals that the presuppositions are not inherent in the New Testament material but are imposed upon it. Cullmann's "theological exegesis" is shown to be an inadequate method of biblical interpretation.

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THE EXEGETICAL METHOD OF OSCAR CULLMANN

This study is an examination of Cullmann's exegetical method in Christ and Time¹ and The Gospel According to St. John and Early Christian Worship.² While Cullmann claims in his two books to deal with the New Testament data per se and to let it "speak for itself",³ he does in fact attempt a synthesis between the New Testament data and his own theological presuppositions. Cullmann's theological presuppositions concerning time and history are not inherent in the New Testament but are imposed upon it. In Cullmann's presentation the presuppositions determine the selection and organization of the data. To the extent that Cullmann's exegetical method includes theological presuppositions it fails in its objective to allow the material to "speak for itself".

This study is important for three reasons. (1) Very little critical work has been done on Cullmann in the English-speaking world. The most important of Cullmann's books have been translated into English, but the translations have not been accompanied by the critical reviews which greeted their first publication in German or French. The debate which has been stirred up by Cullmann's work has been largely confined to

¹Trans. F.V. Filson, Third edition, London: S.C.M., 1962.

²A translation of Les Sacrements Dans L'Evangile Johanniques (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1951) which forms the second part of Early Christian Worship (trans. A.S. Todd and J.B. Torrance, London: S.C.M., 1953).

³A paraphrase of what Cullmann says on Pp. xii and xxix of Christ and Time.

the continent of Europe. One striking exception is James Barr's Biblical Words for Time⁴ which devotes a chapter to criticisms of Cullmann's presuppositions in Christ and Time. But there has been no corresponding attempt by an English-speaking author to determine the presuppositions behind Cullmann's work on the Fourth Gospel. (2) Cullmann's approach to the New Testament material is, in many respects, typical of the modern "biblical theology" movement. If it can be demonstrated that Cullmann's exegetical method is adversely affected by his theological presuppositions, serious questions will then arise concerning the validity of the whole "biblical theology" enterprise. It is not the purpose of this study to draw general conclusions about the "biblical theology" approach to the scriptures, but merely to show the particular problems which emerge from an examination of Cullmann's theological exegesis. (3) The search for a method in biblical studies is always important, and must be constantly renewed in the light of developments in critical scholarship. The most effective way in which the search is renewed is by careful study of the methods which scholars have used in the past. A critical study of Cullmann's exegetical method therefore contributes to the ongoing search for a method. As a solution to the problems created by Cullmann's method, this study concludes by proposing the complete separation of exegesis from theology. The proposed "descriptive exegesis" requires the same critical examination which this study cannot provide.

The study is arranged in five chapters. In chapter I, Cullmann's exegetical method is placed in the context of contemporary biblical

⁴London: S.C.M., 1962.

scholarship. Chapter II presents Cullmann's argument for the necessity of a theological exegesis based primarily on the claim that theological presuppositions are inherent in the biblical material. In chapters III and IV the results of Cullmann's exegetical method are compared with those of exegetes who approach the biblical material without theological presuppositions. Chapter III is a critical analysis of the section in Christ and Time which deals with the New Testament terminology for time. Chapter IV is an examination of Cullmann's exegetical method as it is applied to the Fourth Gospel. Chapters III and IV show conclusively that Cullmann's theological presuppositions are not inherent in the biblical material. Chapter V draws together the results of the entire study into a systematic critique of Cullmann's theological exegesis.

I

CULLMANN'S THEOLOGICAL EXEGESIS IN CONTEXT

Cullmann freely admits that he approaches his exegetical work with theological presuppositions. By this admission he acknowledges his debt to Karl Barth and places himself firmly on the side of all those who, since Barth's Epistle to the Romans of 1919, have advocated a "theological exegesis". On this particular matter Cullmann is in agreement not only with Barth, but with such diverse theological opinion as represented by Bultmann and the more recent advocates of "The New Hermeneutic".¹ All of these scholars have reacted against the earlier Form - critical approach to exegesis which had applied the same scientific historical principles to the biblical material as were used to explain all other literary material. The application of these principles led to a breaking down of the biblical material into many unrelated strands of tradition, with the result that very little attention was paid to the whole (either the Old Testament, the New Testament, or both together)

¹The title of a book edited by James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb Jr. (New York: Harper and Row, 1964) in which the views of Gerhard Ebeling, Ernest Fuchs, Robert Funk, Amos Wilder, and John Dillenberger are presented.

because of the preoccupation with the parts.² Cullmann's reaction differs from the others in a number of significant ways. In the introductory section to the third edition of Christ and Time Cullmann discusses his similarities and differences with his contemporaries; and in an article entitled "The Necessity and Function of Higher Criticism"³ he further clarifies what he means by "theological exegesis".⁴ A discussion of the context of Cullmann's theological exegesis is a necessary preliminary to the delimiting of his theological presuppositions.

1. CULLMANN'S DEBT TO KARL BARTH

According to Cullmann the twentieth century is "the century of theological exegesis", and Barth more than any other scholar is responsible: "Karl Barth must always be remembered with gratitude for having raised implicitly in his commentary on Romans the problem of exegesis - whatever reserves some of us may have about its contents. This commentary

²"At times, it may be hard not to sympathize with the reaction, particularly if we have just consulted, say, a volume of the Old Testament section of the International Critical Commentary, with a view to the immediate exposition of the Christian faith in the pulpit or the dogmatic theology classroom!" E.R. Fairweather, "Christian Theology and the Bible," Canadian Journal of Theology, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 69.

³First published in The Student World, Vol. XLII, no. 2, 1949, Geneva, Pp. 117-33. English translation in The Early Church, edited by A.J.B. Higgins (London: S.C.M., 1956) Pp. 3-16.

⁴Cullmann has written other works which outline his exegetical methods. Eg. "Les recentes etudes sur la formation de la tradition evangelique", 1925, Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuse (Strasbourg) Pp. 459-477, 564-579, and "Les problemes poses par la methode exegetique de Karl Barth", RHPR, 1928, p. 70-83, but the two named in the text have been selected because they represent Cullmann's mature outlook and were written at approximately the same time as Christ and Time and The Gospel According to St. John and Early Christian Worship.

has re-orientated exegesis as a whole by calling it back to its aims".⁵

In Barth's commentary the subject matter of Paul's language is radically translated into the language of the twentieth century. "It is this fait accompli", says James M. Robinson, "that has called forth the hermeneutical reflection of our times".⁶ Barth reverses the procedures of the Form - critical school where the investigating subject mastered the objects of his studies (documents) and obtained his answers. For now it is the object which puts the investigating subject in question.⁷

Cullmann assents to Barth's revolutionary approach. Cullmann says, for example, that "a genuine and complete interpretation must try to develop in modern language the objective ideas expressed in the text".⁸ Cullmann further points out that an interpreter must stand in the kind of relation to his subject where he is deeply involved in it. The examples of Pascal's Pensees and Mozart's works are cited: in the first instance the interpreter "must attempt to penetrate to the very subject which Pascal wished to express", and in the second instance, "he must also himself be a musician".⁹ Thus both Cullmann and Barth attempt to give recognition to the factor which the modern existentialist exegetes stress beyond all others, namely the involvement of the interpreter.¹⁰

⁵The Early Church, p. 15.

⁶The New Hermeneutic, p. 22.

⁷James M. Robinson cites Barth's debate with Harnack in 1923 as a good example of this shift in emphasis. Harnack had been suggesting that the task of theology was to "establish the content of the gospel", or "to get intellectual control of the object". Robinson quotes Barth's reply that "the 'scholarliness' of theology consists in being bound to the recollection that its object was first subject and must again and again become subject". The New Hermeneutic, p. 25.

⁸The Early Church, p. 4.

⁹Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰Infra, p. 13ff.

Cullmann is also critical of Barth on a number of points. In the first place, Cullmann says that Barth draws too rigid a distinction between "purely historical" documents and "ideological" documents.¹¹ According to Barth an historical exegesis is adequate for documents which simply recount past events. But if the documents are of a religious or philosophical nature an historical exegesis is radically insufficient. Here Barth betrays his positivistic view of history as a science, for in his attempt to counteract the liberal quest to establish Christian truth by scientific historical investigation, Barth accepts the liberal view that it is possible to isolate objectively the "facts" of history.¹² Cullmann, on the other hand, is aware of what he calls "the naive historicism of the period",¹³ and he concludes that the same historical principles must be employed "whether in reference to the Bible or any other document".¹⁴ It is not legitimate, according to Cullmann, to separate into two distinct domains historical exegesis and theological exegesis. With regard to the biblical material, both methods are relevant and must be carried on simultaneously because the material is both "ideological" and "historical".¹⁵

Cullmann's second criticism of Barth arises out of the first. It concerns the implicitly negative attitude of Barth to the value of higher

¹¹Cf. Jean Frisque, Oscar Cullmann, Tournai, Casterman, 1960, p. 32.

¹²See Alan Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, London: S.C.M., 1964, for a refutation of the positivistic assumption in historiography - the view that "it is the task of historians (like other scientists) to establish 'facts' which may be objectively ascertained by following recognized scientific procedures". p. 154.

¹³The Early Church, p. 5.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 16.

criticism. In his debate with Harnack, Barth had stated that his objective was not to remove from theological research the critical historical method of studying the Bible, but rather "to identify the relevant place for it".¹⁶ Cullmann says that Barth has not succeeded in reaching his objective. Cullmann's reason for this judgement is that Barth "seems to treat philological and historical explanation as too exclusively preliminary in character".¹⁷ In the preface to the first edition of The Epistle to the Romans Barth states: "The critical historical method of Biblical research has its validity. It points to the preparation for understanding which is never superfluous. But if I had to choose between it and the old doctrine of inspiration, I would decidedly lay hold of the latter. It has the greater, deeper, more important validity, for it points to the actual work of understanding without which all preparation is useless. I am happy not to have to choose between the two".¹⁸ Cullmann is suggesting that Barth has in fact chosen between the two by placing such a great importance on the doctrine of inspiration, and has thus relegated the critical historical method to a secondary and preliminary role. Cullmann gives the historical and philological criticism a more positive role in exegesis. "It must never be considered as wholly a preliminary work. It must rather accompany exegesis from its beginning to its end".¹⁹

Cullmann is not prepared to support Barth's contention that the exegete has "dogmatic responsibility".²⁰ Rather Cullmann says that "the

¹⁶The New Hermeneutic, p. 26. ¹⁷The Early Church, p. 16.

¹⁸Quoted by Robinson in The New Hermeneutic, p. 22.

¹⁹The Early Church, p. 16.

²⁰Cited by Cullmann in footnote no. 10, The Early Church, p. 16.

great and unique responsibility of biblical exegesis is to be faithful to the text in a radical manner, even if the exegetical result of this is but modest and may perhaps at first seem useless for either the dogma or the practical life of the Church".²¹ In contrast to Barth, then, Cullmann draws a distinction between dogmatic theology and biblical exegesis, and says that the latter can only serve the former when it is faithful to its more limited task.²² Cullmann places himself in the category of the biblical scholar rather than the dogmatic or systematic theologian.²³ It remains to be seen whether Cullmann can justify a "theological exegesis" without overstepping the precise and narrow limits which academic integrity demands of the biblical scholar.

2. CULLMANN'S ASSESSMENT OF THE CRITICAL WORK OF THE 19TH CENTURY

While Cullmann is firmly on the side of Barth in insisting that exegesis must be theological, he implies that Barth has gone too far in his reaction against the critical work of the 19th century. Writing in 1949, Cullmann says that "the moment has now come to defend the necessity of philological and historical criticism" and to do justice, "while using all necessary reservations, to the debt of theology to the 19th century."²⁴

²¹The Early Church, p. 16.

²²Cullmann makes the distinction clear in the preface to the third edition of Christ and Time, p. xxviii. "The New Testament scholar.... is required to show only what the New Testament teaches.... But it is his bounden duty to keep within the limits of his work, for which the dogmatic theologian is thankful because only in this way can he rely on the results of the exegete's labour".

²³Christ and Time, p. xxviii.

²⁴The Early Church, p. 5.

Cullmann says that the value in the earlier approach lies in "the application of all forms of human knowledge to the study of the Bible",²⁵ and he insists that this "application" must accompany the exegesis at every level. He laments a tendency among the present generation of students to pass a negative judgement on the philological and historical work. "They make 'theological exegesis' a pretext for passing as quickly as possible from philological study, with its greater austerity and its demands on their abnegation, to systematic studies."²⁶ Cullmann goes on to expound the theological basis which underlies his philological and historical exegesis. It is at this point that Cullmann's theological presuppositions become evident, and these will be examined in detail in the next section.²⁷ In summary, what he claims is that a particular view of history is the central affirmation of the New Testament. Because of "the theological affirmation which is at the foundation of the New Testament: 'Jesus of Nazareth is Lord', history (that is to say, Jesus of Nazareth) is itself the subject".²⁸ The importance of this position for Cullmann's assessment of the role of higher criticism is that because "the word became flesh" (John 1:14) and entered history at a particular time and place, this necessarily involves the application of historical categories to the New Testament. "Although here we are speaking of a very particular history, a biblical history, it is none the less history."²⁹

²⁵The Early Church, p. 5.

²⁶Ibid., p. 6.

²⁷Infra, p. 25ff.

²⁸The Early Church, p. 7.

²⁹The Early Church, p. 11.

Cullmann is attempting to maintain a relationship between what he calls "biblical history" and "general history."³⁰ Because of this relationship the labours of all those who examine the biblical material from a historico - critical point of view are relevant and important.

It is evident that Cullmann's attempt to anchor the Christian faith in the 'real' history of the world is a reaction against the Barthian tendency to undervalue the role of higher criticism. Cullmann agrees with Barth that Christian truth cannot be attained by historical enquiry apart from the insight of faith, and he rejoices with Barth that the liberal "quest of the historical Jesus" ended in failure.³¹ But for Cullmann this does not mean that the historical facts which criticism can investigate are irrelevant to Christian belief. On the contrary, because "the very essence of the critical affirmation of the Bible has to do with history"³² historical criticism is essential.

Cullmann says that philological and historical exegesis must be combined with theological exegesis at every level, and he suggests three ways in which higher criticism can assist in explaining the "theological purpose of all biblical texts".³³ The first and most fundamental role of higher

³⁰ Christ and Time, p. 21.

³¹ Alan Richardson's assessment of the "liberal quest" in History Sacred and Profane, p. 140, admirably expresses the views of both Cullmann and Barth on this matter: "The attempt to achieve security by means of a scientific historical investigation was a form of unfaith and therefore a illegitimate theological procedure. Faith was not a favourable assessment of historical probabilities but a response to the proclamation of the Word of God in the living present".

³² The Early Church, p. 7.

³³ The Early Church, p. 15.

criticism is to assist in the theological understanding of the text by taking history with absolute seriousness, and to include the centrality of history in the exposition of the text. "We must learn how to combine with theological thought a historical viewpoint which presupposes both a knowledge of the facts and the capacity to link them together in a definite perspective. In other words.... we must be both theologians and historians."³⁴ That Cullmann is aware of the extent to which this first role of higher criticism is based on his theological presuppositions is evident in his admission that it is "an easier matter to find agreement among modern interpreters with regard to the second function of historical and philological exegesis."³⁵

This second function Cullmann calls "defining the human setting";³⁶ that is the use of all the sciences which are auxiliary to history (philology, archaeology, papyrology, textual history, literary criticism and even psychology) in order that the interpreter "may see with the writer the truth which he saw and with him may attain to the revelation which came to him".³⁷ Cullmann criticizes the earlier liberal view that only some of the truths of the Bible are adapted to the ideas of the period in which they were written while others are valid for all time. He emphasizes that "biblical texts as a whole wear a dress which belongs to the time of their writers" and the "message is wholly adapted to the ideas of the period".³⁸

The third and final role of higher criticism is to control the

³⁴The Early Church, p. 12.

³⁵Ibid., p. 12.

³⁶Ibid., p. 12.

³⁷Ibid., p. 13.

³⁸Ibid., p. 13.

theological interpretations. Cullmann points out that the good exegete faces the danger of introducing into his exposition ideas which are not in the text. "The critic faces his severest trial when theological ideas spring up all around him, meet, get entangled, conflict and are combined."³⁹ At this point higher criticism is essential both to control the theological ideas and to eliminate those which are alien to the text. "The scholar must regard his own personal discoveries with a pitiless eye, however seductive they may be."⁴⁰ Cullmann thinks that Barth is particularly open to the criticism of not submitting his interpretations to the control of historical exegesis, "not only because of the richness of his thought, but because systematically he seems to treat philological and historical explanation as too exclusively preliminary in character".⁴¹

Cullmann attempts to restore higher criticism to a significant status in the exegetical endeavour. "There must always be a continual interchange of results between historical study and theological penetration so that each may enrich the other."⁴² It remains to be seen, however, whether a "theological exegesis" such as Cullmann advocates can in fact be open and receptive to the findings of higher criticism.

3. CULLMANN'S REJECTION OF THE NEW HERMENEUTIC

The most severe challenge to Cullmann's exegetical work, and the one of which he is most conscious, comes from Rudolf Bultmann and other existentially oriented exegetes who are associated with "the New Hermeneutic".

³⁹The Early Church, p. 15.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 15.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 16.

⁴²Ibid., p. 14.

All of these men acknowledge their debt to Karl Barth for pointing out that exegesis is fundamentally theological because its primary role is the translation of the biblical words into contemporary language. Gerhard Ebeling, for example, says that "the text is there for the sake of the event of the interpretation,"⁴³ and that "theology itself is hermeneutic, for it consists in translating what the Bible has to say into the word for today."⁴⁴ Ebeling echoes Barth when he states that "in all the words of Scripture we have to do with nothing other than the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ. The effect of this is that not a single word of Scripture is understood if it is not grasped in its correlation to faith."⁴⁵ Similarly Ernst Fuchs says that "the New Testament is itself a textbook in hermeneutic. It teaches the hermeneutic of faith - in brief, the language of faith."⁴⁶ According to Bultmann, Ebeling and Fuchs, faith is the only way in which the New Testament can be understood - outside of the context of the believing subject it is meaningless. Because faith means the involvement of the subject in order that the text may have meaning in the present, this brings the existential element into interpretation. And it is at this point that the representatives of the New Hermeneutic claim to have made a substantial advance over Barth's position, for they state that the existential element is a factor in the interpretation of all texts, and not simply those of a religious or philosophical character.⁴⁷

⁴³The New Hermeneutic, p. 68.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 67.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 64.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 141.

⁴⁷Supra, p. 7, where it is noted that Barth draws a distinction between "ideological" and "purely historical" documents.

By means of existential interpretation the representatives of the New Hermeneutic claim to have established theology as a discipline on the same level as other academic disciplines.⁴⁸ For not only the biblical texts but also the classics, letters and philosophy "demand an intellectual, moral, religious conversion of the interpreter over and above the broadening of his horizon".⁴⁹ In all fields of interpretation the "conversion" is only the first step, for there remains the task of thinking out everything from the new and more profound viewpoint. The theologians of the New Hermeneutic are engaged in working out the implications for the presentation of the Christian faith.

Cullmann has dissociated himself from the New Hermeneutic, and he makes his reasons quite clear in an important paragraph from the introduction to the third edition of Christ and Time:

I am a theologian. But the lectures I delivered at Basle, where I am a member of the theological faculty, are in no way different from those I deliver at the "Ecole des Hautes Etudes" and the Sorbonne in Paris, where I am a member of the department of "Relionsgeschichte" of the faculty of Arts. This is possible, because in both of these departments I observe the same limits. Indeed I consider it a theological necessity also to listen obediently to what the writers of the new covenant are saying before one evaluates or criticizes, before one feels "touched in one's existence," even if their words are strange to our modern minds. I am aware that I thereby stand in contradiction to a "hermeneutical" trend widely prevalent today.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Cf. Robinson's comment in *The New Hermeneutic*, p. 69: "It was Dilthey's recognition of hermeneutics as the methodology of the humanities, deepened by Heidegger, that gave to the hermeneutics of Bultmann critical rapport with the cultural life of our times."

⁴⁹Bernard Lonergan S.J., "Hermeneutics" (an unpublished paper), p. 3.

⁵⁰Christ and Time, p. xxix.

The issues which Cullmann raises in this paragraph are fundamental to the delimiting of the scope of the exegetical method. It has been noted⁵¹ that Cullmann considers the importance of the involvement of the interpreter, but in this paragraph he is clearly drawing a line before the point of existential "conversion". He agrees with Bultmann that "a previous living relationship with the subject"⁵² is essential for exegesis, but he does not agree on the necessity of what Bultmann calls "an existentiell encounter with the text."⁵³ Similarly he agrees with Bultmann's view that every exegete must have presuppositions in terms of the direction of the enquiry.⁵⁴ Only what Cullmann calls a "naive

⁵¹ Supra, p. 6.

⁵² Rudolf Bultmann, "The Problem of Hermeneutics," Essays Philosophical and Theological, London: S.C.M., 1955, p. 252.

⁵³ In an essay entitled "Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?" in Existence and Faith, Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann, edited by Schubert M. Ogden (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1960) Bultmann explains what he means by "existentiell": "To understand history is possible only for one who does not stand over against it as a neutral, non-participating spectator, but himself stands in history and shares in responsibility for it. We speak of this encounter with history that grows out of one's own historicity as the existentiell encounter". p. 294.

⁵⁴ Cullmann thus rejects what Bernard Lonergan (in his unpublished paper cited supra, p.15) calls "The Principle of the Empty Head". This principle contends that, "if one is to be objective, if one is not to drag in one's own notions, if one is not to settle in an a priori fashion what the text must mean no matter what it says, if one is not to 'read into' the text what is not there, then one must drop all preconceptions of every kind, see just what is in the text and nothing more". In refutation of this principle, Lonergan asks, "In fact what is there? There are printed signs in a given order. That is all that is there. Anything over and above a re-issue of the same signs in the same order will be mediated by the experience, intelligence and judgement of the interpreter." Lonergan, p. 3.

historicism"⁵⁵ would claim that there is an objective knowledge which can be attained by the silencing of the subjectivity of the interpreter.⁵⁶ But Cullmann is not willing to take subjectivity so far as to say that "only those who are stirred by the question of their own existence can hear the claim which the text makes."⁵⁷ Cullmann says that it is precisely the duty of the exegete to listen obediently to what the text is saying before he "feels touched in his existence".

The limits which Cullmann places on exegesis provide his justification for teaching the same subject in a theological faculty and a faculty of arts. He is claiming to be able to interpret the basic ideas of the New Testament to Christians and non-Christians alike. He would argue that it is possible for a professor to steep himself in Plato's thought and teach it effectively without himself becoming a Platonist. Cullmann would agree with Bultmann that "only those understand Plato who philosophize with him,"⁵⁸ but he would not agree that it is necessary to become committed to Plato's philosophy in order to interpret it. For fundamentally different reasons both Cullmann and the representatives of the New Hermeneutic claim to have established a working relationship between theology and the other academic disciplines.⁵⁹ The significant point of difference between the two positions lies in the assessment of

⁵⁵The Early Church, p. 4.

⁵⁶Supra, footnote 54.

⁵⁷Bultmann, Essays, p. 256.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 246.

⁵⁹Cf. Bultmann, Essays, p. 258: "The interpretation of biblical writings is not subject to conditions different from those applying to all other kinds of literature."

the extent to which the exegete must be involved in order to understand. While Cullmann acknowledges the importance of the existential element in exegesis he places limits on exegetical work and clearly distinguishes it from dogmatic theology. He says that he finds the current "manner of amalgamating them on the basis of a certain 'hermeneutics' dangerous for exegesis".⁶⁰ That Cullmann's assessment of the existentially oriented exegesis is accurate is evident in several ways.

Cullmann holds that the exegete must be historian and theologian at the same time.⁶¹ Examination reveals that Cullmann means something quite different by "historian" than what the existentialists mean. An illustration of this difference is seen in James M. Robinson's criticisms of Cullmann on the grounds that "the assumption that the historian can hold off his historicness until he is ready to shift consciously into the category of theologian is naive".⁶² Robinson's statement betrays his own assumptions about the nature of history. Like all of the existentialists he thinks that historical phenomena do not exist at all unless there is a subject to comprehend them. Implicit in the existentialist exegesis is the Bultmannian assumption that "facts of the past only become historical phenomena when they become significant for a subject which itself stands in history and is involved in it".⁶³ Cullmann wishes to avoid

⁶⁰Christ and Time, p. xxviii.

⁶¹Supra, p. 8.

⁶²The New Hermeneutic, p. 41.

⁶³Bultmann, Essays, p. 254.

philosophical statements about the nature of history. His recurring plea in Christ and Time⁶⁴ that the biblical material not be approached from a particular philosophical standpoint is directed primarily against the existentialist exegetes. Whether Cullmann's "un-philosophical" view of history, which he claims to derive directly from the biblical material, is an adequate substitute for the existentialist view is a question which can only be assessed after the full presentation of Cullmann's position in Chapter II.

Bultmann's approach provides a good example of the dangers involved in an exegesis which, based on a particular philosophical outlook, results in a particular view of history. Bultmann's statement in "the Problem of Hermeneutics" that one must have understanding⁶⁵ if one is to hear what the scriptures have to say expresses Cullmann's view that "one must listen obediently to what the writers of the new covenant are saying".⁶⁶ Because understanding involves a theory of knowledge, some sort of philosophical framework is necessary for the exegetical work of both Cullmann and Bultmann. Whereas Cullmann claims to find his framework in the New Testament material, Bultmann, on the other hand, makes it quite clear that his framework is existential philosophy. Speaking about the exegetes selecting the relevant approach to the enquiry, Bultmann says that "to work this out is a matter for human reflection - concretely, the task of philosophical,

⁶⁴ eg. Pp. i, xxvii, etc.

⁶⁵ Bultmann, Essays, p. 261.

⁶⁶ Christ and Time, p. xxix.

or existential analysis of human being".⁶⁷

Bultmann's philosophical outlook leads him to a positivistic conception of history. In his essay, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" he says that exegesis is a part of the science of history. "The historical method includes the presupposition that history is a unity in the sense of a closed continuum of effects in which individual events are connected by the succession of cause and effect.... This closedness means that the continuum of historical happenings cannot be rent by the interference of supernatural, transcendent powers."⁶⁸ Bultmann betrays his positivistic presuppositions by ruling out, in advance of the enquiry into the biblical evidence, the possibility of the action of God as a factor in historical causation. Alan Richardson points out that recent discussion "has at least shown that other views of the nature of history and historical method are possible, and that the nineteenth century positivistic view is no longer the dominant conception amongst those philosophers and theologians who have given attention to the problem."⁶⁹

This examination of Bultmann's exegetical presuppositions has demonstrated, in a negative way, the value of the limits which Cullmann places on exegesis. While Cullmann has not, on the one hand, made clear his own philosophical presuppositions concerning the understanding which is involved in any exegesis, neither has he, on the other hand, committed himself to philosophical and historical categories which are suspect in

⁶⁷Bultmann, Essays, p. 258.

⁶⁸Bultmann, Existence and Faith, p. 291-292.

⁶⁹Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, p. 143.

many contemporary quarters. There is no doubt that all the representatives of the New Hermeneutic have made a significant contribution to the current hermeneutical debate by stressing the existential element in exegesis. But by making the involvement of the interpreter the sine qua non of the entire enterprise they have been led to an extreme position which is not in tune with contemporary historiography. As Alan Richardson points out: "it is not necessary to adopt or even understand Heidegger's philosophy in order to appreciate the existential (existentielle) dimension of historiography; and most historians nowadays acknowledge this dimension without concerning themselves at all with any articulated existentialist (existentiale) Philosophy".⁷⁰ It is for good reason then that Cullmann, against the New Hermeneutic, attempts to draw a clear distinction between exegetical work and systematic theology.

4. SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

Cullmann stands firmly with his post-Barthian Protestant contemporaries in favour of a "theological exegesis" against the earlier Form-critical approach to the scriptures. Cullmann criticizes Barth for not distinguishing between dogmatic theology and biblical studies, and for failing to give sufficient importance to the role of higher criticism in exegesis. Similarly Cullmann criticizes the New Hermeneutic for its failure to make a distinction between biblical studies and theological interpretation. Cullmann and the existentialist exegetes are attempting (against Barth) to restore the range of critical scientific disciplines

⁷⁰Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, p. 149.

to their legitimate autonomy. But the different ways in which the attempt is made produce two completely different understandings of the exegetical method.

The fundamental question is: must exegesis be concerned with the interpretation of the texts, or must it be confined to the presentation of the original. Krister Stendahl, suggests that there is wisdom in making a distinction between the principles of interpretation (hermeneutics) and the task of biblical studies. The principles of interpretation, he says, belong to the discipline of theology, not the biblical studies as such.⁷¹ "Consequently the task of biblical studies must be confined to the presentation of the original. To be a good historian in this field is not only to give dates and theories of authorship. It includes the empathetic, descriptive analysis of the ideas and the synthetic description of the patterns of thought. All this belongs to the presentation of the material."⁷² Stendahl says that when we go on to ask the question: 'what does this mean to us here and now?' we have moved into the realm of systematic theology. The theological task of hermeneutics is to "build upon the solid foundation of the original expounded wholly in its own terms".⁷³ Stendahl's position is essentially that of Cullmann: exegesis must be regarded as purely descriptive. This is what Cullmann means by letting the material "speak for itself".

Stendahl's delimitation of exegesis as "descriptive" includes reference to the existential element. Similarly Cullmann's exegetical

⁷¹Krister Stendahl, "Implications of Form - criticism and Tradition - criticism for Biblical Interpretation," Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. LXXVII, 1958, p. 33.

⁷²Stendahl, p. 37-8.

⁷³Ibid., p. 38.

method is open to the insights of the New Hermeneutic, but these insights are not permitted to dominate the entire exegetical procedure. The representatives of the New Hermeneutic have made a significant contribution in pointing out that the exegete is involved in terms of his presuppositions right from the start. But some serious doubts have been raised as to whether the presuppositions can be adequately described in terms of existential philosophy.⁷⁵ The existential foundation undermines the effort to place theological exegesis on the same level as all other critical scientific exegesis.

While Cullmann's attempt to place exegesis on the level of the critical sciences has considerable merit, it remains open to question at one important point. Cullmann brings theological presuppositions to his exegesis. As an heir of Barth he stands within the tradition of theological exegesis. Even when seeking to give higher criticism a more elevated status than Barth would permit, Cullmann still keeps it within the framework of the theological exegesis. Cullmann will claim that this procedure is legitimate because the theological presuppositions are inherent in the

⁷⁵Cf. the evaluation of the current existentialist hermeneutic by James Muilenberg: "The value of this (latter) approach is that it seeks to grapple seriously with the dilemmas of history and historical revelation, that it grounds the problem of interpretation in fresh dimensions of depth, and that it takes very earnestly the relationship between the interpreter and the original speaker in Scripture, indeed, the singularity of all historical existence. It exposes, often in a very trenchant fashion, the psychological forces at work in dealing with the text; it insists upon the necessity of the exegete really listening to what is being said to him. The danger of this approach is that in insistence upon the existential appropriation of the event, the historical and sui generis and concrete reality of the original event may be lost, and that metaphysical nuances may at times be introduced (however subtly!) which are alien to the mentality of the original writer and, indeed, to the whole Hebraic mentality." "Preface to Hermeneutics," Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. LXXVII, 1958, p. 21.

biblical material. Until a critical examination of Cullmann's claim is undertaken the validity of his theological exegesis remains an open question. By stating that the material must be allowed to "speak for itself" Cullmann has moved in the direction of a separation of biblical studies from dogmatic theology. He has moved far from Barth and the New Hermeneutic towards the position of O. Kuss that exegesis must treat the New Testament "as a document which is to be explained strictly according to the universally recognized methods of linguistic and historic research".⁷⁶ But the question which will occupy the remainder of the thesis is: Can an exegesis based on theological presuppositions be included within the framework of "the universally recognized methods of linguistic and historical research"?

⁷⁶Quoted in: Vorgrimler, Herbert (ed.) Dogmatic vs. Biblical Theology, Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1964, p. 74.

II

THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF CULLMANN'S EXEGESIS

It would be both impossible and unfair to attempt an answer to the fundamental question of the thesis without first stating clearly the basic theological presuppositions behind Cullmann's work, and the reasons which he puts forward in support of his theological exegesis. Cullmann himself has suggested that interpreters listen obediently to what is being said before they attempt to criticize and evaluate.¹ This chapter is devoted to a presentation of the material in Christ and Time relevant to the theological foundation for Cullmann's exegetical method.² The theological foundation for the exegesis can be seen in (i) the Christian system of reckoning time, (ii) the place of eschatology in the New Testament, (iii) the relation of 'biblical history' to general history, (iv) the relation of theology to 'biblical history', (v) the witness of the earliest confessions of faith.

¹Christ and Time, p. xxix.

²The preliminary material in Christ and Time is particularly relevant, including the new introductory section written for the third edition of 1962. The presentation in this chapter concentrates on the preliminary material, referring to the other sections of Cullmann's book only where it is necessary to elaborate points made in the earlier material

1. THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM OF RECKONING TIME

In the opening sentence of his book Cullmann states that his object is "to determine what is central in the Christian proclamation".³ He says that "the endeavour to determine this central element must be designated the one great task of New Testament scholarship".⁴ He suggests that attempts to determine what is central must not start from any previously established position (most particularly a philosophical position) outside of the New Testament material. Cullmann writes his book to show that "the specifically Christian element of the New Testament revelation"⁵ emerges from the material itself. According to Cullmann there is a basic "framework"⁶ lying behind all the New Testament writings, and this framework constitutes the specifically Christian element in the New Testament material.

Cullmann suggests that the Christian system of reckoning time, far from being merely a convention, "actually presupposes fundamental assertions of New Testament theology concerning time and history".⁷ He finds decisive significance in the practice of numbering both forward and backward from the birth of Christ. "Only when this is done is the Christ - event regarded as the temporal mid-point of the entire historical process".⁸ According to Cullmann a theological affirmation lies at the basis of the Christian chronology, and it is this affirmation which constitutes the central element of the New Testament revelation. Thus Cullmann describes his task in *Christ and Time* as an investigation of "the basic presuppositions

³Christ and Time, p. xi.⁴Ibid., p. xi.⁵Ibid., p. xii.⁶Ibid., p. xxviii.⁷Ibid., p. 19.⁸Ibid., p. 18.

of all New Testament theology, that is, the New Testament conception of time and history".⁹ Cullmann says that the main portion of his book is devoted to showing "the consequences that result from the conception which Primitive Christianity had of time and history".¹⁰ It should be noted that he equates the New Testament conception of time and history with that of primitive Christianity.¹¹

Cullmann admits that the title of his book can be misleading if the reader expects a discussion from the philosophical point of view of the relation of God to time. "Time is not the main concern of mine, nor of the New Testament. The word in the title of my book ought not to suggest, therefore, that a theoretical discussion of the concept follows in the text."¹² J.A.T. Robinson says that "it is characteristic of this study precisely that it is not called God and Time, but Christ and Time. It is Biblical and Christocentric, rather than theistic in its approach. It insists that a Christian discussion of time must begin, not like philosophy from first principles, but from the middle".¹³ By "the middle" Robinson and Cullmann mean the Christ-event, and they are saying that this single event in history is the clue to the meaning of all history. It is

⁹Christ and Time, p. 26.

¹⁰Christ and Time, p. 19.

¹¹Not all scholars are prepared to equate the two. infra, p. 33 of this chapter where it is demonstrated that Rudolf Bultmann agrees with Cullmann's description of the early Christian conception of time and history, but disagrees that there is any unified conception of time and history in the New Testament.

¹²Christ and Time, p. xxv.

¹³Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 3, No. 1, March, 1950, p. 86.

the emphasis on history, and the particular kind of history found in the New Testament, which Cullmann regards as central, and therefore he is not interested in speculation concerning the nature of time. Cullmann endeavours to take seriously all the temporal references in the New Testament, and he concludes that "salvation is bound to a continuous time process which embraces past, present and future".¹⁴ That which eliminates all speculative thought about time is the centrality of the one historical fact decisive for salvation, namely the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Time is important for Cullmann only in the sense that the temporal sequence of events in the New Testament constitutes the historical foundation for the specifically Christian element of the revelation. "Regardless of the title of my book," he says, "my primary concern is not with the question of time but with the presentation of the Biblical redemptive history".¹⁵

2. THE PLACE OF ESCHATOLOGY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Cullmann is no exception among continental biblical theologians who consider the problem of eschatology as fundamental to the understanding of the New Testament. In Christ and Time he attempts to define the problem precisely, and to illustrate his views by reference to those of other scholars.

For Cullmann eschatology concerns not only the "last things" in the sense of what is to take place at the end, but also the relation between this age and the age to come. The Christ-event provides the basis for

¹⁴Christ and Time, p. 32.

¹⁵Ibid., p. xvi.

understanding the entire historical process. The eschaton, which for the Jews still lay in the future, has for the early Christians already come in the event of Jesus Christ. "The 'end' as the meaning of redemptive history.... is Jesus Christ, who has already appeared.... While the 'end' was previously only expectation, it is now acknowledged as fulfillment."¹⁶ But in spite of the appearance of the 'end' within history, the historical process obviously continues, and thus a tension is produced in the New Testament between the present (the already accomplished) and the future (the not yet fulfilled). Cullmann says that this tension between the "already" and the "not yet" is the central concern of both his book and the New Testament.¹⁷ In Christ and Time he attempts, by means of an exegetical historical examination, to show the nature of the eschatological orientation of the early Christians.

When Cullmann uses the word eschatology in Christ and Time it always has reference to the future, to the age to come.¹⁸ Eschatology in this futurist sense is an indispensable component in the present-future tension which lies behind the entire New Testament,¹⁹ and for this reason it occupies an important place in Cullmann's presentation. But eschatology in this sense of an anticipated future can no longer be the central point of reference for the understanding of the New Testament because of the Christ-event and the new division of time resulting from this event. "We must recall the fact that in Primitive Christianity the future plays

¹⁶ Christ and Time, p. 140.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. xxvi.

¹⁸ Ibid., Pp. 89, 140, 149.

¹⁹ Infra, p. 34 where Cullmann attempts to show that futurist eschatology is important even in the Gospel according to John.

a quite different role from that which it plays in Judaism. Unless we make the necessary limitation it is false to assert that Primitive Christianity had an eschatological orientation."²⁰

According to Cullmann, eschatology in this futurist sense is "dethroned" by the Christ-event.²¹ For the early Christians the future is no longer, as in Judaism, the 'end' which gives meaning to the whole. For Christians the central point of reference lies in the historical event of Jesus Christ. "Primitive Christianity does indeed think eschatologically; but it now no longer thinks in a 'consistently',²² that is, an exclusively eschatological manner."²³ In spite of its dethronement, however, eschatology continues to possess a real significance for the early Christians and the writers of the New Testament. To eliminate eschatology is to eliminate the New Testament tension between present and future.

Cullmann uses a military example to illustrate the place of eschatology in the New Testament.²⁴ He compares the Christ-event to the decisive battle in a war. Though the effects of the decisive battle are not recognized by all and the war continues, the battle is

²⁰Christ and Time, p. 139.

²¹Christ and Time, p. 139.

²²Infra, p. 32f where "consistent eschatology" is discussed.

²³Christ and Time, p. 140.

²⁴Ibid., p. 84.

determinative of final victory. "An undefined period of time"²⁵ between the decisive battle and "Victory Day" represents the situation of the New Testament writers:

It is already the time of the end, and yet it is not the end. This tension finds expression in the entire theology of primitive Christianity. The present period of the Church is the time between the decisive battle, which has already occurred, and the 'Victory Day'. To anyone who does not take clear account of this tension, the entire New Testament is a book with seven seals, for this tension, is the silent presupposition that lies behind all that it says. This is the only dialectic and the only dualism that is found in the New Testament. It is not the dialectic between this world and the Beyond; moreover it is not that between time and eternity; it is rather the dialectic between present and future.^{25a}

Whether the present-future tension can provide the key to the understanding of the entire New Testament remains to be seen, but here it must be noted that important biblical scholars such as C.H. Dodd and William Manson also point to this "dualism". Dodd says that "the eschatology of the early Church has two sides. On the one hand we have the belief that with the coming of Christ the 'fulness of time' has arrived, the prophecies are fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is inaugurated on earth. On the other hand we have the expectation of a consummation still pending in the future".²⁶ Similarly Manson says that "Christianity.... from the beginning exhibits an essential bi-polarity. The End has come! The End has not come!"²⁷ Cullmann devotes many pages

²⁵Ibid., p. xxi, R. Bultmann does not consider Cullmann's phrase "an undefined period of time" as accurately representing the views of the New Testament writers. According to Bultmann they expected the immediate return of Christ. See Existence and Faith, p. 238.

^{25a}Christ and Time, p. 145.

²⁶C.H. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, Cambridge, 1955, p. 7.

²⁷Scottish Journal of Theology, Occasional Paper No. 2, Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1953, p. 7.

of Christ and Time to a defence of the tension which these scholars consider important against various attempts to minimize or eliminate it.

Cullmann acknowledges his debt to Albert Schweitzer and Martin Werner²⁸ but sees the fundamental error of their "consistent eschatology" as a failure to comprehend the changed attitude of the early Christians towards the future which resulted from the Christ-event. According to Cullmann, everything must be seen in the light of the historical work of Jesus himself. Everything must be explained from this fact of Jesus as the mid-point, rather than from some future anticipated event. "It is simply not true that Primitive Christianity has the same eschatological orientation as does Judaism. To be sure, it has also an eschatological orientation. The Jewish expectation for the future retains its validity for Jesus and throughout the entire New Testament, but it is no longer the center".²⁹ For the early Christians the point of central significance was the resurrection as the crowning act of Christ's work, and thus their expectations for the future are modified:

The Christian hope is not the Jewish one. To be sure, hope is also present in Primitive Christianity in its full intensity... Intensity and central position, however, are not to be confused. In reality, the increased intensity of hope in Primitive Christianity is to be explained by the very fact that the center of time is not in the object of hope but rather in an already occurred historical fact.... The hope of final victory is so much the more vivid because of the unshakably firm conviction that the battle that decides the victory has already taken place.³⁰

In the preface to the third edition of Christ and Time Cullmann points to a similarity between the "consistent eschatology school" and the

²⁸Christ and Time, p. xii. ²⁹Ibid., p. 85. ³⁰Ibid., p. 86.

views of Rudolf Bultmann.³¹ The similarity concerns the delay of the parousia. Cullmann admits that the early Christians expected the final end within "a matter of decades",³² and he explains this error in perspective as resulting from the same psychological tendency which leads persons to expect the hasty conclusion of a war once the decisive battle has been fought. In his review of Christ and Time Bultmann says that "Cullmann eliminates the problem that grows out of the delay of the parousia".³³ This problem had also occupied the attention of Werner and Schweitzer. Thus the supporters of Bultmann and those of the basically different "Consistent eschatology" have drawn together in opposing Cullmann's view that eschatology understood as temporal future is central to the New Testament. Both schools do not deny the existence of the tension between present and future nor the consequence that there is redemptive history in the New Testament. What they deny is that the redemptive-historical perspective is basic to the whole New Testament. They see the redemptive-historical perspective as a later development: Bultmann calls it "a mistaken development of the early Catholic Church,"³⁴ and F. Buri calls it "a solution arising from embarrassment".³⁵ "It is plain," says Cullmann, "where the link between Bultmann and consistent eschatology is to be found. Both present the incorporation of eschatology into redemptive history as a wrong solution to the delayed parousia, as an impossible afterthought, although they document this differently."³⁶

³¹ Christ and Time, p. xviii.

³² Ibid., p. 87.

³³ Existence and Faith, p. 239.

³⁴ Christ and Time, p. xx.

³⁵ Ibid., p. xxi.

³⁶ Ibid., p. xxi.

Cullmann says that it is one of his main purposes in writing his book to demonstrate that one cannot (as Schweitzer and Bultmann maintain) detach eschatology and its related redemptive-historical perspective from the New Testament message.³⁷ Eschatology understood as "temporariness"³⁸ is really the core of the New Testament.

Cullmann attempts to show that for all the New Testament writers there is still a future to be anticipated. Even though death has been conquered by Christ, death is still a reality to be faced by each person individually.³⁹ Similarly, while baptism is regarded as a "rising with Christ," this rising is still only partial. The powers of sin and death, even though conquered by Christ, continue to exercise their claim upon men. Thus "the final transformation of our fleshly body into the spiritual body is reserved for the future".⁴⁰ Even in the Gospel of John where "the sense of realization has extended itself over almost the entire field, and expectation has shrunk correspondingly,"⁴¹ Cullmann says that "it will not do simply to discard all the Johannine passages that speak of resurrection at the end".⁴² References to the future are important in John in

³⁷Christ and Time, p. xix.

³⁸"On the basis of the New Testament evidence, I have plainly decided in favour of temporariness being the essence of eschatology." Christ and Time, p. xix.

³⁹Christ and Time, p. 235.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 239.

⁴¹C.H. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 7.

⁴²Christ and Time, p. 238.

spite of the powerful emphasis on the believer already having eternal life.⁴³ Cullmann agrees with William Manson that "there can be no such thing under any imaginable conditions as a fully realized eschatology in the strict sense."⁴⁴ To be faithful to the New Testament one must never overlook this obvious fact, for to do so would be to eliminate the eschatological tension in all the documents.

In summary, Cullmann's position can be described as a moderate "realized eschatology". It attempts to give decisive significance to the death and resurrection of Christ as the event in which the 'end' of all history is revealed, and it also attempts to do justice to the New Testament conception of the parousia as the final end of the historical process. Cullmann's position gives significance to the present as the time of the Church and the time of the sacraments. The Church bears witness to the tension between what has been accomplished and what is yet to be realized. "The Church is God's highest gift of salvation in this interim period, and yet it is composed of imperfect sinful men."⁴⁵ Until that which is perfect is come that which is in part is present only in sacramental, provisional form. The sacraments essentially point back to the central event of the death and resurrection,⁴⁶ but they also point

⁴³Infra, p. 81ff.

⁴⁴Manson, p. 7.

⁴⁵Christ and Time, p. 155.

⁴⁶Cf. Reginald Fuller, The Mission and Achievement of Jesus, London: S.C.M., 1954, Pp. 118-120. Fuller acknowledges his debt to Cullmann, and says on P. 119 that because of the decisive event of the cross "all the phenomena of the Church's life are thus related primarily to the past, and reproduce the power of the decisive event of the past in the present."

forward to the final consummation of all things. In the Eucharist, for example, Christ appears "as the one sitting on the right hand of God, who has been crucified and has risen and will return."⁴⁷ Only a moderate "realized eschatology" can hold together what for Cullmann is the basic tension of the New Testament. And only this perspective can explain how Cullmann can write a book in which it is stated in one place that eschatology is the major concern,⁴⁸ and in another place it is stated that eschatology has been "dethroned".⁴⁹

3. THE RELATION OF BIBLICAL HISTORY TO GENERAL HISTORY

In Christ and Time Cullmann does not define what he means when he uses the word history. He presupposes that his readers know what he means. In his article "The Necessity and Function of Higher Criticism" he has a number of statements which place the word in a context where it is possible to draw out the meaning even though once again no clear definition is given. A review of these statements forms a preliminary to an examination of the section in Christ and Time which deals with the relation between biblical history and general history.

According to Cullmann, "the very essence of the central affirmation of the Bible has to do with history.... The Biblical revelation.... is a revelation of God in history.... The central message of this revelation is found in the New Testament.... but as soon as we speak of Jesus of Nazareth we speak of history."⁵⁰ History here appears as the locus for

⁴⁷ Christ and Time, p. 169.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. xix.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 139.

⁵⁰ The Early Church, p. 7.

the events of revelation. Cullmann says that "the divine revelation was given form for us at a definite moment of history,"⁵¹ and by this he means of course the Christ-event. For Cullmann history involves relationships between the events of the past, present and future. He says that "the history of Jesus presupposes a relationship both with the history of Israel and with the history of the primitive Church";⁵² and thus it is the task of the biblical scholar to "bring out the historical sequence into the light of day so that the divine plan (what the New Testament calls oikonomia) may become evident not behind but within history itself."⁵³ It is clear from these statements that whenever Cullmann uses the word history he is referring to a succession of events in time and space.

Proceeding to the distinction in Christ and Time between biblical history and general history, the important question centres around the extent to which Cullmann's broad use of the word history can be applied to both categories. There is a wide discrepancy between the two usages. "The Primitive Christian consideration of history concentrates primarily upon a definite number of events of a quite particular sort, of which some happened before while others will happen after Christ; and its chief aim is to set these quite definite occurrences in relation to the central event which took place in Palestine about the year one."⁵⁴ Thus the concern of the New Testament is chiefly with what Cullmann calls "Biblical history". He admits that for general history primitive Christianity has only a very limited concern: "only in the margin do references

⁵¹The Early Church, p. 9. ⁵²Ibid., p. 7. ⁵³Ibid., p. 12.

⁵⁴Christ and Time, p. 20.

to so-called secular history appear in the New Testament".⁵⁵ Though the references in the New Testament to the location in time and space of the recorded events are few, Cullmann considers them sufficient for the establishment of a recognizable and theologically significant relationship between secular history and biblical history.

Cullmann describes biblical history as "a very thin stream which flows within the broad river of world history."⁵⁶ In his chapter on "Redemptive History and Universalism", he says that the movement "takes its start from the broadest possible basis and narrows steadily until it reaches that center from which it again broadens out: Creation - mankind - Israel - the remnant - the One - the apostles - the Church - mankind - the new creation."⁵⁷ Thus he shows how the history which is the concern of the Bible takes place within the broader context of the history of the world. Cullmann is prepared to use the expression "redemptive history" (Heilsgeschichte) to designate the biblical history, in spite of the fact that the term "has become far too much a battle cry with which the theological position of the 'Erlangen School' is customarily designated."⁵⁸ He suggests that the term "revelational history" (Offenbarungsgeschichte) comes even closer to describing the salvation-history which he finds in the Bible.⁵⁹

⁵⁵Christ and Time, p. 20.

⁵⁶The Early Church, p. 7.

⁵⁷Christ and Time, p. 178.

⁵⁸Christ and Time, p. 27.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 27.

Important implications for the relation between biblical history and general history are contained in Cullmann's statement that "although we are here speaking of a very particular history, a biblical history, it is none the less history."⁶⁰ Cullmann is attempting to place the biblical history within the context of the world history precisely to avoid removing the biblical history from the scrutiny of historiography.⁶¹ Thus he cautions against surrounding "the Biblical history by high walls, so that all access to general history is made impossible".⁶² He says that he is "not attempting to make use of history in order to set it aside later on."⁶³ To set history aside is to set Jesus of Nazareth aside, and he is, according to Cullmann's understanding of the New Testament, the central point of the entire historical process. There is thus a theological basis for both higher criticism⁶⁴ and all attempts to establish the historicity of all of the events of which the biblical history is composed. "The mention of Pontius Pilate in the Apostles'

⁶⁰The Early Church, p. 11.

⁶¹Alan Richardson in History Sacred and Profane (p. 134) accuses Brunner and Barth of escaping from entanglement in historiography "by flight into a realm of Heilsgeschichte, or supra-history where critics cease from troubling and the faithful are at rest". On the same page in a footnote Richardson speaks favourably of Cullmann's use of the word Heilsgeschichte, "to refer to the acts of God for our salvation in the midst of the history of our world".

⁶²Christ and Time, p. 21.

⁶³The Early Church, p. 11.

⁶⁴"The history on which the New Testament tells us our salvation is based is, none the less a real history and one, in consequence, to which historical categories must be applied". The Early Church, p. 11.

Creed not only corresponds to a definite historical situation of the Church, but also has a theological significance, inasmuch as it shows by way of example how the course of even the so-called secular events stands in relation to the redemptive history".⁶⁵

Rudolf Bultmann, in his review of Christ and Time criticizes Cullmann for failing to make clear what he means by history: "I cannot see that for him 'history' in the phrase 'history of salvation' has any different meaning from what it has in 'history of the world'".⁶⁶ Cullmann's reply, clarifying as it does the difference between the two concepts, suggests that Bultmann has missed Cullmann's point about a uniform use of the word in all contexts. "The difference," says Cullmann, "has no effective bearing upon the historical character of facts which are common to the two kinds of history, nor yet upon the temporal character of the connection between the facts, but only upon the choice of these facts and the perspective in which the New Testament sees them by reason of the central place occupied there by the death of Christ."⁶⁷ In his reply to Bultmann, Cullmann affirms his view that the salvation-history occurs within the secular history; but by emphasizing that the difference between the two lies in the criteria for the selection of the facts he raises a serious problem for the secular historian.

Cullmann admits that biblical history must appear to the secular

⁶⁵Christ and Time, p. 190.

⁶⁶Existence and Faith, p. 231.

⁶⁷The Early Church, p. 11.

historian as "a quite queer construction".⁶⁸ Biblical history, with its selection of certain events as important, and by the joining of all the events with the historical action of Jesus, appears as a completely arbitrary compilation to the "pure historian".⁶⁹ Cullmann says that the relationship between the secular history and the biblical history only takes on meaning when Jesus of Nazareth is recognized as the absolute divine revelation to men. It is this recognition in faith which enables the believer to ascribe a normative value to the entire biblical history.⁷⁰ And the Christian view of history, based on the slender Christ-line of biblical history, renders a final judgement on the events of general history.⁷¹ Cullmann is aware that his references to "faith" and "the mid-point of all history"⁷² raise the problem of biblical history to the level of a theological problem.⁷³ But he insists that the theological problem posed by the biblical history was central in the early Christian proclamation. In the "close connection between Christian revelation and history"⁷⁴ is seen the "scandal" and the "offense" of primitive Christianity. "The offense is that God reveals himself in a special way and effects 'salvation' in a final way within a narrowly limited but continuing process".⁷⁵

⁶⁸Christ and Time, p. 22.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 22.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 23.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 20.

⁷²Ibid., p. 19.

⁷³Ibid., p. 22.

⁷⁴On p. 183 of Christ and Time, Cullmann explains why the Athenians scoffed at Paul's speech on the Areopagus: "The failure of his speech is explained by this very fact, that he permitted the offense to stand; he preserved the unity of the redemptive line which begins with Adam and ends with the resurrection of Christ."

⁷⁵Christ and Time, p. 23.

4. BIBLICAL HISTORY AND THEOLOGY

If biblical history poses a theological problem then the necessity arises of clarifying the relationship between the theological enterprise and biblical history. Cullmann's statement that "all Christian theology in its innermost essence is Biblical history,"⁷⁶ leaves no doubt about the intimate nature of the relationship. The reason for the relationship between theology and biblical history arises from the way in which God reveals himself in the New Testament: "on a straight line of an ordinary process in time God here reveals himself, and from that line he controls not only the whole of history, but also that which happens in nature."⁷⁷ For Cullmann all theology is biblical history in the sense that the task of theology is the clarifying and expounding of the unified Christ-line.

The central affirmation of this Christocentric theology is a certain concept of revelation. "Here the full and final consequences are drawn from the fact that it is God's very nature to reveal himself.... Nowhere, however, is God's action more concretely revealed than in the history which, to speak theologically, presents in its innermost nature the revelation of God to men."⁷⁸ Thus the biblical history is the revelation, and Jesus Christ is the focal point of God's revelatory action in history. "Nowhere," says Cullmann, "has the unity of the entire revelatory process as a Christ-process - a unity which in the New Testament is more or less presupposed - found more powerful expression than in the prologue of the Gospel of John, where creation and redemption

⁷⁶Christ and Time, p. 23. ⁷⁷Ibid., p. 23. ⁷⁸Ibid., p. 24.

appear as a single process in which Christ and revelation are active."⁷⁹ Cullmann says that the earliest Christian confessions of faith also fit his view of revelation: "they do not, in the manner of the later Church creeds, rend asunder the divine revelatory action as though in creation only God the Father and in the historical redemptive work only God the Son were the actor in the revelatory proceeding".⁸⁰ Thus Cullmann sees God's revelation as taking place solely in history: "there is here no room for speculations concerning God that ignore time and history".⁸¹

Cullmann finds the reason for "Primitive Christianity's thorough orientation to revelatory and redemptive history",⁸² in the Christian claim that the climax and central point of all revelation occurred in history in the person of Jesus Christ. "As soon as the historical work of Jesus of Nazareth is regarded as the full expression of the divine revelatory action, the necessity inevitably results of combining all remaining divine revelatory action with it on one unified Christ-line to present a single 'biblical history'".⁸³ The intimate relationship between theology and history established by the Christ-event must be maintained against all tendencies to remove the theological concerns from from the historical events. Cullmann cites examples of these tendencies in the early Church and in contemporary theology. Celsus is an example of an early writer who could not accept the idea of salvation in history.⁸⁴ And Bultmann provides a contemporary example of a thinker who attempts

⁷⁹Christ and Time, p. 24.

⁸⁰Christ and Time, p. 25.

⁸³Ibid., p. 24.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 23.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 28.

⁸²Ibid., p. 26.

to eliminate the 'scandal' of history. According to Cullmann, Bultmann "strips the Christian proclamation of its time setting in redemptive history".⁸⁵ Cullmann will not permit redemptive history to be described as one of the "myths" of which the New Testament revelation can be stripped.⁸⁶ Rather, it is redemptive history which constitutes the specifically Christian element in the New Testament. And if the writers of the New Testament saw the redemptive history as central, Cullmann insists that this same perspective must accompany any contemporary exegetical work. The exegete must take into account the theological significance of revelation through history.

In the introduction to Christ and Time there is not only a foundation for Cullmann's theological exegesis but also a foundation for the enterprise called 'Biblical theology', or in this case, 'New Testament theology'. It is significant that Cullmann admits that all theology must have a "principle of division",⁸⁷ and that for the presentation of New Testament theology this principle must be the redemptive history which, he says, is the framework in which the New Testament is cast. He says that the purpose of Christ and Time is an investigation of "the basic pre-suppositions of all New Testament theology".⁸⁸

What is the basis for regarding the redemptive work of Christ as

⁸⁵Christ and Time, p. 30.

⁸⁶Christ and Time, p. 86.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 26. The "principle of division", is, in effect, the same as a "principle of selection" or a "principle of organization". For the significance of this admission of Cullmann, infra, p. 47.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 26.

the "kernel" or "essence" of the New Testament proclamation, and the principle of division for New Testament theology? This a valid question to address to Cullmann because the New Testament by itself is not a work of theology: it is not a unified theological document but a diversified collection of material which nowhere in its organization or final form betrays a conscious attempt to isolate what is essential from what is accessory.⁸⁹ Cullmann finds a reply to the question in the primitive confessions of faith scattered throughout the New Testament material. It is not without reason that Cullmann, in the introduction to Christ and Time, says: "I attach to my investigation of Die ersten christlichen Glaubensbekenntnisse, 1943 (Eng. tr., The Earliest Christian Confessions, 1949)⁹⁰ special significance both in determining what is central in the earliest Christian proclamation and in establishing the criterion by which to determine this central element".⁹¹

5. THE WITNESS OF THE EARLIEST CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

An examination of Cullmann's book, The Earliest Christian Confessions, shows how he arrives at a foundation for his theological exegesis. Cullmann says that very early, even in the stage of oral transmission, the question as to the central element of the Christian faith was raised.⁹² The need for a summary of the faith was even more acute when the Church

⁸⁹E.C. Hoskyns and F.N. Davey, The Riddle of the New Testament. London: Faber, 1963, Pp. 11-13.

⁹⁰Translated by J.K.S. Reid, London: Lutterworth Press.

⁹¹Christ and Time, p. xiii.

⁹²Confessions, p. 10.

came to establish the canon of the New Testament. And so, says Cullmann, the question arose:

In this tradition and in these books, what is common core and what particular development? Every confession of faith, whether worked out consciously or originating spontaneously, gives an implicit answer to this question.... Anyone who summarizes the Biblical tradition realizes at once the necessity of distinguishing between the central principle and what is derived from it. The whole problem of Scriptural exposition depends on this distinction. What is the standard that allows us to discriminate between these two elements? In the period of primitive Christianity every confession of faith in one way or another proves to be such a standard, even if to give an answer to this question is not its immediate aim.⁹³

In the light of this quotation it can be seen how the earliest confessions provide the foundation for all New Testament theology. Cullmann says that "every theology of the New Testament presupposes a corresponding rule of faith",⁹⁴ and this rule of faith provides a key for the interpretation of the mass of the material - a principle of organization which can unify the diverse material. For Cullmann, every confession of faith "involves an exegesis of the whole New Testament".⁹⁵

In spite of the diversity of the language and circumstances of the confessions of faith in the New Testament, Cullmann finds certain common characteristics. In the first place, the confession of Christ is always central: "in all confessions of the apostolic age the concern is with Christs.... the starting and middle point of Christian faith is faith in Christ".⁹⁶ Cullmann also attempts to show the fundamental concern of the earliest confessions with time and history. From an

⁹³ Confessions, p. 11.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 13.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 50.

analysis of the confessions, particularly the formula "Kyrios Christos" (Philippians 2:11) he concludes that it is "the present Lordship of Christ, inaugurated by his resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of God, that is the centre of the faith of primitive Christianity".⁹⁷ He explains that this historical core is also the "dogmatic core"⁹⁸ because in it is contained the principle of organization of the history of salvation. "When the earliest Christians confess that Christ is the Lord, this is a precise declaration of the time when it pleased God to reveal His plan of salvation: the time which comprises, not only the present, but also the past and the future."⁹⁹ The relationships between past, present and future are implied, if not explicitly stated, in all the early confessions of faith.¹⁰⁰ For this reason Cullmann can state at the end of his book that "the divine plan of salvation.... unfolds itself in the linear time of the Bible".¹⁰¹

This very short summary of Cullmann's work on the earliest confessions is sufficient to indicate the relevance of this earlier work to the introductory chapters of Christ and Time. Cullmann has found a key to the interpretation of the New Testament in the earliest confessions of faith. And because these confessions make theological assertions,

⁹⁷Confessions, p. 58.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 58.

⁹⁹Confessions, p. 64.

¹⁰⁰Cullmann admits that references to the second coming are rare in the first confessions. He says that the early Christians' hope for the second coming of Christ was included in the certainty of the resurrection, and therefore, "it seemed unnecessary in a short summary to include a special mention of the second coming." Confessions, p. 57.

¹⁰¹Confessions, p. 64.

Cullmann has found justification for a theology of the New Testament. The witness of the earliest Christian confessions means for Cullmann that the exegete not only can, but must, approach the New Testament with theological presuppositions.

6. SUMMARY AND PRELIMINARY EVALUATION

The introductory chapters to Christ and Time not only summarize and incorporate the findings of the remainder of the book, but they also introduce the reader to the theological presuppositions which lie behind all of Cullmann's exegetical work. Thus the conclusions which Cullmann reaches about what is central in the New Testament are also the theological presuppositions which he uses to understand the material. The reader is left wondering about the logic of an interpretation in which the conclusions are already presupposed in the questions directed to the material.

An attempt has been made in this chapter to escape from this cyclical dilemma by arranging the presuppositions in a logical sequence. Hence in this presentation the Christian way of reckoning time logically precedes the present-future tension, because the latter is dependent on the former. Similarly Cullmann's demonstration of how biblical history relates to general history is followed by the derivative conclusion that all theology is biblical history. And the arrangement is climaxed by a study of the earliest confessions of faith in order to establish the criteria for separating what is central from what is peripheral in the New Testament. But such a logical progression is not observed by Cullmann. For example, the reason for the theological implications of the Christian system of reckoning time (mentioned at the beginning of the chapter) only becomes

evident later in the chapter (where the witness of the earliest confessions is discussed). At every level the theological presuppositions determine the outcome of the investigation, and the investigation confirms the presuppositions.

In fairness to Gullmann it must be stated that he considers the inconsistency and irrationality of his approach as necessary because of the foundation in the biblical material itself. It is precisely because the exegete must be both a historian and a theologian at the same time, that he must impose his theological presuppositions on the material. Every text must be approached in the light of the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The biblical history cannot be separated from theology: because of Jesus Christ all theology is biblical history. And while this offends human reason, it is part of the scandal of the Christian faith that the theological presuppositions should determine the results of the exegesis. While Gullmann has insisted previously on eliminating all philosophical presuppositions,¹⁰² he considers the theological presuppositions as essential for the exegesis of scripture, for only he who has faith can discern "the line of salvation from Israel to Christ and from Christ to the Church".¹⁰³ A question which will be taken up in a later section is whether the Christian faith does demand such an elimination of reason and logic. It will be suggested that the faith-reason dichotomy is excessive in Gullmann, and that it leads to an elevation of the New Testament scriptures to a realm where they are immune to scientific and

¹⁰²Supra, p. 27.

¹⁰³Supra, p. 41.

historical criticism.¹⁰⁴

An essential element of Cullmann's theological exegesis is the quest for a norm within the New Testament, and the application of this norm to all the material. The word "norm" reappears constantly throughout the introduction to Christ and Time. On one page alone the following synonyms appear: "essence," "innermost character," "core," "basic motif."¹⁰⁵ In this chapter the theological foundation of Cullmann's exegesis has been isolated in each section by the application of the norm to the material under consideration. Thus the theological affirmation lying behind the Christian way of reckoning time constitutes the central element of the New Testament revelation.¹⁰⁶ Similarly Cullmann says that the "already and not yet" tension is the silent presupposition behind the entire New Testament.¹⁰⁷ Also Cullmann ascribes a normative value to biblical history over the general history of the world.¹⁰⁸ Further, because redemptive history constitutes the specifically Christian element in the New Testament all theology is biblical history.¹⁰⁹ All of these attempts to establish some central norm or standard within the New Testament, by which all the rest of the material may be judged, find their "objective"¹¹⁰ justification in the earliest Christian confessions of faith. But even Cullmann's work on the earliest confessions betrays

¹⁰⁴Infra, p. 130f.

¹⁰⁵Christ and Time, p. xix.

¹⁰⁶Supra, p. 26

¹⁰⁷Supra, p. 29

¹⁰⁸Supra, p. 41.

¹⁰⁹Supra, p. 42.

¹¹⁰Confessions, p. 13, "The ancient Church.... took the trouble to emphasize the objective character of the rule of faith, and to eliminate every suspicion of arbitrariness".

signs of being approached with the same theological presuppositions.

For example, Cullmann says that the confessions of faith are a standard by which the central element can be distinguished from the peripheral because they all involve an exegesis of the entire New Testament.¹¹¹

But Cullmann obviously means a theological exegesis involving his presuppositions, otherwise the exegete would not have the faith to discern the "plan of salvation" which Cullmann speaks of later in the book.¹¹²

The criteria for the establishing of the standard are thus "objective" only in the context of a theological exegesis. Thus Cullmann's exegetical method does not depend entirely on the thesis of The Earliest Christian Confessions because exactly the same theological exegesis is used in Christ and Time to arrive at similar conclusions. Cullmann's exegetical method is open to criticism in all of his attempts to expound the central element of the New Testament. A theological exegesis must be concerned with the quest for a norm since theology involves some principle for the selection and organization of the material. But the problems encountered in Cullmann's theological exegesis suggest that it is not the business of exegesis proper to be concerned about a norm.

Another question concerning the value of a theological exegesis emerges from the approach adopted in this chapter, namely to listen first to what Cullmann says before evaluating or criticizing. The assumption behind this approach was that Cullmann might have valuable insights which would have been overlooked if a critical approach had been adopted from

¹¹¹Confessions, p. 13.

¹¹²Confessions, p. 64.

the beginning. It was noted that J.A.T. Robinson credited Cullmann for pointing out the central place of time in the New Testament;¹¹³ and also C.E. Dodd and William Manson agreed with Cullmann's assessment of the present-future tension in the New Testament.¹¹⁴ But the problem arises as to how to assess the value of Cullmann's insights when there is such an intimate relationship between theology and exegesis. In Cullmann's New Testament theology the insights concerning the present-future tension are bound up with a linear view of time. Some interpreters would see great value in the former but would wish to abandon the latter.¹¹⁵ But because of their inclusion in a unified theological presentation, all of Cullmann's conclusions are on the same footing and must stand or fall together. The question arises as to whether at least some of Cullmann's conclusions could be reached by another method, such as, for example, the purely descriptive exegesis advocated by Stendahl.¹¹⁶ Thus it is evident that it is not Cullmann's conclusions themselves which are being questioned, but the method by which he arrives at his conclusions.

The basic problem posed by Cullmann's theological exegesis is not capable of resolution within the framework in which he operates. The problem is that while, on the one hand, Cullmann claims to be presenting conclusions arrived at by "a purely scientific, historical-exegetical"¹¹⁷

¹¹³Supra, p. 27.

¹¹⁴Supra, p. 31.

¹¹⁵Paul Minear, for example, in his review of Christ and Time, says that while Cullmann "has demonstrated the centrality of the category of time for both historical and theological problems... his description of time as an upward sloping line is too neat and geometric to be wholly convincing," Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 70, 1951, p. 57.

¹¹⁶Supra, p. 22.

¹¹⁷Christ and Time, p. xxiv.

method, on the other hand, it is part of the method that the conclusions are the presuppositions of the exegesis. The necessity for the intimate relationship between theology and exegesis arises from the nature of the New Testament material itself. But this same necessity results in the predicament that there is no way of testing (within Cullmann's frame of reference) whether his exegesis is accurate. Just as the results of deductive reasoning cannot be questioned from within the system but can only be evaluated by a comparison with the results of inductive reasoning, so the only solution to the dilemma posed by Cullmann's theological exegesis is to step outside his system and adopt a different approach to the scriptures, and then compare and contrast the results with those of Cullmann. Such a procedure will be adopted in the two succeeding chapters.

III

THE NEW TESTAMENT TERMINOLOGY FOR TIME

At the end of his book on Cullmann, Jean Frisque makes the perceptive comment that "le dialogue avec l'auteur doit prendre place au départ de la construction théologique; en cours de route, il est trop tard pour intervenir, les jeux sont fait".¹ It is the purpose of both this chapter and the succeeding one to enter into dialogue with Cullmann before the level of the theological construction. In order to achieve a dialogue it is necessary to adopt a procedure which Cullmann would consider illegitimate, namely to separate exegesis from theology. The comparison between Cullmann's theological exegesis and a descriptive approach to exegesis in Chapters III and IV will provide a basis for assessing whether Cullmann's theological presuppositions properly belong to the discipline of biblical studies. The question to be resolved is whether redemptive history is integral to the New Testament material or whether such a view of time and history as Cullmann proposes only becomes a possibility when the interpreter has "faith" or adopts a "theological exegesis".

¹Frisque, Oscar Cullmann, p. 236.

1. THE BASIS FOR COMPARISON

The standard against which Cullmann's exegesis is to be compared finds expression in two contemporary scholars Krister Stendahl and David Noel Freedman. Both of these men adopt a descriptive approach to the exegetical task and attempt to work within the framework of "the universally recognized methods of linguistic and historical research".² The limits which these men place on exegesis are noted here so that the contrast to Cullmann will be evident when the biblical material is examined.

Stendahl draws a clear distinction between what the text meant at the time it was written and what it means to the contemporary reader.³ He confines exegesis to a description of the original: "from the point of view of method our only concern is to find out what the words meant when uttered or written by the prophet, the priest, the evangelist or the apostles - and regardless of their meaning in later states of religious history, our own included".⁴ Even the clarification of the hermeneutic principles is beyond the scope of the exegete whose task is entirely descriptive. "This descriptive task can be carried out by believer and agnostic alike.... both can work side by side, since no other tools are called for than those of description in the terms indicated by the texts themselves".⁵ Stendahl admits that all interpreters have

²Vorgrimler, Dogmatic vs. Biblical Theology, p. 74.

³Stendahl, K., "Biblical Theology", an article in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, New York: Abingdon, 1962, Vol. 1, p. 422.

⁴Ibid., p. 422.

⁵Ibid., p. 422.

presuppositions and preconceived ideas, but he says that the advantage of a purely descriptive approach is that "the material itself gives us means to check whether our interpretation is correct or not".⁶

Freedman, makes a similar plea for a descriptive exegesis according to universally recognized scholarly procedures.⁷ He calls for "a respectful approach to the Bible".⁸ "The phrase is not meant in a theological or cultic sense, but rather in a scholarly sense. There are two matters involved, first a respect for the plain meaning of the text and for the intention of the author or speaker (a common justice rendered to every piece of literature, and equally owed to the Bible), and second a respect for the biblical tradition."⁹ Freedman, under the second point, is urging the interpreter not to begin with the assumption that the biblical pattern of history is automatically false.¹⁰ Freedman's "inductive approach to Biblical studies"¹¹ consists primarily of a straight forward grammatical-historical exegesis of the text, passage by passage. But the inductive approach can also include a "synthetic approach"¹² once the accumulation of a body of data has been completed. After the basic exegetical work has been accomplished it is permissible to make certain hypotheses which attempt to collate, organize, systematize the knowledge,

⁶Ibid., p. 422.

⁷Freedman, D.N., "On Method in Biblical Studies: The Old Testament," Interpretation, Vol. 17, 1963, p. 308-18.

⁸Ibid., p. 308.

⁹Ibid., p. 313.

¹⁰Supra, p. 20, where it was suggested that Bultmann has shown a tendency to approach the scriptures with this assumption.

¹¹Freedman, op. cit., p. 308.

¹²Ibid., p. 314.

and provide an over-all view. The inductive approach depends upon a recognition that the attempts to synthesize are no more than hypotheses and must be abandoned if proven incorrect. Within this context Freedman suggests that there is value in such efforts to isolate and identify common themes - there is even value in the attempt to find an over-all unity. "The attempt to generalize findings is a feature of every scientific enquiry, and could hardly have been avoided in the case of the Bible."¹³ But he cautions that "it is only on the basis of an exhaustive exegetical study that any discussion of themes and patterns is possible."¹⁴ Freedman's "inductive approach" does not broaden the descriptive task of exegesis as formulated by Stendahl, but it does permit the scientific approach to the biblical material to go one step further once the exegetical task has been completed. The contrast between the methods of Cullmann and Freedman becomes most vivid when it is noted the extent to which Cullmann's theological exegesis involves approaching the exegetical task with prior assumptions concerning the common theme and over-all unity of the material.¹⁵

The scientific method of Stendahl and Freedman, based on a descriptive and inductive approach to exegesis, will be compared to Cullmann's theological approach in two distinct ways. A chapter will be devoted to each of these two ways. In this chapter Cullmann's treatment

¹³ Ibid., p. 315.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 315.

¹⁵ Infra, p. 127, where further implications of the contrast are discussed.

of the New Testament terminology for time will be compared with that of James Barr in his book Biblical Words for Time.¹⁶ Barr's method will be seen to correspond with the principles laid down by Stendahl and Freedman. Chapter IV will present a critical analysis of Cullmann's exegetical method as he applies it to one book of scripture. Cullmann's treatise on the Fourth Gospel, entitled The Gospel According to St. John and Early Christian Worship¹⁷ is a good example of his theological exegesis and can be compared with commentaries which exemplify the descriptive and inductive approach to exegesis. Both the chapter on terminology in Christ and Time and the treatise on the Fourth Gospel are of considerable importance to Cullmann for the establishing of his conclusions concerning time and history in the New Testament.

2. JAMES BARR'S EXEGETICAL METHOD

In The Semantics of Biblical Language¹⁸ James Barr criticizes biblical theologians for their failure to relate their treatment of biblical terminology to the findings of general linguistics. He suggests that the scriptures be approached with a knowledge of what modern linguists say about the biblical language and that this approach be compared to modern theological assessments of the biblical language.¹⁹ Barr approaches

¹⁶Barr, James, Biblical Words for Time, London: S.C.M. 1962, pp. 174, (BWT).

¹⁷Cullmann, O., Early Christian Worship, London: S.C.M. 1953, p. 126.

¹⁸Barr, James., The Semantics of Biblical Language, Oxford, 1961.

¹⁹Semantics, p. 296., "It is probable that a greater awareness of general semantics, of general linguistic method in all its aspects, and an application of such awareness in biblical interpretation, would have valuable and important results for theology."

the biblical material from the point of view of universally accepted linguistic procedure. This is not a theological but rather a descriptive treatment of the biblical terminology.

In the Semantics of Biblical Language Barr makes a two-fold criticism of the method of biblical theologians such as Cullmann, while allowing that their conclusions might still be true.²⁰ In the first place, he shows that it is careless linguistic procedure to compare two languages such as Greek and Hebrew without having some norm to which both can be referred. "Thus the isolation of Hebrew from general linguistics tends to heighten the impression of Hebrew being quite extraordinarily unique in its structure."²¹ Cullmann speaks of "the radical opposition between Greek and Biblical thinking"²² and says that "there can be no real reconciliation when the fundamental positions are so radically different."²³ Similarly J.A.F. Robinson says that "the Greek conception of time and eternity is totally opposed to the Biblical understanding."²⁴ Both Cullmann and Robinson are criticized by Barr for arriving at their conclusions by means of an isolation of Greek and Hebrew which tends to accentuate the differences between them.²⁵ Barr's first criticism is relevant to those

²⁰"Where linguistic evidence has been used in aid of a theological argument, and where I believe that evidence to have been misused, I do not necessarily believe the conclusion of the theological argument to be itself wrong in particular. Quite often I think that theological arguments which I have examined would have been better and more convincing without the linguistic evidence which has been used in their support" Semantics, p. 6.

²¹Semantics, p. 291.

²²Christ and Time, p. 54.

²³Ibid., p. 58.

²⁴Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1950, p. 88.

²⁵Semantics, p. 27.

sections of Christ and Time where Cullmann contrasts the primitive Christian understanding of time with the "Greek and un-Biblical concept of time".²⁶

But Barr's second criticism is even more relevant because it strikes at the heart of the method whereby Cullmann arrives at his conclusions about the New Testament conception of time. Barr criticizes biblical theologians and contributors to all theological word books for drawing their conclusions about the differences between Hebrew and Greek thought from an analysis of words. He says that one primary assumption of biblical theologians has been that biblical language in its grammatical mechanisms or its lexical stock will always reflect or correspond to biblical thought.²⁷ By showing how words can have different meanings in different contexts and how words can change their meanings over a period of time, Barr is led to the major thesis of his book; namely that sentences and phrases are the main conveyors of thought not lexical structures.²⁸ Barr's criticisms of Cullmann's exegetical method are primarily directed towards the close correlation between thought and language which is presupposed in Cullmann's treatment of the New Testament material.

The contrast between the exegetical methods of Cullmann and Barr is best studied within the framework that Barr suggests in Biblical Words for Time. He proposes to concentrate on one particular procedure which

²⁶Christ and Time, p. 26.

²⁷Semantics, chapter 2.

²⁸Ibid., p. 263.

he finds very common among biblical theologians.²⁹ "This procedure is the building of a structure from the lexical stock of the biblical languages, and the assumption that the shape of this structure reflects or sets forth the outlines of biblical thinking about a subject."³⁰ The subject for discussion in this case is "time", and Barr cites Cullmann's chapter on "The New Testament Terminology for Time" as a particularly good example of what he considers to be a faulty exegetical procedure.

3. THE CENTRALITY OF THE CATEGORY OF TIME IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Cullmann begins the chapter on terminology in Christ and Time by drawing attention to the prominence in the New Testament of temporal language. He cites the recurring use of the words $\eta\mu\epsilon\rho\alpha$, $\omega\rho\alpha$, $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$, $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ and $\alpha\iota\omega\acute{\nu}$ to illustrate his point. But even in the first paragraph of the chapter Cullmann goes beyond simply saying that time is important.

Cullmann claims that the New Testament is exclusively preoccupied with time and history. He refers to "the emphatically temporal character of all expressions of faith",³¹ and he says that "the New Testament writings for the first time give to all revelation an essential anchorage in time".³² These statements contain Cullmann's views of revelation and

²⁹"Although the detailed study lies only in one small corner of the field of biblical interpretation, the issues ultimately raised include quite basic matters of method in biblical interpretation along with the integration of biblical study with dogmatic and philosophical theology." BWT, p. 14, infra, pp.127f. for a further discussion of some of the basic issues to which Barr is referring.

³⁰BWT, p. 12.

³¹Christ and Time, p. 37.

³²Ibid., p. 38.

history which will be examined in a later section.³³ But since it is the temporal character of expressions of faith which provides Cullmann with the justification for his complete rejection of Greek thought,³⁴ it is important to examine the evidence that Cullmann produces in his chapter on terminology. Examination reveals, however, that even the passage which Cullmann cites in conjunction with his exclusive claim for temporality, Hebrews 11:1,³⁵ contains a non-temporal reference. E.C. Blackman³⁶ shows that the word ὑπερτάτος, 'solid reality' has the philosophic sense of 'being' or 'nature' as in Hebrews 1:3, "the very stamp of his nature". Blackman says that "this is somewhat Platonic" and is a significant addition to a definition of faith which does indeed include a temporal reference ("things hoped for"). It is legitimate, therefore, to question Cullmann's phrase "the emphatically temporal character of all expressions of faith" even with respect to the example which he uses to make his point.

But there are also other examples of expressions of faith in the New Testament which do not have a temporal reference. For example, in the well-known passage of the letter of James (22:14-22) faith is described as mere belief which neither affects behaviour or calls forth personal trust: according to verse 19 even demons may be said to have faith in this sense. Blackman says that "the moralism of James represents

³³Infra, p. 135.

³⁴Christ and Time, Pp. 62-65.

³⁵"Faith gives substance to our hopes, and makes us certain of realities we do not see" - New English Bible.

³⁶Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 2, p. 234.

the continuing influence in the Church of the ethics of Hellenistic Judaism".³⁷ Cullmann would no doubt consider this conception of faith as a degradation, but it is an example of the influence of Greek thought within the New Testament. And it does point to the need for a modification of Cullmann's exclusive claim. Cullmann's chapter on terminology alludes only once³⁸ to the contrast between Hellenistic thought and the thought of the New Testament - a contrast which is very dominant in the remainder of the book. Analysis reveals that what is said later in the book about the contrast cannot be based on the examination of the terminology in chapter one.³⁹

From the many words for time in the New Testament Cullmann singles out *καιρός* and *καινός* for particular attention because they "most clearly elucidate the New Testament conception of time".⁴⁰

4. CULLMANN AND BARR ON KAIROS

Cullmann says that "the characteristic thing about *καιρός* is that it has to do with a definite point of time which has a fixed content".⁴¹

Cullmann produces considerable evidence from the New Testament to demonstrate

³⁷Ibid., p. 234.

³⁸Christ and Time, p. 37.

³⁹Paul Minear, reviewing Christ and Time in the Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 70, 1951, p. 53, says that "there is much evidence that the antithesis between Christian and Hellenistic conceptions was not so complete as the author supposes." Minear is no doubt alluding to evidence which Cullmann omits in his chapter on Terminology.

⁴⁰Christ and Time, p. 40.

⁴¹Christ and Time, p. 39.

that *καίρος* means "exact, right, critical time" or "opportunity".⁴²

From the many examples given by Cullmann two are reproduced here to demonstrate that in certain contexts *καίρος* can be translated as Cullmann suggests.⁴³ In Matthew 26:18 Jesus sends out his disciples with the message: "my *καίρος* is at hand". Not only is Jesus quoted as using *καίρος* in the sense of 'decisive moment', but the early Christians also used *καίρος* to describe their present experience of suffering: in I Peter 4:17 it is stated that "the *καίρος* has come for the judgement to begin at the house of God". In both of these instances Cullmann's usage of *καίρος* is supported by competent exegetes.⁴⁴

However, Barr shows that Cullmann has overlooked a number of important New Testament passages where *καίρος* does not mean a point of time defined by its content, but has reference to what can only be an extended period.⁴⁵ In Ephesians 2:12 *καίρος* is used to describe the entire era when the Gentiles were separated from Christ.⁴⁶ Similarly, in Mark 10:30 the word *καίρος* does not refer to an instant or moment when

⁴²Christ and Time, p. 39-43.

⁴³The essential facts about the usage of *καίρος* are readily available in The Theological Word Book of the New Testament. Delling's article cites many examples where "decisive time" is the sense intended by the usage of

⁴⁴For Matt. 26:18 see Sherman E. Johnson, The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 7, p. 573, also J.C. Fenton, Saint Matthew, Pelican Gospel Commentaries, London, 1963, p. 414. For I Peter 4:17 see A.M. Hunter, The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 12, p. 145.

⁴⁵BWT, p. 38-39.

⁴⁶Cf. F.W. Beare, Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 10, p. 651, "Before Christ came there was no communion of man with God except within the fold of the nation which he had made peculiarly his own."

a man is rewarded, but to this age as contrasted with the coming period.⁴⁷ Again in Hebrews 9:9 *καιρός* is used to describe the present era.⁴⁸ Barr shows that the use of *καιρός* to mean "time" in the sense of a "period" has a long history in classical Greek and in the Septuagint.⁴⁹ The important consequence for the New Testament exegete of Barr's analysis of *καιρός* is that it must not be assumed in advance that the word means a point of time, but that the meaning of the word must be discussed from the context in which it is used.

In his chapter on terminology Cullmann mentions the word *Χρόνος* twice,⁵⁰ and in both instances he translates this word as "time". He says that the word is not used abstractly⁵¹ but always "in concrete reference to the redemptive history".⁵² But the only example provided is Revelation 10:6 where it is said that there will be no more *Χρόνος*, which he translates as: "There will be no more delay".⁵³ While Cullmann

⁴⁷ Cf. F.C. Grant, Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 7, pp. 808. "The contrast between 'now in this time' and 'in the world to come' is the usual eschatological contrast between the two ages".

⁴⁸ Cf. A.C. Purdy, Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 2, p. 688. "The whole contrast is between the old and the new orders".

⁴⁹ BWT, Pp. 32-38.

⁵⁰ Christ and Time, Pp. 38 and 49.

⁵¹ Cullmann's statement that "none of the temporal expressions of the New Testament, not even *Χρόνος*, has as its object time as an abstraction" (p. 9) is an example of the tendency among biblical theologians to stress the differences between Hebrew and Greek thought. Since there is no word in any language that means "time as an abstraction" there is no point in stressing that Jewish and Christian usage has no such word. Cullmann's statement is superfluous and can easily lead the unwary reading into thinking that there is something unique about biblical language. Cf. Barr. BWT, p. 78.

⁵² Christ and Time, p. 49.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 49.

may be right in his interpretation of this passage,⁵⁴ the objectionable feature of his treatment of χρόνος is that he never mentions that it can have the same meaning as καιρός in a number of places in the New Testament. The omission is serious enough in itself, but it is even more critical when it is noted how conclusions are drawn about time in the New Testament from a one-sided treatment of καιρός.

Cullmann builds a good part of his case for a New Testament conception of time from an analysis of καιρός. The fact that he fails to mention the equivalence of καιρός and χρόνος in many passages means that one very important aspect of what the New Testament says about time is overlooked. Barr cites Acts 1:6 as an instance where χρόνος could be replaced by καιρός with no appreciable change of meaning.⁵⁵ χρόνος in this passage means 'at the present juncture', 'now'.⁵⁶ Barr also considers the two passages in the New Testament where καιρός and χρόνος occur together in a collation (Acts 1:7 and I Thess. 5:1) and concludes that "there is no significant difference between the two words, or at least none that can be expressed either by the distinction between 'chronological time'

⁵⁴Barr admits that modern interpretation favours this translation (so R.S.V.), but he points out that arguments for 'delay' have been founded mainly upon the verb χρονίζειν, which means 'to delay', but this is not the same as evidence for χρόνος itself. "All the ancient versions translated with words for 'time' here, although they had words for 'delay'." (p. 76) R.H. Preston and A.T. Hanson (The Revelation of Saint John the Divine, Torch Bible Commentaries, London: S.C.M., 1949) are typical of most modern interpreters. They say that "John is not trying to define eternity: he simply means 'there shall be no more delay'.... There is no metaphysical significance to χρόνος in verse 6". p. 87.

⁵⁵BWT, p. 38.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 38.

and 'realistic time',⁵⁷ or by that between periods of time and moments of time".⁵⁸ Barr cites the opinion of Blass ("one of the greatest New Testament philologists")⁵⁹ that in Acts 1:7 the two words are synonyms. That Cullmann fails to consider the equivalence of the two words is evident from his treatment of the two passages in question. In his exposition he simply does not mention the $\chi\rho\nu\sigma\acute{\iota}$ which occur along with the $\kappa\alpha\iota\rho\acute{\iota}$. A mention of the $\chi\rho\nu\sigma\acute{\iota}$ would have prevented Cullmann from making a generalization about Acts 1:6 to the effect that, "it is not all the fragments of ongoing time that constitute redemptive history in the narrower sense, but rather these specific points, these $\kappa\alpha\iota\rho\acute{\iota}$ singled out from time as a whole".⁶⁰ This sentence provides a good example of how Cullmann's exegesis is adversely affected by a theological notion of $\kappa\alpha\iota\rho\acute{\iota}$ (derived from its use in certain contexts) indiscriminately applied to situations where this usage was not intended by the author.

While Barr is willing to grant that $\kappa\alpha\iota\rho\acute{\iota}$ usually means a point of time, he is not willing to say that whenever this word occurs it must

⁵⁷This first distinction refers to that of John Marsh in The Fulness of Time, London: Nisbet, 1952, p. 19f. The Second distinction refers to Cullmann's use of $\kappa\alpha\iota\rho\acute{\iota}$ to refer only to moments of time.

⁵⁸BWT, p. 39.

⁵⁹BWT, p. 40.

⁶⁰Christ and Time, p. 40.

have the meaning that Cullmann attaches to it.⁶¹ "We must say that the New Testament *καιρός* represents more than one concept, and at a minimum two, namely that of 'right time' and that of 'time' in general - the latter a concept commonly indicated also by *Χρίνος*".⁶² It is not legitimate says Barr to subsume these two meanings under a single '*καιρός*' concept'.⁶³ The remainder of Barr's treatment of *καιρός* is concerned to show how Cullmann's exegesis has been adversely affected by "pressing the sense of 'critical moment' or 'decisive moment' upon examples of *καιρός* in cases where this sense is uncertain, or even improbable or impossible."⁶⁴

Very frequently in his chapter on terminology Cullmann leaves the word *καιρός* untranslated, and this adds to the difficulty of knowing whether he is pressing into the mould of the '*καιρός*' concept' examples of *καιρός* where the sense of 'decisive moment' is unlikely or disputed. Thus in Cullmann's exposition Acts 1:7 appears as "the *καιρός* which the Father has fixed in his omnipotence".⁶⁵ By leaving the word in Greek Cullmann avoids the difficult arguments which would be necessary to

⁶¹Cullmann says that *καιρός* (like *λίωv*) "can be used in the New Testament without special theological reference", and he gives Acts 24:25 as his sole example of a secular usage (p. 39). But examination reveals that Cullmann intends a 'theological content' for *καιρός* in all the other New Testament passages which he quotes in the chapter on terminology.

⁶²BWT, p. 62.

⁶³Christ and Time, p. 40. Cullmann speaks of "this central New Testament concept of the *καιρός*". In view of the various meanings of *καιρός* in the New Testament, Barr says that "the phrase 'the *καιρός*' concept' has no intelligible meaning". BWT, p. 53.

⁶⁴BWT, p. 54.

⁶⁵Christ and Time, p. 40.

establish the meaning of 'decisive moment' in this context. Barr has shown⁶⁶ that some scholars consider the presence of the word $\chi\rho\acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ in this verse as exegetical grounds for regarding the words $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ and $\chi\rho\acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ as equivalent expressions for a period of time. It can also be shown that Cullmann imposes his ' $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ concept' upon I Tim. 6:15 where the $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ $\acute{\iota}\delta\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$ is "translated" as "at appropriate $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ ".⁶⁷ Cullmann says that $\acute{\iota}\delta\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$ 'appropriate' ^{is} already inherent in $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ as "decisive moment".⁶⁸ But Barr argues that the reverse is true. He says that it is the use of $\acute{\iota}\delta\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$ which makes it legitimate and reasonable to translate as "decisive moment" in this context.⁶⁹ Cullmann approaches the exegesis of these passages with a theological presupposition concerning the meaning of $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$, whereas Barr attempts to determine the meaning of the word from the context in which it is used.

Cullmann's ' $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ concept' proves to be the theological basis for his linear view of time and for the redemptive history which for him is the specifically Christian element of the New Testament. Cullmann says that it is the relationship between the $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ which provides the basis for linear time and redemptive history. In the chapter on terminology Cullmann speaks of Christ as standing "in the midst of the divine plan of

⁶⁶ Supra, p. 67.

⁶⁷ Christ and Time, p. 40.

⁶⁸ "By the addition of the objective $\acute{\iota}\delta\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$ 'appropriate', it is emphasized that the sovereign power of God fixes these $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ in the context of his entire plan of salvation". Christ and Time, p. 40.

⁶⁹ BWT, p. 42.

salvation, whose $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ are definitely fixed by God".⁷⁰ Similarly he says that "in the past, the present and the future there are special divine $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ by the joining of which the redemptive line arises".⁷¹ The misleading effect of transliteration is seen in both of these sentences from Cullmann in that other possible meanings of $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ are overlooked. But even if Cullmann's implied usage of $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ is allowed to stand, another important question is whether there is any New Testament evidence to support the "special divine $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ by the joining of which the redemptive line arises".⁷²

Barr says that Cullmann's picture of a history composed of a series of $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ "is produced by stringing together a number of different passages, each of which contains the word $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ with some reference to a theologically important event."⁷³ Barr suggests in this statement that any linking up of the $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ is the product of a theological exegesis, and cannot be legitimately extracted from New Testament linguistic usage. He says that "there are no contexts in biblical Greek in which 'a series of $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ ' appears in usage."⁷⁴ Cullmann, on the other hand, cites the $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ $\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ of the Pastoral Epistles, especially as it occurs in I Tim. 2:6, as showing "the necessity of connecting the $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ with one another."⁷⁵ Cullmann argues that in some instances the word $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ refers to a future event (the example he gives is I. Tim. 6:15) and in other instances the word refers to a past event (Titus 1:3) but that in

⁷⁰ Christ and Time, p. 42.

⁷³ BWT, p. 61.

⁷⁵ Christ and Time, p. 43.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 43.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 61.

⁷² Ibid., p. 43.

I Tim. 2:6 both of these usages converge, and this demonstrates the necessity of the joining of the *καρποί*. But there are two basic criticisms of Cullmann's exegesis of I Tim. 2:6. The first is that Cullmann's interpretation of *καρποί* in the futurist sense of "still to come"⁷⁶ has, says Barr, "very little support in its favour, and is implicitly contradicted by many works of reference".⁷⁷ In the second place, both Barr and Bultmann question Cullmann's exegesis of *καρποί* as representing a plurality of divinely planned moments. Bultmann suggests that *καρποί* is not a genuine plural and therefore cannot designate "stages in the history of salvation".⁷⁸ And Barr, by showing that the plural (*καρποί*) in the general sense of 'time' and with no element of either decisiveness or of plurality of meaning was well established in Hellenistic usage and in the Septuagint,⁷⁹ raises a serious criticism of Cullmann's interpretation.⁸⁰ Cullmann does not produce any linguistic evidence, other than the *καρποὶς ἰσίδος* of the Pastoral Epistles to prove the necessity of joining the *καρποί*. The line which joins the *καρποί* is essential to Cullmann's view of time and history, but an examination of I Tim. 2:6

⁷⁶ Christ and Time, p. 41.

⁷⁷ BWT, p. 62. Barr has overstated his case with these words. He cites only Bultmann and Bauer to support his case, and there are scholars such as F.D. Gealy (Interpreter's Bible, Vol. II, p. 401) who agree with Cullmann. Barr has pointed to the lack of unanimity concerning a futurist interpretation, and this at least weakens Cullmann's argument.

⁷⁸ R. Bultmann, Existence and Faith, p. 234.

⁷⁹ BWT, Pp. 32-38.

⁸⁰ The translation of _____ in the general sense of 'time' is supported by the Authorized Version of the Bible, and also the Revised Version and the Revised Standard Version.

has shown that the passage, when exegeted in its context and utilizing universally recognized linguistic methods, will not support the interpretation which Cullmann gives it.

5. CULLMANN AND BARR ON AION

The section on *καίρος* has demonstrated some of the dangers in Cullmann's attempt to derive a biblical conception of time and history from an analysis of the words used for time. It was shown how Cullmann overlooked one of the usages of *καίρος* and constructed a biblical view of time and history from the theological content which he found in certain contexts. Cullmann's discussion of *αἰών* exhibits the same tendency to draw theological conclusions from an analysis of the word. But since the theological conclusions which Cullmann draws out from his analysis of *αἰών* are not as immediately relevant to the foundation of his theological exegesis,⁸¹ and since many of the faulty exegetical procedures have already been exposed, the treatment of *αἰών* in this section can be reduced to a summary of Cullmann's main points paralleled by Barr's critical comments.

According to Cullmann the distinction between *καίρος* and *αἰών* brings out the essence of the New Testament understanding of time. "The two ideas that most clearly elucidate the New Testament conception of time are those usually expressed by *καίρος* (a point of time) and *αἰών* (age)".⁸²

⁸¹Cullmann's views on eschatology in the New Testament, redemptive history, and the relation of redemptive history to general history are all based to a considerable extent on his understanding of *καίρος*. In other words Cullmann's theological presuppositions are particularly evident in his use of this word. Cullmann concerns himself with *αἰών* only because he thinks it is helpful in determining the relation between time and eternity in the New Testament.

⁸²Christ and Time, p. 39.

The previous analysis has shown that *καρπός* can also mean an age or a period, and Barr listed Eph. 2:12, Hebrews 9:9 and Mark 10:30 as examples.⁸³

"In these passages very little appreciable difference would be made by substituting *αἰών* for *καρπός*".⁸⁴ Thus when all of the New Testament usage is considered it is an oversimplification to state the distinction between *καρπός* and *αἰών* as that between 'moment' on the one hand, and 'age' or 'period' on the other. Barr's point is that if the two words can have identical meanings in certain contexts, it is not legitimate to draw out theological conclusions about time in the New Testament from a distinction which is by no means absolute. Barr is willing to concede to Cullmann that "it is at least true that *αἰών* never means a point of time, even if it is not true that *καρπός* never means a period or extent of time."⁸⁵ But this concession does not provide any foundation for the fundamental opposition between *καρπός* and *αἰών* which is the backbone of Cullmann's lexical structure. *αἰών* (which always refers to an extent or period of time) cannot in any absolute way be distinguished from either *καρπός* or *χρῆνος* since both of these latter words can also refer to an extended period of time. Thus Barr shows that it is not legitimate to draw theological conclusions from a distinction between *αἰών* and any other word for time.⁸⁶

But Cullmann also draws theological conclusions from the various linguistic usages of *αἰών* itself, and again the main thrust of Barr's criticism is directed against the method whereby Cullmann arrives at these

⁸³BWT, p. 48.

⁸⁵BWT, p. 47.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 42.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 78.

conclusions. The most important of Cullmann's conclusions for his thesis in Christ and Time is that "eternity, which is possible only as an attribute of God, is time; or, to put it better, what we call 'time' is nothing but a part, defined and delimited by God, of the same unending duration of God's time".⁸⁷ In support of this conclusion Cullmann brings forward three arguments all based on the linguistic usage of αἰών in the New Testament. In the first place, Cullmann says that with the exception of a small number of cases (Hebrews 1:2 is given as an example) where the term takes on "a spatial meaning and so comes to mean 'world'," the sense of αἰών and of αἰώνες is always temporal.⁸⁸ Cullmann says that because "the use of the plural 'ages' is particularly preferred when eternity is mentioned"⁸⁹ this proves that the continuation and not the cessation of time is intended. Cullmann's third argument consists of a demonstration that the same word αἰών in the New Testament designates "both an exactly defined and incalculable duration, which we then translate by the word 'eternity'."⁹⁰ In this double sense of αἰών Cullmann finds a clue to the relation between time and eternity in the New Testament. Barr criticizes all three of Cullmann's arguments.

Cullmann does not regard his first argument, that the sense of αἰών is almost always temporal, as proving anything about the relation of time and eternity. The argument is regarded as a preparatory matter: it leads into the others. But the fact that Cullmann admits exceptions to his generalization points to the necessity of establishing the meaning of αἰών in every context in which it is used. An examination of Cullmann's

⁸⁷Christ and Time, p. 62.

⁸⁹Christ and Time, p. 46.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 45.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 45.

treatment of $\alpha\acute{\omega}\nu$ reveals that the procedure recommended by Barr has not been followed.⁹¹

Barr challenges Cullmann's second argument that the use of the plural for 'eternity' proves that the word does not signify cessation of time or timelessness. "Such an argument", says Barr, "is a purely theoretical one, and takes no account of the circumstances in which plural forms may in fact be used in language".⁹² Barr gives examples from various languages, including Hebrew, where a plural form does not mean a plurality and variety of the objects designated by the singular. There is therefore no basis for Cullmann's argument that the use of the plural demonstrates that eternity is endless time. Barr not only questions the logic of Cullmann's argument, but also some of the facts which are produced to substantiate the case. Cullmann says that the plural $\alpha\acute{\omega}\nu\epsilon\varsigma$ is particularly preferred when eternity is being spoken of, but Barr shows, by a detailed analysis of the word, that Cullmann's statement is inaccurate.⁹³

Cullmann's third and most important argument⁹⁴ is that the use of $\alpha\acute{\omega}\nu$ both for an 'age' or limited duration of time and for unlimited duration or 'eternity' proves that 'eternity' in the New Testament is not fundamentally different from time but is simply unlimited time. In his Semantics of Biblical Language, Barr pointed out that if a word has

⁹¹On pages 68 and 69 of BWT Barr examines Cullmann's examples of the various usages of $\alpha\acute{\omega}\nu$, and concludes that "it is only in other syntactic contexts, and not in the ones quoted, that $\alpha\acute{\omega}\nu$ means a particular limited duration.", p. 69.

⁹²BWT, p. 64.

⁹³Ibid., p. 66.

⁹⁴The third argument is the only one which Cullmann mentions in support of his thesis in other parts of his book. Eg. Christ and Time, p. 62.

two senses, as does αἰών in the New Testament, this cannot be used to demonstrate that the objects meant by the word in these two senses are essentially akin.⁹⁵ And in Biblical Words for Time Barr points out that Plato used αἰών not only for a timeless eternity but also for a limited temporal period.⁹⁶ But Plato carefully stated what he meant by αἰών when he used it,⁹⁷ and did not infer a relationship between the different 'objects' signified by his various uses of the word.⁹⁸ Cullmann sums up with the statement that "above the distinction between 'time' and 'eternity' stands the one time concept of the age (αἰών) which includes both".⁹⁹ And Barr says that this statement is not only "a case of the faulty use of 'concept' already criticized", but also "an ignoring of the variety of different syntactical contexts in which αἰών and αἰώνες are used.... The argument ignores also the basic fact that the cases involving αἰών in senses like 'the present age' can be easily distinguished from, and are in no way dependent upon, its sense as 'perpetuity'".¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵Cf. also BWT, p. 147 where Barr shows that the word αἰώνες is used of both the Jerusalem temple gates in Psalm 23:7 and of the Christian God in Romans 16:26.

⁹⁶BWT, p. 72.

⁹⁷"Plato himself explicitly says that temporal movement is absent from that which he called αἰών in the Timaeus". BWT, p. 72.

⁹⁸Barr's demonstration that the facts to which Cullmann appeals in New Testament Greek "are equally, or much more, present in classical Greek and in Plato in particular" (BWT, p. 72) is a particularly biting criticism of Cullmann. Cullmann states that his purpose is to show how his conclusions "differ from the Greek conception, present above all in Platonism, of the way in which time and eternity are related." Christ and Time, p. 61.

⁹⁹Christ and Time, p. 62.

¹⁰⁰BWT, p. 78.

Barr not only criticizes the evidence that Cullmann produces in the three arguments for the conclusion that eternity is endless time; but Barr goes further and considers whether there is any other linguistic evidence to support this conclusion. The essence of his argument is that even an adequate treatment of the linguistic evidence cannot produce the conclusion that time and eternity are not opposed. The end result of Barr's examination of $\alpha\iota\omega\upsilon$ is not the conclusion that time and eternity are unrelated. His point is precisely that no definitive conclusions can be reached by an examination of the linguistic evidence. He leaves open the possibility that Cullmann may be perfectly correct;¹⁰¹ but he is critical of Cullmann and any others who reach conclusions about time and eternity by the method of terminological and lexical study.

6. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EXAMINATION OF TERMINOLOGY

Barr considers Cullmann's chapter on terminology as quite crucial "establishing as it does the two great assertions, that time is a line and that it differs from eternity only in that the latter is unlimited",¹⁰² There are many indications that Cullmann himself gives considerable weight to the chapter. He says that "it will be shown in this and the following chapters that the New Testament writings for the first time give to all revelation an essential anchorage in time.... In this respect the terminology of the New Testament is characteristic".¹⁰³ In stating that

¹⁰¹ Most scholars would agree, however, with Paul S. Mear, writing in the Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 70, 1951, p. 52, that "it simplifies things unduly to call all Greek ideas of eternity 'timeless', and to reduce all Biblical ideas to that of 'endless time'."

¹⁰² BWT, p. 80.

¹⁰³ Christ and Time, p. 38.

"theological understanding necessarily encounters limits in the separate treatment of a single word".¹⁰⁴ Cullmann appears to be aware of the major point that Barr made in The Semantics of Biblical Language. Examples have been given in this chapter to show that Cullmann does not heed the limits which are encountered in the separate treatment of words. One statement of Cullmann is a particularly good example of his method of basing his conclusions about time and history on the linguistic usage of the New Testament. Speaking of the word $\alpha\iota\omega\nu$, Cullmann says that the "ambiguous usage of the same word.... will help us.... to determine accurately the relation between time and eternity in the New Testament".¹⁰⁵ Barr's judgement that the chapter on terminology is crucial is supported by statements of Cullmann himself. Cullmann begins a summary paragraph at the end of his chapter with these words: "the terminology of the New Testament teaches us that...."¹⁰⁶ And he begins the next chapter with the words: "Our study of terminology has shown that...."¹⁰⁷

In view of these statements it is difficult to understand how Cullmann can write in his preface to the third edition that any "exclusive preoccupation with those first chapters about linear time and eternity attributes to them much greater significance than I am prepared to give them. They merely serve a preparatory purpose and I have not shortened them for this new edition because that would have influenced their clarity adversely".¹⁰⁸ Similarly in an addendum Cullmann writes: "concerning 'linear time' as a background, I believe that it can be derived from the New Testament conception of eschatology quite independently from the

¹⁰⁴Christ and Time, p. 38.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. xxv.

lexicographical method which Barr rejects".¹⁰⁹ Cullmann does not state how 'linear time' can be derived from the New Testament conception of eschatology. The reader can only speculate that Cullmann is referring to his theological exegesis. It must be granted that if an interpreter were permitted to bring theological presuppositions to the exegesis then it would be possible to speak of "linear time as a background". Cullmann's position is ambiguous because on the one hand he considers the chapters on terminology as important (he does not leave them out of the third edition) but not crucial (the same conclusions can be reached by some other method, presumably a theological exegesis). This provides a good example of how Cullmann attempts to combine a theological exegesis with a historical-critical approach. When the historical-critical method is pressed by a scholar such as Barr, Cullmann takes refuge from the critical enquiry by resorting to his theological exegesis. Cullmann comes closer to a descriptive exegesis in his chapter on terminology than anywhere else in his book. But there are signs that his theological presuppositions have affected even his treatment of the terminology. Barr's criticisms have shown that to the extent that Cullmann's conclusions concerning time and history are based on the treatment of terminology they are likely to be inaccurate because of faulty exegetical procedures. The effect of Barr's criticisms is to eliminate any historical-critical basis for Cullmann's conclusions, and thus to relegate them to the category of theological presuppositions.

Cullmann's theological presuppositions do not have a foundation in

¹⁰⁹Christ and Time, p. xxxi.

the biblical material. At least they cannot be uncovered by a descriptive exegesis which seeks to understand the material in its context and according to the intention of the author. There is no historical-critical foundation for Cullmann's linear view of time, his conception of the temporariness of eschatology, his view of redemptive history and its relation to 'general' history, and his view of eternity as endless time. Barr's criticisms have demonstrated that Cullmann's views cannot be based on the terminological examination because Cullmann has resorted to faulty linguistic methodology and omitted New Testament evidence which would have contradicted his results. Because Cullmann's views concerning time and history cannot be substantiated by a descriptive exegesis the interpreter must seek elsewhere than the New Testament to find the origin of Cullmann's presuppositions is undertaken, a comparative examination of some of Cullmann's work on the Fourth Gospel will be useful to demonstrate the extent to which Cullmann's presuppositions concerning time and history are imposed upon an individual document of the New Testament.

IV

THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND REDEMPTIVE HISTORY

In the preface to the third edition of Christ and Time Cullmann says that he has been criticized for detecting "signs of redemptive history in the message of Jesus, Paul and even John".¹ Cullmann alludes to a forthcoming book in which he will attempt to demonstrate that it is "particularly in John", not "even in John" that redemptive history can be seen. The book to which he refers is Les Sacrements Dans L'Evangile Johanniques,² which, translated into English, forms the second part of Early Christian Worship. The purpose of this chapter is to compare Cullmann's exegesis of the Fourth Gospel with a descriptive exegesis in order to assess the legitimacy of his claim that salvation-history "belongs to the programme of the Gospel".³ The comparison will demonstrate the extent to which Cullmann has approached the Fourth Gospel with theological presuppositions which cannot be supported by the evidence of the document itself.

The specific way in which Cullmann chooses to substantiate his thesis is to show the connection in the Gospel between the contemporary

¹Christ and Time, p. xxiii.

²Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1951, Pp. 92.

³Early Christian Worship, p. 50, (ECW).

Christian worship and the historical life of Jesus. The Evangelist he says, "traces the line from the Christ of history to Christ the Lord of the community in which the Word continually becomes flesh."⁴ Cullmann has elsewhere⁵ stated that baptism and the eucharist were the only significant gatherings for worship in the early church. The Fourth Gospel, says Cullmann, "treats these two sacraments as expressions of the whole worship life of the early community and correspondingly sets forth the relation between the Lord of the community present especially in these two sacraments and the life of Jesus".⁶ In other words the church's acts of worship provide the setting in which events of the past become the media of God's saving action in the present. Cullmann examines selected passages from the Gospel in order to show "how the evangelist endeavours to discover in the once-for-all thoroughly real, historical events of the life of Christ the further implications for the history of salvation already contained therein as signs, and to awaken in his readers an understanding of this comprehensive perspective for past, present and future".⁷

Cullmann's exposition of the Fourth Gospel is, by his own

⁴ECW, p. 38.

⁵ECW, p. 31. "In the early church there are only these two celebrations or services - the common meal, within the framework of which the proclamation of the Word always had a place, and Baptism". Cullmann's claim that the "basis and goal" of every primitive Christian gathering was the Lord's Supper (apart from Baptism) rests on slender evidence. He quotes the two famous references in Acts to the breaking of Bread (2:42 and 20:7) and concludes: "we have found a convincing argument for the view that as a rule there was no gathering of the community without the breaking of bread" (p. 29). Most New Testament scholars are not convinced. Cf. C.F.D. Moule, Worship in the New Testament, London: Lutterworth, 1961, P. 61ff.

⁶ECW, p. 58.

⁷Ibid., p. 56.

admission, selective.⁸ He makes no attempt to link the story of the Nobleman's Son (4:46-54) or the Raising of Lazarus (11:1-44) or the Anointing at Bethany (12:1-8) with either baptism or the eucharist. Cullmann says that in the Gospel of John there are "other contacts of the life of Jesus with the history of salvation".⁹ He suggests the connections of the life of Jesus with the Old Testament and with the heresies current in the evangelist's time as other examples. But the connection which he chooses to demonstrate in order to substantiate his case for salvation-history pertains to worship. Since Cullmann does not elaborate on any of the "other contacts" his case for redemptive history in John depends entirely on the results of his enquiry into early Christian worship.

Cullmann presents evidence, based on "the results of exegesis",¹⁰ to show that there are allusions to baptism and the eucharist in certain of the events of Jesus' life which John records. Cullmann finds allusions to baptism in (1) the Baptism of Jesus, (2) the Conversation with Nicodemus, (3) the Conversation with the Samaritan Woman, (4) the Healing at Bethesda, and (5) the Healing at the Pool of Siloam. He finds the eucharist to be set forth especially in (6) the Marriage at Cana, (7) the Feeding of the Multitude, and (8) the Discourse of the True Vine. He finds both sacraments combined in (9) the Footwashing at the Last Supper and (10) the issue of Water and Blood at the crucifixion. In this treatment the Purpose of the Evangelist (11) will be discussed following the exegesis of the

⁸ For further comments on Cullmann's selective approach, *infra*, p. 123.

⁹ *ECW*, p. 57.

¹⁰ *ECW*, p. 58.

individual passages.

1. JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE BAPTISM OF JESUS, 1:6-8, 19-34

Cullmann says that "from John's baptizing and from Christ being baptized a line should be drawn to the Baptism which Christ brought and which is practised in the early Christian community".¹¹ Cullmann admits that "if we had nothing besides these Baptism passages, their connection with Christian Baptism might appear problematic".¹² The references to baptism in other parts of the Gospel provide Cullmann with the justification for finding hidden allusions to baptism in this passage as well.

Cullmann says that in verses 19 to 28 the evangelist is concerned to demonstrate the superiority of Christian baptism over John's Baptism. This is considered to be indicated by the setting of the witness of John to Jesus in which the priests and levites come to question the Baptism (1:19). Cullmann says that "in the composition of the delegation, the context of public worship of the passage is immediately evident. The delegation is composed of men who specialize in questions of liturgical propriety".¹³ G.R. Beasley-Murray says that this inference is "highly improbable. It is nevertheless typical of the manner in which Cullmann finds connections between the Gospel history and the Christian sacraments; with such a method the links can most certainly be found, and

¹¹ECW, p. 59.

¹²Ibid., p. 60.

¹³Ibid., p. 60.

that in abundance".¹⁴

In answer to the question of the priests and levites John declares in verse 22 that he is not the Christ. "It is already a question of baptism", says Cullmann, "and more specifically it is a question of a rejection of a continuance of the baptism of John after Christ has introduced Baptism by the spirit."¹⁵ The speculative character of Cullmann's statement becomes evident when it is noted that no hint has yet been given in the text to suggest even that the ministry of John was one of baptism. Only at verse 25 is John asked why he is baptizing. Previous to verse 25 "it is a question of the status and mission of John as compared with that of Jesus the Messiah, not of the baptism administered by the one and that administered in the name of the other".¹⁶ And even after the question to John and his reply in verse 26, "I Baptize with water, but among you stands one whom you do not know", there is no reference to Christian baptism. The implication of John's reply is not that the significance of all baptism is in Jesus, as Cullmann maintains,¹⁷ but

¹⁴G.R. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, London: Mac-Millan, 1962, p. 217, The assessment of Beasley-Murray is supported by the suggestion of C.K. Barrett (The Gospel According to St. John, London: S.P.C.K., 1965) that "in view of 1:24 it seems doubtful whether John was intimately acquainted with the levitical institutions". The evangelist could hardly be demonstrating a conscious concern for Christian worship if "he has simply borrowed a familiar Old Testament phrase (eg. 2 Chron. 23:4) to describe Jewish functionaries". P. 143.

¹⁵ECW, p. 62.

¹⁶Beasley-Murray, p. 218.

¹⁷ECW, p. 63, Cullmann admits that the thought is only "implicit" in verse 26, but he goes on to say that "already here.... it is indicated that Christian Baptism is wholly bound up with the person of Christ."

the thought of verse 31 (which, as Beasley-Murray points out,¹⁸ is the real continuation and exposition of verse 26) that the purpose of John's baptism was the public manifestation of Jesus.¹⁹

Cullmann finds a "positive reference to Christian baptism.... in the fact that to the water the Spirit is added".²⁰ Most scholars agree that there is a reference to the baptism of Jesus in verse 32 where John bears witness to the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus.²¹ But it does not necessarily follow that the reference of verse 33 to "he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit" alludes to Christian baptism.²² It is indeed possible that the evangelist is here once again drawing attention to his central preoccupation in this episode, namely the preparatory role of John; and the contrast between water and the Spirit merely serves to illustrate this central concern.²³ Cullmann's exegesis does not take sufficient account of the total context in which the individual verses are set.

On the assumption that the relation between Jesus' baptism and

¹⁸Beasley-Murray, p. 218.

¹⁹Cf. J.H. Bernard: A critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John, The International Critical Commentary, Edinburgh: Clark, 1928, p. 48. Cf. also Barrett, p. 148.

²⁰ECW, p. 63.

²¹E.C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, London: Faber and Faber, Second edition, 1947, p. 177. Cf. also Barrett, p. 148 and Bernard, p. 48.

²²Bernard in his exegesis of this verse says nothing about Christian baptism (p. 51-52).

²³Cf. Hoskyns, p. 178.

Christian baptism is established Cullmann proceeds to demonstrate "how clearly Christian Baptism is connected with the death of Christ."²⁴ It is the way in which the evangelist arranges the sequence of events which furnishes Cullmann's evidence: the account of Jesus' baptism comes immediately after his description as the 'Lamb of God' (vs. 29). Thus Cullmann says that "in his Baptism it falls to Jesus to undertake the role of the servant of God, suffering vicariously for his people".²⁵ Cullmann cites the suggestion of Schlatter and Burney that 'Lamb of God' refers to the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 because the aramaic word can mean both 'lamb' and 'servant'. But both C.H. Dodd²⁶ and Barrett²⁷ consider this suggestion unlikely; and Bernard, while he agrees with Cullmann's suggestion, shows that it presents serious difficulties for the exegete.²⁸ Dodd says that "the Fourth Gospel, as distinct from the Johannine epistles, shows no interest in 'expiation' as the effect of the death of Christ".²⁹ And he therefore challenges one of the final results of Cullmann's book that the two sacraments "have this in common that they are bound in the closest way to the death of Jesus".³⁰ Insofar

²⁴ECW, p. 63.

²⁵ECW, p. 64.

²⁶C.H. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, Cambridge, 1953, p. 220.

²⁷Barrett, p. 147.

²⁸"It does not appear that either the Jews or the early disciples during the earthly ministry of Jesus conceived of Isa. 53 as foretelling a suffering Christ. It is, therefore, hard to believe that John the Baptist, alone among the witnesses of the ministry of Jesus, and before that ministry had begun, should have associated Him with the central figure of Isa. 53." Bernard, p. 46.

²⁹Dodd, Interpretation, p. 220.

³⁰ECW, p. 118.

as Cullmann's conclusion about the realltion of the death of Jesus to Christian baptism is based on his exegesis of John 1:19-34, Dodd's criticism is a justifiable one.

2. THE CONVERSATION WITH NICODEMUS, 3:1-21

Cullmann sees in the Nicodemus episode an incident in the life of Jesus "which points to the Christ lifted up in death and present to the church in the sacraments".³¹ Scholars do not deny that there is a reference to Christian baptism in the evangelist's account of this incident, but they do deny that the primary emphasis of the passage lies where Cullmann places it. Any linking of this passage (and therefore, also Baptism, according to Cullmann) to the death of Christ is also seriously questioned by scholars.

Cullmann begins his demonstration of the centrality of baptism in 3:1-21 by stating that "the relation of rebirth to baptism is already a common conception in the early church".³² On this basis the passage is immediately placed in the context of the early Church. It is the evangelist's purpose, says Cullmann, to underline for the primitive Christian community the fact that baptism by the Spirit and baptism by water belong together, and are not, as the tendency was in the early Church, to be separated from each other.³³ Cullmann says that the author of the Fourth Gospel knew what he was doing when he brought together "water" and "the Spirit" in verse 5: it not only accords with the characteristic Johannine

³¹ ECW, p. 78.

³² Ibid., p. 75, italics Cullmann's.

³³ Ibid., p. 76.

theology that "the Spirit is present in material elements just as the Logos became flesh", but says Cullmann, "obviously there is a quite special connection here with the sacrament."³⁴

Most commentators agree that there is a reference to Christian baptism in verse 5³⁵ but they regard it as an isolated reference which does not change the meaning of the entire passage.³⁶ Stephen Smalley says that Cullmann has overlooked both the context of the discussion with Nicodemus which is entry into the kingdom and the background which is Hellenistic.³⁷

The problem, though Nicodemus would not have presented it in this way, is the method of transfer from τὰ κάτω to τὰ ἄνω; from the realm of σὰρξ to the realm of πνεῦμα. Jesus' mention of rebirth, which conforms initially to the same background of thought, leaves Nicodemus more puzzled than ever (3:9) - and we might well ask whether a Jew was supposed to understand by the word 'water' all that Cullmann expects. It is then that Jesus explains further, and He does so in terms of faith (v. 12) in the Person (v. 13) and work (v. 14) of the Christ. On the basis of this a response is demanded (v. 16) and entry into the kingdom of God effected (vv. 17-18).³⁸

In view of the context of verse 5, therefore, it would appear that the

³⁴ECW, p. 78.

³⁵Cf. Bernard, p. 104; Barrett, p. 174; Hoskyns, p. 214.

³⁶Stephen Smalley, "liturgy and Sacrament in the Fourth Gospel", Evangelical Quarterly, Vol. XXIX, No. 3, 1957, p. 163. Cf. also Bernard, p. clxv; "what has happened here is that John has taken a great saying of Jesus (vs. 3) addressed, it may be, to Nicodemus in the first instance and that he has restated it in verse 5 in terms of the doctrine of Christian baptism which was beginning to take shape at the end of the first century".

³⁷Cf. Barrett, p. 170. "Jesus is portrayed as the fulfillment of Judaism but in the portrayal concepts drawn from the Hellenistic world are employed".

³⁸Smalley, p. 163.

evangelist's purpose is other than stressing the importance of Christian baptism. Smalley says that "if the reader still sees in the mention of 'water' (3:5) a reference to Christian Baptism, he is entitled to do so only in the light of the content thus given to it".³⁹ Barrett says that "it is possible to interpret the word 'water' without reference to baptismal rites",⁴⁰ (an obvious point which is not recognized by Cullmann) but he concludes that verse 5 probably does refer to Christian baptism. But he, like Smalley, shows that the emphasis of the entire episode lies elsewhere.

Cullmann interprets the passage that gives the final witness of John to Jesus (3:22-36) as further proof that the evangelist is concerned primarily "to define the new Baptism by the Spirit.... over against the baptism of John".⁴¹ He suggests that the word $\alpha\nu\omega\theta\epsilon\nu$ ('above'; vs. 31) links the whole section (22-36) with the Nicodemus discourse (1-21) because the same word occurs in vs. 3 and refers in both cases to he who ascended into heaven ("was lifted up") and who is the "objective source of the re-birth effected in baptism".⁴² From this basis Cullmann concludes that the answer to Nicodemus' question, "How can these things be?" is found in verse 13 where reference is made to the Son of Man ascending and descending and thus bringing redemption. By this reasoning Cullmann once again links baptism to the redemptive death of Christ. But as Beasley-

³⁹Smalley, p. 164.

⁴⁰Barrett, p. 174.

⁴¹ECW, p. 79.

⁴²ECW, p. 79.

Murray points out: "Anyone acquainted with the content of John 3 will surely agree that this is an astonishing argument. Verse 13 is not the direct answer to the question, 'How can these things be?'"⁴³ And because Nicodemus is not asking how rebirth is effected in baptism it is illegitimate for Cullmann to conclude that "Jesus shows how this bestowal of the Spirit, together with the forgiveness of sins which is offered in the same sacrament, depends on the death and resurrection of Christ, and that in virtue of this, that miracle of rebirth, which to Nicodemus is so inconceivable, can take place".⁴⁴

Serious doubts have been raised concerning the links which Cullmann establishes between the Nicodemus episode, the death of Christ, and the sacrament of Christian baptism. The results of this examination point to Beasley-Murray's conclusion "that Cullmann has failed to establish his case for a consistent baptismal interest in John 1-3. That the evangelist was interested in John's baptism and its relation to Christian baptism none would wish to deny, but it is not a predominating theme of the early chapters of this Gospel".⁴⁵

3. THE CONVERSATION WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN, 4:1-30

The symbol of water is repeated in the discourse with the woman of Samaria, and Cullmann's treatment of this incident is typical of the

⁴³Beasley-Murray, p. 218. Similarly, concerning vs. 13 Barrett says that this verse "is not a saying which can be placed within the setting of the historical ministry of Jesus, but is the testimony of the church after his death and resurrection". (p. 178)

⁴⁴ECW, p. 77.

⁴⁵Beasley-Murray, p. 219.

way in which he finds a reference to baptism whenever water is mentioned.

There is, indeed, a link between this incident and the preceding one but the link is not, as Cullmann suggests, their mutual concern with baptism.⁴⁶ According to Barrett the link is forged "by the use of the term 'water'."⁴⁷ In 3:5 water is mentioned as that with which men wash, and Jesus was seen to supercede the means of cleaning known to Judaism. But in 4:14 the water symbol is given a different content for now the thought advances and deals with the "continuance"⁴⁸ of the new life through the supply of "living water" which Christ gives. The purpose of the transition, says Smalley is to lead up to "the central treatment which will be given to the notion of worship".⁴⁹ Similarly Dodd says that the main point of the incident is that "Christ inaugurates worship ἐν πνευμάτι.... that is, on the plane of full reality".⁵⁰

But Cullmann insists on relating the whole of this incident to the sacrament of baptism. His basis for doing so is that "while the Spirit is the subject of discussion with the woman of Samaria we must not forget that this Spirit is bestowed in Baptism and effects rebirth (John 3:5)."⁵¹ On the basis of the reference to baptism in the "water and the Spirit" of 3:5⁵² Cullmann argues that the "living water" of 4:14 also refers to baptism. Similarly Cullmann argues that because John 7:37ff is a parallel passage to 4:14 (both refer to "living water") and because

⁴⁶ ECW, p. 81.

⁴⁷ Barrett, p. 190.

⁴⁸ Dodd, Interpretation, p. 313.

⁴⁹ Smalley, p. 164.

⁵⁰ Dodd, Interpretation, p. 314.

⁵¹ ECW, p. 82.

⁵² Infra, p.

⁵³ ECW, p. 82.

7:37ff "is certainly to be related to Baptism",⁵³ therefore 4:14 also alludes to baptism. Contrary to Cullmann, the commentaries of Hoskyns, Bernard and Barrett make no suggestion that John 7:37ff is a baptismal passage.⁵⁴ Thus it would be more accurate to say that both John 4:14 and 7:37ff are examples of how the evangelist can speak of bestowal of life in the Spirit without mentioning baptism. Cullmann admits that the reference in chapter 4 to 'drinking' the water "appears barely consistent with the thoughts of Spirit and Baptism".⁵⁵ The only answer which he gives to his own objection is that "it might be relevant to recall that in many gnostic baptist sects in the ancient world the baptismal water was drunk".⁵⁶ Hardly a satisfactory basis for relating baptism and the "living water" of chapter 4!

The way in which Cullmann exegetes John 4:1-20, says Beasley-Murray, "is surely to fall into the like error of early Christian writers who read baptism into every mention of water in the Old Testament."⁵⁷

4. THE HEALING MIRACLE AT BETHESDA, 5:1-19

Cullmann says that there is a connection between the Bethesda healing and the cultus of the early Christians, not only through the life-giving waters of baptism but also through the idea of the Sabbath. A descriptive exegesis challenges Cullmann's arguments for both of the

⁵³ ECW, p. 82.

⁵⁴ Hoskyns, p. 322; Bernard p. 281-283; Barrett, p. 270-272.

⁵⁵ ECW, p. 83.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 83.

⁵⁷ Beasley-Murray, p. 220.

connections.

Cullmann admits that to link the Bethesda narrative with baptism appears to be "forcing a system".⁵⁸ He proceeds, however, undaunted by the weight of evidence against him:⁵⁹ "after the previous chapters which refer explicitly or implicitly to Baptism in the Christian community, the connection with Baptism here too is quite compelling."⁶⁰ This argument is a good example of Cullmann's tendency to build up conclusions from unfounded assumptions. A descriptive exegesis of the first four chapters of John's Gospel has uncovered only one implicit reference to Christian baptism (3:5) and no explicit references. And yet Cullmann approaches his exegesis of chapter 5 on the assumption that "it is one of the evangelist's chief concerns to trace the lines from the worship life of the early church to the life of Jesus".⁶¹

Cullmann has two arguments to support his view that Christian baptism lies behind this incident. The first is archeological: "The Double Pool became, in early Church times, the scene of many Christian Baptisms both in Jewish and pagan Jerusalem".⁶² Cullmann fails to point out that the archeological evidence is not sufficient to prove his thesis unless it can be further demonstrated (i) that baptisms were taking place before the evangelist wrote, and (ii) that the evangelist knew of

⁵⁸ ECW, p. 84.

⁵⁹ Cullmann can cite only Merx and Schweitzer as favouring his view (p. 85, note 1) whereas Barrett, Bernard and Dodd, among others, are opposed to a baptismal reference in 5:1-19.

⁶⁰ ECW, p. 86.

⁶¹ ECW, p. 85.

⁶² ECW, p. 86.

the Pool.⁶³ Cullmann's second argument is that because both healing and forgiveness are granted at the pool, it is Christ, in the miracle of healing which is continued in baptism, who "takes the place of the angel which troubles the water".⁶⁴ But the stress in this entire passage is not baptismal. Again there is the use of water as a symbol, but in this instance as in the others the meaning is not baptismal. Here the water is used in contrast to the life-giving word and work of Christ.⁶⁵

Beasley-Murray points out that "the Lord did not command the sick man to plunge into the water, but rather He sent him away healed and forgiven by the power of His word. No clear baptismal motives occur in the following discourse".⁶⁶ He admits that there are conceptions in the text, such as Christ's power to heal and forgive, which would be consonant with baptism, if baptism were plainly indicated in the text, "but in the absence of such indications the connection with baptism can at best be admitted as possible but unproven."⁶⁷

Cullmann's attempt to show that there is an allusion to the Christian day of worship in the dialogue following the healing on the Sabbath is directly challenged by Dodd. According to Cullmann the saying in chapter 5:17 about God working hitherto $\epsilon'ως \alpha\rho\tau\epsilon$ is more than likely an allusion to the new day of rest of the community, the day of Christ's

⁶³ But from the text this second inference is unlikely, since, as Barrett says "the indications both of place and time are extremely vague; evidently John was not interested in them." p. 208.

⁶⁴ ECW, p. 86.

⁶⁵ Cf. Dodd, Interpretation, p. 319 and Hoskyns, p. 263.

⁶⁶ Beasley-Murray, p. 220. ⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 220.

resurrection, ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου (day of the Lord).⁶⁸ Dodd says that he finds Cullmann's argument "ingenious and interesting"⁶⁹ but he questions Cullmann's idea that Christ's work was terminated with his death and resurrection in the sense that he worked ἕως ἄρτι but no longer. According to Dodd "it is an exegetical error to connect ἕως ἄρτι with ἐργάζομαι"⁷⁰ in verse 17. The meaning of the passage is that it is the Father who works 'until now' and not the Son, as Cullmann suggests. And with respect to the Father working 'until now', Dodd says that this means just what it says without implying 'so long and no longer'.⁷¹ It must be concluded once again that Cullmann has overstepped the limits of sound exegesis in his attempt to find connections between the events of Jesus' life and the worship of the early Church.

5. THE HEALING AT THE POOL OF SILOAM, 9:1-39

As Smalley says "there is more basis for the Cullmannesque treatment of the healing of the man born blind"⁷² than the majority of the incidents which Cullmann exegetes. Cullmann finds support for his view that the evangelist is deliberately referring to baptism in this passage from Hoskyns, M.J. Lagrange, and A. Omodeo.⁷³ Similarly Dodd says that

⁶⁸ECW, p. 92. "The words ἕως ἄρτι in John 5:17 refer therefore almost certainly at once to Christ's resurrection and to the new creation at the end".

⁶⁹C.H. Dodd, Review of Les Sacrements Dans L'Evangile Johannique in the Journal of Ecclesiastical History Vol. 3, 1952, pp. 218-220.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 220.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 220, Cf. Dodd, Interpretation, p. 321, and Barrett, p. 213.

⁷²Smalley, p. 164.

⁷³Cited by Cullmann, ECW, p. 102.

the theme of chapter 9 "is subtly linked, in the author's manner, with the discourses on life by the recurrence of the symbol of water. As men enter the true life by birth from water, so they receive the true light by washing with water."⁷⁴ On the other hand neither Barrett nor Bernard in their commentaries find any reference to baptism in this passage, and Beasley-Murray says that "the baptismal reference in this narrative is to be judged as uncertain; it is by no means self-evident."⁷⁵

The connection of baptism with the healing is maintained by Cullmann chiefly on the grounds that the blind man received his sight after washing his eyes in a pool that had the significant name "Sent". Cullmann says that "we are actually called upon to ask what it means when a pool of water is brought into connection with Christ the 'Sent'. To ask the question is to answer it".⁷⁶ Beasley-Murray suggests that the answer is not as plain as Cullmann makes it out to be. Siloam, says Beasley-Murray, is technically the name of the spring that feeds the pool, and therefore it is incorrect to identify Siloam with the pool in Jerusalem. Thus the counterpart to the name Siloam is not a pool (for baptism) but Jesus himself. For the readers of the Gospel, says Beasley-Murray, "Go to Siloam" really signifies "Come to me".⁷⁷ Barrett also shows how the evangelist, for whom ἀποστέλλειν and περιπεῖν are important words, brings out the derivation of the name Siloam: "Jesus himself is ὁ ἀποστάλλων, and he gives light to the blind, just as he himself is a spring of living water".⁷⁸ Beasley-Murray and Barrett are saying

⁷⁴Dodd, Interpretation, p. 357.

⁷⁵Beasley-Murray, p. 221.

⁷⁶ECW, p. 104.

⁷⁷Beasley-Murray, p. 221.

⁷⁸Barrett, p. 279

that once again the context is broader than baptism, and here specifically the broader theme is "the triumph of light over darkness".⁷⁹

General agreement would be accorded to Cullmann's statement that "Baptism is early designated by the Greek word φωτισμός (enlightenment), and already in the Epistle to the Hebrews the verb φωτισθῆναι (to be enlightened) is a synonym for βαπτισθῆναι (to be baptized)."⁸⁰ But it does not follow axiomatically that the evangelist is referring to baptism in the healing miracle. At best it must be regarded as a possibility that the evangelist consciously intended to bring out a parallelism between baptism and the restoring of sight to a blind man. It is more likely, as Beasley-Murray, Barrett and Dodd suggest, that the evangelist had a broader purpose.

6. THE MARRIAGE AT CANA, 2:1-11

The first of the three episodes of John's Gospel which Cullmann connects with the Christian eucharist is the miracle at Cana.

Cullmann finds the key to the incident in verse 4, "my hour has not yet come". "It is clear", he says "that the hour which is not yet come is the hour of Jesus' death".⁸¹ There is no argument with Cullmann on this point: Bernard, Barrett, Hoskyns and Dodd all support this interpretation. But from this established position Cullmann goes on to

⁷⁹Dodd, Interpretation, p. 357.

⁸⁰ECW, p. 103.

⁸¹ECW, p. 67.

⁸²Cf. Bernard, p. 76; Barrett, p. 159; Hoskyns, p. 188; Dodd, p. 298.

construct an argument based on his own presuppositions. He says that it is legitimate "to ask what is the meaning of water and wine, since it belongs to the very essence of John's Gospel that words are used in a double sense."⁸³ Convinced as he is of hidden meanings behind the Johannine terminology, Cullmann says that "the wine is a pointer to the wine of the Lord's Supper, i.e. the blood which Christ shed for the forgiveness of sins".⁸⁴ Cullmann's argument for this position depends on the parallels which he finds between the Cana story and the feeding of the multitude in chapter 6 - "the one a bread miracle, the other a wine miracle, the one a food miracle, the other a drink miracle."⁸⁵ Because, in Cullmann's view, the 'bread' of chapter 6 is "connected with the bread of the Last Supper," it follows that the 'wine' of chapter 2 "points to the blood of Christ offered in the Lord's Supper."⁸⁶

This argument of Cullmann is another good example of how he finds what he is looking for in a passage of scripture. He says that in writing the Cana story the evangelist exhibited an "interest in the new Christian worship".⁸⁷ But as Dodd and others point out, the purpose of the author of the Cana story is to demonstrate that the old order of religion has been replaced by the new.⁸⁸ Dodd says that there is a connection between the waterpots which were set out at the feast and "the entire system of

⁸³ ECW, p. 68.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 69.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 69.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 69. Note: it is not clear whether Cullmann in this quotation is making a distinction between the Last Supper and the Lord's Supper.

⁸⁷ ECW, p. 70.

⁸⁸ Dodd, Interpretation, p. 299; Barrett, p. 158.

Jewish ceremonial observance".⁸⁹ And thus, as Barrett says, the primary contrast is between the new wine of the Gospel and the water of ceremonial observance.⁹⁰ Sacramental interest is not evident from a descriptive exegesis of this passage. Bernard, Barrett and Hoskyns find no allusions to the eucharist in the episode. Dodd says that "it may well be that even for the earliest Christian readers of John 2:1-11 the eucharistic complex of ideas was in mind, and was intended to be in mind. Yet no explicit allusion is made, and the non-Christian reader would have no inkling of it."⁹¹ An implication of Dodd's statement is that the faith of the interpreter is necessary in order to detect the links between the various episodes of Jesus' life and the worship of the early Church. In other words the links can only be detected by a theological exegesis of the type exemplified by Cullmann. The relation between the Cana miracle and the eucharist is only evident to those who have the faith to discern it. A descriptive exegesis finds no allusions to the eucharist in this incident, and suggests that the evangelist's purpose lay elsewhere in his desire to contrast the old order with the new.

7. THE MIRACLE OF THE FEEDING OF THE MULTITUDE, 6:1-13, 26-65

Cullmann says that the evangelist's handling of the feeding of the multitude and the discourse which follows it is the test case for his interpretative approach to the whole Gospel. He thinks that this passage

⁸⁹Dodd, Interpretation, p. 299.

⁹⁰Barrett, p. 158.

⁹¹Dodd, Interpretation, p. 298.

(6:1-13, 26-65) provides sufficient insight into the purpose and method of the evangelist to enable the interpreter to find references to baptism and the eucharist in other parts of the Gospel. "All the question marks which may be put at my explanation of other passages should be concentrated on the claim that the author saw in this story as such a connexion with the Eucharist."⁹²

Cullmann's argument is based on what he considers to be a direct relationship between the feeding miracle and the discourse which follows. He admits that if the feeding miracle (1-13) is taken by itself the allusions to the eucharist "are perhaps rather weaker here than in the other miracle stories which we have studied".⁹³ But Cullmann argues that because "the subject of the subsequent discourse is the Eucharist.... it must at all events be presupposed that the evangelist saw, as he was writing down the story, a reference in this miracle to the Eucharist, that he had the Eucharist in mind without actually saying so."⁹⁴ Cullmann concludes that "John 6:1-13 shows what a Johannine story looks like, in the writing of which the evangelist without any doubt was thinking at once of the once-for-all event and of the Eucharist."⁹⁵ And because of the bringing together of the once-for-all event and the Eucharist in this episode, the task of the exegete is to bring out the connection between other events of Jesus' life and the worship life of the early Church.

What light can a descriptive exegesis shed on the feeding miracle and the discourse? In the first place, it is generally agreed that there

⁹²ECW, p. 95. ⁹³Ibid., p. 94. ⁹⁴Ibid., p. 94. ⁹⁵Ibid., p. 94.

are allusions to the eucharist in vv. 51b-58.⁹⁶ But it should be noted that at least some commentators consider this passage to be a later interpolation in the interests of eucharistic doctrine.⁹⁷ And again, while most scholars⁹⁸ accept some relationship between the discourse and the feeding miracle, the intensity of this relationship is diminished by the intrusion of the incident on the lake (6:16-21) and the fact that the discourse was delivered in the synagogue at Capernaum. The undoubted presence of many in the synagogue who had not witnessed the miracle would suggest that the subject matter of the discourse was not as directly related to the miracle as Cullmann suggests.

Cullmann says that the subject of the discourse was the eucharist. This is quite a different statement from the cautious admissions by Bernard, Barrett and Hoskyns that there are allusions to the eucharist in 51b-58. None of these scholars is prepared to say that the subject of the entire discourse (26-65) is the eucharist. Bernard says that "the whole discourse as we have it, has been arranged by John so as to bring out the special teachings of Jesus about His own person, and to illustrate the growing opposition of the Jews."⁹⁹ Hoskyns says that

⁹⁶Cf. Hoskyns, p. 298. "The apparent contradiction implied in the insistence that there must be a real physical eating and drinking of what is grievously misunderstood if it is interpreted purely physically is resolved and explained only if the conscious reference to the Eucharist is perceived. See also Barrett, p. 236, Bernard, p. 240 and Dodd, Interpretation, p. 338.

⁹⁷So, for example, R. Bultmann, cited by Cullmann in ECW, p. 93. But Barrett (p. 235) Hoskyns (p. 304-307) and Dodd (Interpretation, p. 340) consider the passage as authentic.

⁹⁸Cf. Barrett, p. 236; Hoskyns, p. 291; Bernard, p. 190.

⁹⁹Bernard, p. 190.

"the theme of the discourse is unbelief and faith".¹⁰⁰ And both Barrett and Hoskyns specifically indicate that the eucharist is not the evangelist's chief concern in this passage. "The discourse is not", says Hoskyns, "a 'Eucharistic Discourse' if by that is meant that the evangelist has presented his readers with a reflection upon or a preachment about the Eucharistic practices, beliefs, and experiences of Christians as the beginning of the second century or earlier".¹⁰¹ Similarly Barrett says that "it is perhaps too much to call the discourse a 'sacramental' discourse. John is less ready than some of his commentators to argue about the eucharist".¹⁰² These scholarly opinions suggest that Cullmann has overstated his case concerning the eucharistic focus of the entire discourse.

But even if it is granted that there is a relationship between the feeding miracle and the discourse, so that the evangelist may be said to have "had the Eucharist in mind"¹⁰³ as he wrote the account of the feeding miracle, there is hardly a sufficient basis here for Cullmann's further deduction that the evangelist's purpose in recording the event was to set forth the relationship between the events of Jesus' life and the cultus. The writer of this thesis may, on occasion, have had the M.A. diploma in mind as he wrote, but it does not follow that an occasional thought reveals the author's primary purpose in writing.

This examination has shown that Cullmann's attempt to find in John 6:1-13, 26-65 a basis for a theological exegesis of the entire Gospel would be challenged by a descriptive exegesis. This passage does not

¹⁰⁰ Hoskyns, p. 288.

¹⁰² Barrett, p. 236.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 288.

¹⁰³ ECW, p. 94.

provide a standard to which all others can be related. A descriptive exegesis has not uncovered any grounds for isolating this passage and regarding it as divulging the hidden purposes of the author with respect to the whole Gospel. The examination of Cullmann's arguments has revealed more of the way in which his mind works than of the mind of the author of the Fourth Gospel.

8. THE FAREWELL DISCOURSES, 13:31-17:26

Cullmann finds allusions to the eucharist in the allegory of the vine (15:1-11) and the high priestly prayer of chapter 17. "The relation between the branch and the vine is.... above all the eucharistic communion of believers with Christ".¹⁰⁴ "The high-priestly act of love which institutes the Eucharist.... finds its deepest eucharistic expression in Jesus' prayer, chapter 27".¹⁰⁵

Cullmann has considerable support for his contention that the whole setting of the farewell discourses is eucharistic. He cites A. Loisy, M. Goguel, G.M.C. Macgregor and E.C. Hoskyns as favouring his view.¹⁰⁶ Allowing for the eucharistic 'context' of these discourses, however, some scholars have reservations about the eucharistic 'content' being the dominant theme. Barrett and Bernard admit that the symbolism of the true vine is "at least in part eucharistic".¹⁰⁷ But Barrett suggests that the main interest of the author in this passage, as in all the last

¹⁰⁴ ECW, p. 113.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 114. ¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 110.

¹⁰⁷ Bernard, p. 478; "we take the view that the Vine of the allegory was directly suggested here by the wine of the first Eucharist which had just been celebrated". Cf. Also Barrett, p. 393.

discourses, is in the life of the church, and particularly in the question of who are and who are not true disciples of Jesus.¹⁰⁸ Neither Bernard nor Barrett make reference to the eucharistic 'content' of chapter 17.¹⁰⁹ And Barrett says that because "the present prayer is a summary of Johannine theology relative to the work of Christ.... the common description of it as the 'High-priestly prayer' or the 'prayer of consecration' does not do justice to the full range of material contained in it."¹¹⁰

Again in the farewell discourses the author's purpose appears to be broader than the connecting of the recorded events with the worship life of the early Christian community. From a descriptive exegetical point of view Cullmann's attempt to show that each of the three episodes where he finds allusions to the eucharist (the miracle at Cana, the feeding of the multitude, and the discourse of the True Vine) brings out a particular aspect of eucharistic teaching is clearly questionable.¹¹¹ It rests on the assumption that the primary preoccupation of the evangelist is with the worship life of the early church.

9. THE WASHING OF THE DISCIPLES' FEET, 13:1-20

This episode is the first of two in which, according to Cullmann, baptism and the eucharist are formally placed together by the evangelist.

Cullmann accepts the interpretation of Loisy and Bauer¹¹² that

¹⁰⁸ Barrett, p. 393.

¹⁰⁹ Bernard, p. 557f and Barrett, p. 416f.

¹¹⁰ Barrett, p. 417.

¹¹¹ Cullmann's argument is on P. 106, ECW.

¹¹² The views of Loisy and Bauer are expounded by Hoskyns, p. 436.

verse 10 teaches the necessity of receiving both sacraments. Dodd and Moule¹¹³ more recently have found allusions to both sacraments in this verse. Cullmann says that the reply to the request of Peter, "He that has been completely washed has no need for a further washing (except for his feet) but is completely clean", teaches the sufficiency of one baptism, and further that the necessity for the cleansing of sins after baptism is met by the frequent celebration of the eucharist.¹¹⁴ In Cullmann's argument the disputed phrase "except his feet" plays an important part: its presence is necessary in order to assure the cogency of the argument.¹¹⁵ But as Beasley-Murray points out, if the disputed phrase in verse 10 is allowed to stand it must certainly relate to the action of Jesus just completed, and not to an action of a wholly different kind such as the eucharist.¹¹⁶ "Contrary to Cullmann, the interpretation thus demanded is so muddling and unsuitable to the action it is supposed to explain it strongly favours the view that the phrase 'except the feet' is a later interpolation due to a scribe who misunderstood the narrative".¹¹⁷ Cullmann's view that there is a reference to the repeated cleansing of

¹¹³Dodd, Interpretation, p. 401. C.F.D. Moule, "The Judgement Theme in the Sacraments", The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology, ed. by A.J.B. Higgins, Cambridge, 1956, p. 475.

¹¹⁴ECW, p. 108-9.

¹¹⁵ECW, p. 109. Cullmann says: "I hold against Bultmann and other exegetes who consider these words a later interpolation, that their authenticity on the grounds of their content is to be assumed."

¹¹⁶Beasley-Murray, p. 222. "To understand the phrase 'except (to wash) the feet' as relating to a different mode of cleansing is to do defiance to the whole story. Verse 10, after all, represents an explanation of the actions of Jesus in washing the feet of the disciples."

¹¹⁷Beasley-Murray, p. 222; Barrett, p. 368; Hoskyns, p. 439.

Christians by the eucharist in John 13:10 (a passage of doubtful authenticity) must be judged as speculative to say the least.¹¹⁸ It can hardly be concluded from this kind of evidence that "the evangelist wants to show that the two sacraments belong together."¹¹⁹

Many commentators agree with Cullmann that there is in the narrative a simple reference to the adequacy of baptism.¹²⁰ However, Bernard says that "if there be any allusion to baptism here, it must lurk in the word *λελούμενος* 'bathed', and.... the esoteric meanings of vs. 10 would then be that, as baptism cannot be repeated, the baptized person need but to have regard to the removal of the occasional defilements of sin with which he is troubled". Bernard concludes that "this seems over subtle".¹²¹ Beasley-Murray also expresses hesitation about the reference to baptism on the grounds that "this is not a secondary interpretation of the narrative but a tertiary".¹²² Beasley-Murray says that "the primary lesson drawn from the foot-washing, and the only one explicitly mentioned by John is its example of humility and love towards one another."¹²³ A secondary meaning of the incident, says Beasley-

¹¹⁸Cf. C.H. Dodd, Journal of Ecclesiastical History, p. 219.

"Surely there is some loose joint in the argument here—even if it were certain that the words *εἰ κἢ τοῦς ποδῶς* are part of the original text."

¹¹⁹ECW, p. 109

¹²⁰Eg. Barrett, p. 376; Dodd, Interpretation, p. 401. Hoskyns, however, does not find allusions to baptism in this passage, p. 436-9.

¹²¹Bernard, p. 589.

¹²²Beasley-Murray, p. 223.

¹²³Beasley-Murray, p. 223. Also Hoskyns, p. 440.

Murray is its prophetic function as pointing to the death of Jesus.¹²⁴

If now we go a stage further and see in the foot-washing an illustration of baptism, we have to do so as a lesson deduced from a secondary lesson.... How much further are we supposed to go? And did John write with the express intention that we should so interpret his words? Some commentators no doubt cheerfully answer in the affirmative. For my part I can but record my misgivings at such a procedure. A reference to baptism in the narrative of John 13 is not impossible, but in my judgement probability is against it.¹²⁵

Beasley-Murray's question, "did John write with the express intention that we should so interpret his words?" raises acutely the central problem created by Cullmann's exegesis. Commentators are prepared to admit that there may be allusions to the sacraments in the foot-washing.¹²⁶ But when it is clearly demonstrated that these allusions belong to the secondary or even the tertiary level of interpretation, it leads to the conclusion that the evangelist was not preoccupied with the two sacraments, as Cullmann clearly suggests.

10. THE SPEAR THRUST, 19:34

At the end of his book Cullmann says that the author of the Fourth Gospel has found the connection "between Baptism and the Lord's Supper and the death of Christ indicated in all the different events of Christ's life. He is able to indicate it particularly impressively at

¹²⁴Cf. Barrett, p. 363. "The cleansing of the disciple's feet represents their cleansing from sin in the sacrificial blood of Christ."

¹²⁵Beasley-Murray, p. 223.

¹²⁶Cf. Barrett, p. 364. "Perhaps, in a secondary way, the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist are also prefigured."

particularly impressively at this climax of Jesus' life".¹²⁷ John 19:34 indicates that when Jesus' side was pierced "there came out water and blood". This, says Cullmann, is a very striking connection between the death of Christ and the two sacraments.

Once again there is considerable support for Cullmann's interpretation.... Barrett says that "it is difficult to doubt that there is at least allusion to the Christian sacraments in the blood and water that issued from the side of the dead Jesus".¹²⁸ Beasley-Murray cites Westcott, Macgregor, Hoskyns, Temple, R.H. Lightfoot, Schlatter, Bauer and Bultmann as among those who favour this interpretation. But the unanimity of opinion is not as overwhelming as Cullmann (who cites only F. Büchsel as an exception) makes it out to be. Dodd says that because the incident is introduced as a fulfillment of prophecy, and therefore likely to be pre-Johannine, it cannot be regarded as a conscious attempt on the part of the evangelist to allude to the sacraments.¹²⁹ Bernard in his commentary, makes no reference to the sacraments. Burkitt, Godet, C.J. Wright, Strachan and J.A. Findlay are cited by Beasley-Murray as further examples of those who reject Cullmann's interpretation of this incident.¹³⁰ The crucial question for the interpreter is, once again, whether the sacraments can be regarded as a major concern of the evangelist. Three commentators, Barrett, Bernard and Beasley-Murray suggest that John

¹²⁷ ECW, p. 114. In the light of the preceding considerations it is necessary to question Cullmann's use of the word "all" in this quotation, as Cullmann only exegetes selected passages.

¹²⁸ Barrett, p. 69.

¹²⁹ Dodd, Interpretation, p. 429.

¹³⁰ Beasley-Murray, p. 224.

particularly noted the flow of blood and water in order to refute the Docetic doctrines which were prevalent when the Gospel was composed.¹³¹

"This may be a less exciting conclusion to draw from John's words than the founding of the two sacraments", says Beasley-Murray, "but the existence of Christianity depends on its truth; in a time when the doctrine of a real Incarnation was being challenged it was basic to demonstrate it".¹³² There are good reasons, therefore, to suggest that once again the sacraments are not the primary concern of the evangelist. Dodd and Beasley-Murray question even a secondary reference to the sacraments here on the grounds that the secondary significance of the blood and water pertains to the "living water" of 4:14 and the blood which is "drink indeed" of 6:55.¹³³

At this point Beasley-Murray's question, "How much further are we supposed to go?" again becomes relevant. Cullmann's interpretation of John 19:34 has been seriously questioned by the application of a descriptive approach. For even where descriptive exegetes are willing to concede allusions to the sacraments in John 19:34 they are not prepared to say that these allusions are the primary concern of the evangelist; and they certainly are not prepared to grant that a sacramental interpretation of this verse "contains the key to the understanding"¹³⁴ of the entire book.

¹³¹Barrett, p. 462; Bernard, p. 647; Beasley-Murray, p. 225.

¹³²Beasley-Murray, p. 225.

¹³³Dodd, Interpretation, p. 428. Beasley-Murray, p. 226.

¹³⁴ECW, p. 115.

11. THE EVANGELIST'S PURPOSE

The primary question which has arisen in the exegesis of individual passages from the Fourth Gospel concerns the purpose of the evangelist. The analysis of individual passages has demonstrated that there is very little evidence to support Cullmann's contention that the relation between early Christian worship and the historical events of Jesus' life is a primary concern of the evangelist. It has been shown that in every instance the evangelist's primary purpose appears to be other than the contemporary sacramental worship. Thus, for example, the central pre-occupation of the author in the John the Baptist passages is the preparatory role of John, not Christian baptism. Similarly the author's primary purpose in the Cana Miracle is to contrast the old order of religion with the new, not to present some aspect of eucharistic teaching. And it was shown that a reference to baptism in the Foot-washing episode, if it is to be permitted at all, must be regarded as a tertiary lesson in the incident. Even in passages where it is generally granted that there are allusions to the sacraments, such as John 3:5 and 6:51b-58, a descriptive exegesis indicated that the author's primary purpose is other than describing contemporary Christian worship. The descriptive exegesis has pointed to the conclusion that Cullmann has too narrow a conception of the evangelist's purpose.

In opposition to this conclusion Cullmann argues that it is not sufficient to exegete each pericope in isolation, but that each pericope must be placed in the context of the whole Gospel. He admits that "each

detail taken by itself does not amount to much".¹³⁵ And throughout Cullmann's presentation there are admissions that he may be "forcing a system"¹³⁶ when he finds allusions to baptism or the eucharist, but his justification for doing so lies in what he considers to be the purpose of the evangelist. He says that "when we have regard to all these references where the evangelist makes known to us his literary personality and purpose, we see that it must be the task of the exegete of this Gospel to allow for this purpose in all its parts".¹³⁷ An adequate assessment of Cullmann's exegesis must therefore include a consideration of what can be determined about the evangelist's purpose from the document itself. First Cullmann's view of the evangelist's purpose will be outlined, and then critically examined in order to assess its validity.

Cullmann regards the Fourth Gospel as essentially the work of one man, with the exception of chapter 21 which "is certainly an addition".¹³⁸ In comparison to the Synoptics there is in John's Gospel "a more individual and consciously confessional witness".¹³⁹ The author's purpose, says Cullmann, is expressly stated at the end of the Gospel, chapter 20 verse 31; "these signs are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Thus a theological principle has governed the selection of the material presented, and John's purpose in writing a 'life of Jesus' is to impart faith in Jesus as 'the Christ'. Because 'the Christ' is "the mediator of God's entire plan of salvation in past, present and

¹³⁵ECW, p. 105.

¹³⁷ECW, p. 50.

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 84.

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 40.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 39.

future",¹⁴⁰ the evangelist's purpose is "to bring into relief the relation of the once-for-all event to the plan of salvation, which embraces the whole of God's time".¹⁴¹ The link which unites the events of Jesus' life with the living present is faith, and this is why the correlation and antithesis 'faith-sight' is so prominent in the Gospel. "The Johannine concept of faith stands in closest relationship to the composition of the Gospel".¹⁴² Accordingly the author's purpose is to record events which must be apprehended on two levels, as both occurrences in the past and as livingly affecting his readers in the present. The events are "remembered" in the pregnant Johannine sense of the "understanding of the facts which is first granted through the Holy Spirit".¹⁴³ This deeper understanding occurs in the Church through the prompting of the Holy Spirit. "Corresponding to this simultaneous seeing in the flesh and seeing and recognizing in faith there is the double meaning of the word usually used to designate the object of seeing and believing. The writer does not use our modern concept of incident, but rather that of a 'sign' (σημεῖον) and thereby means to point again to the double quality of an event at once visible and demanding a higher understanding in the context of faith".¹⁴⁴ Cullmann calls attention to the evangelist's characteristic use of terms in a double sense, such terms as ὑψωθῆναι, ἀκολουθεῖν, εἶπω ζωῆς, ἀναστῆναι, τετέλεσται, which illustrate the duality of apprehension intended by the author.¹⁴⁵ In the record of Jesus' life in the Gospel each event is orientated towards the period in which the

¹⁴⁰ ECW, p. 39. ¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 39. ¹⁴² Ibid., p. 39. ¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 49.
¹⁴⁴ ECW, p. 46. ¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 50-56.

evangelist and his readers live, and this orientation is indicated most vividly by the allusions to worship which lie behind the recorded events of Jesus' life. Thus Cullmann concludes that "the evangelist's whole purpose is to present both once-for-all history and the reference of this history to its previous and subsequent course, in one comprehensive perspective."¹⁴⁶

Cullmann's view of the evangelist's purpose can be criticized at several points.

(i) The Meaning of John 20:31

C.K. Barrett says that it is a mistake to press too far the question of the purpose of this Gospel. Concerning John 20:31 he says that "this verse, important as it is, provides no more than a starting point for a discussion of the purpose of the Gospel; for merely to say that John was written in the interests of faith is to say nothing at all, beyond that it is a Christian book, which is hardly in dispute."¹⁴⁷ Barrett's remark is very relevant to Cullmann's treatment of the Johannine concept of faith which, says Cullmann, "stands in closest relation to the composition of the Gospel".¹⁴⁸ According to Cullmann believing must be followed by a deeper understanding which enables the believer to comprehend the divine plan of salvation in past, present and future. Cullmann says that it is the conscious intention of the evangelist to lead his readers to this deeper understanding. But as James Gaffney points out, believing is not

¹⁴⁶ ECW, p. 46.

¹⁴⁷ Barrett, p. 114.

¹⁴⁸ ECW, p. 39.

accompanied by an apprehension of the divine plan and purpose.¹⁴⁹ In a complete chart describing all the consequences of believing Gaffney lists no reference to an apprehension of the divine plan.¹⁵⁰ The consequence of believing in 20:31 is not a comprehension of God's plan of salvation in past, present and future, but rather "life in his name". Most commentators agree that the evangelist's purpose is to lead his readers to faith, and that the historical data are presented to show that Jesus is the Word become flesh.¹⁵¹ Barrett says, for example, that the words "that ye may believe" suggest that the evangelist's purpose is not to convey interesting information about Jesus but to show to men their relation to God in Jesus.¹⁵² It is agreed, therefore, that the evangelist's theological purpose is to lead men to faith; but to say as Cullmann does, that faith is followed by a dual apprehension of both the historical events and their further implications in the history of salvation is to make an assumption which cannot be supported by the material itself.

(ii) The Use of Double or Ambiguous Expressions

Cullmann's case for salvation-history in John depends upon a deliberate use by the evangelist of ambiguous words and phrases. "The Gospel of John indicates in so many places the necessity of a double meaning that enquiry into the deeper unexpressed sense is to be raised,

¹⁴⁹James Gaffney, "Believing and Knowing in the Fourth Gospel", Theological Studies, Vol. 26, No. 2, June 1965, Pp. 215-241.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 238.

¹⁵¹Barrett, p. 5, Hoskyns, Pp. 58-85.

¹⁵²Barrett, p. 114.

in this Gospel to the status of a principle of interpretation."¹⁵³ Cullmann says that such words as ἀνωθεν , τυφλόι , and τετέλεσται are to be understood both chronologically and theologically because it is the evangelist's intention that they should be so understood. The important question is whether the dual meanings of these words emerge in the mind of the interpreter who approaches the Gospel with a knowledge of various linguistic usages, or whether they belong to the intention of the evangelist. Many scholars agree with Cullmann that there are too many ambiguous words and phrases to ignore them or to regard them as accidental.¹⁵⁴ But Cullmann's argument depends upon four further deductions in order to reach the point where the ambiguous words can lead to a principle of interpretation: (i) that the evangelist wrote in Greek and not in Aramaic, (ii) that the ambiguous words are not literary devices but rather have theological significance, (iii) that the theological significance is always what Cullmann says it is, namely linking of past and present in the history of salvation, (iv) that the theological significance uncovered in a relatively small number of words and phrases can provide the basis for a theological interpretation of the entire Gospel. Since arguments could be presented against each one of Cullmann's deductions, Cullmann's understanding of the author's intention, arrived at by an examination of ambiguous word usage, must be judged as speculative. Cullmann's statement that "it belongs to the essence of John's Gospel that words are used in a double sense"¹⁵⁵ is another example of his tendency to delimit and define

¹⁵³ECW, p. 57.

¹⁵⁴Cf. Dodd, Interpretation. Pp. 134, 303.

¹⁵⁵ECW, p. 68.

too precisely the evangelist's purpose.

(iii) The Meaning of "sign"

Cullmann says that the word 'sign' refers to "the double quality of an event at once visible and demanding a higher understanding in the context of faith".¹⁵⁵ In Cullmann's presentation the word 'sign' is applied to "the smallest literary unit"¹⁵⁶ such as "living water" or "bread from heaven". But the evangelist only uses the word 'sign' in connection with certain events such as the marriage at Cana and the healing of the blind man. Dodd says that the word 'sign' in John has the prophetic sense of "significant act",¹⁵⁷ and Dodd's description of chapters two to twelve as the "Book of Signs"¹⁵⁸ is based on the understanding of 'sign' as an event. But Cullmann's argument for salvation-history in John is based on the application of the word 'sign' to both a small literary unit and an event in the ministry of Jesus. It is on the basis of the analysis of words and phrases with double meanings in which "the evangelist makes known to us his literary personality and purpose"¹⁵⁹ that Cullmann arrives at his conclusions about salvation-history in the Gospel. Having found salvation-history in the ambiguous words and phrases Cullmann then proceeds to find it in the events of Jesus' life. But this is not a legitimate transition to make unless the word 'sign' can be applied to both the events and the ambiguous expressions. And on Cullmann's own definition of sign (confirmed by Dodd) the word

¹⁵⁵ECW, p. 46.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁵⁷Dodd, Interpretation, p. 142.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., p. 290.

¹⁵⁹ECW, p. 50.

refers to specific events in Jesus' ministry and not to isolated words and phrases. Therefore it is a questionable procedure for Cullmann to approach his exegetical work on the selected passages armed with a previously established position regarding the evangelist's purpose. Whatever can be said about the evangelist's purpose must be determined from the passages themselves.

(iv) Sacraments or Sacrament?

If a sign refers to "the double quality of an event at once visible and demanding a higher understanding in the context of faith",¹⁶⁰ it must be asked why the "higher understanding" must always involve baptism and the eucharist. Cullmann says that "the sacraments mean the same for the church as the miracles of the historical Jesus for his contemporaries."¹⁶¹ As the miracles of the historical Jesus were signs for his contemporaries so baptism and the eucharist are the signs of God's redeeming activity in the present. Cullmann admits in a footnote that the word "σημείον" is only a description of the reference to the Sacrament not for the Sacrament itself"; but his entire treatment of early Christian worship is based on an equating of 'sign' with the two sacraments.¹⁶² For Cullmann it is always either baptism or the eucharist which lies behind the Johannine 'sign'. Since it is the finding of allusions to baptism and the eucharist in the episodes of Jesus' life which provide Cullmann with his proof for salvation-history, the identification between sign and the

¹⁶⁰ ECW, p. 46.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁶² Speaking of the sacraments on P. 107 (ECW) Cullmann underlines the word 'two'.

two sacraments is very important to him.

But this identification is another good example of the way in which Cullmann has made too narrow a delimitation of the evangelist's purpose. "The real issue", says Smalley, "is not one of sacraments, but one of sacrament. How far and in what sense is the pattern of the Fourth Gospel 'sacramental'?"¹⁶³ The primary problem of the Fourth Gospel, as Hoskyns, Dodd and Barrett point out, is not the place of the Christian sacraments. It is, in Hoskyns' words, "the far more important, far more disturbing, problem of history itself and of its meaning".¹⁶⁴ It is logical to assume that the 'signs', which are so prominent in the evangelist's presentation, will reflect the main theme of the book. But the descriptive exegesis indicated that the evangelist's primary purpose always appeared to be other than a narrow interest in the Christian sacraments. Even John 6:51-58, where allusions to the eucharist are generally accepted, was seen to be primarily concerned with the more fundamental questions of faith and unbelief. Insofar as any purpose can be ascribed to the evangelist it must be broader than a concern to relate the episodes of Jesus life with the early Christian cultus. John is primarily concerned to show the glory of the Word made flesh, and as Hoskyns says "the theme of the Fourth Gospel is the non-historical that makes sense of history, the infinite that makes sense of time, God who makes sense of men and is therefore their Saviour".¹⁶⁵ The fundamental sacramental fact in John is the incarnate life of the Son of God, and the two sacraments of baptism and eucharist

¹⁶³Smalley, p. 161.

¹⁶⁴Hoskyns, p. 58.

¹⁶⁵Hoskyns, p. 129-130.

are rooted in this fact. They have no significance apart from this fact.¹⁶⁶ Cullmann's identification of the 'signs' with the two sacraments draws attention away from the most important of the 'signs' (the incarnation) and results in an exegesis which is strained and cluttered by secondary or tertiary considerations.

The first four criticisms of Cullmann's exegesis have demonstrated the way in which his own theological outlook has been imposed on the evangelist's work. The final two criticisms are concerned with non-theological factors which are relevant to Cullmann's attempt to discover the purpose of the evangelist.

(v) Date, Place, Authorship and Readership

Barrett's contention that it is a mistake to press the author's purpose too far is reinforced by the fact that there is no agreement regarding date, place, authorship, and those to whom the Gospel was addressed.¹⁶⁷ And yet any attempt to discern the author's purpose would not be unrelated to any or all of these matters if they could be determined with accuracy. Many would agree with Hoskyns that "the author has done his best, apparently with intention, to cover up his tracks".¹⁶⁸ The matter of the intended readership illustrates the problem. C.F. Craig

¹⁶⁶ Barrett suggests that the reason for the omission of the institution of the sacraments in John lies in the author's unwillingness to attach the total sacramental fact of the incarnation to a particular moment and a particular action. p. 42.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. R. Eisler, The Enigma of the Fourth Gospel, London: Methuen, 1938, Pp. 1-3. Also W.F. Howard, The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation, London: Epworth, Revised edition, 1955, Pp. 19-94, 164-178.

¹⁶⁸ Hoskyns, p. 18.

in an article on "Sacramental Interest in the Fourth Gospel" says that the Gospel "breathes the intimacy of the cult group" and was not written for outsiders.¹⁶⁹ Similarly Hoskyns says that "it cannot be doubted that the author is writing for Christians who have been cleansed by baptism and who share in the eucharist".¹⁷⁰ Dodd, on the other hand, believes that the evangelist is "subject to a self-imposed limitation. In writing for a non-Christian public he will not directly divulge the Christian 'Mysteries'. Consequently he can give no direct answer either to the question 'How can a man be born again?' or the question 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'"¹⁷¹ If there were agreement as to whether the author was addressing Christians, non-Christians, or both, the interpreter would have far more to say about the evangelist's conscious purpose. But whichever position is taken with respect to the intended readership, problems are posed by Cullmann's interpretation. If the Gospel were addressed to non-Christian readers it could hardly be expected that they would understand the double signification which, according to Cullmann, is fundamental to the author's purpose. And if the Gospel were addressed to Christians, one must ask why the author has not made his references to contemporary worship more explicit. In fact Cullmann does not state to whom the Gospel is addressed - a strange phenomenon in a writer who is so precise about the author's purpose.

It must also be noted that a number of scholars do not find any

¹⁶⁹ Journal of Biblical Literature, 1939, p. 31-41.

¹⁷⁰ Hoskyns, p. 436.

¹⁷¹ Dodd, Interpretation, p. 343.

consciously imposed structure in the Fourth Gospel, and these men of course are most reluctant to permit anything to be said about an author's overall purpose. Bultmann is the only scholar whom Cullmann identifies with this position,¹⁷² but there are others such as W. Bauer, F.R. Hoare, A. Loisy, W. Lewis, and G.H.C. Macgregor.¹⁷³ Bultmann, for example, thinks that the Gospel has come through a series of redactions, and that the book is the product of several hands. Bultmann's displacement theory is based primarily on the detection of incongruities of thought, and therefore directly contradicts Cullmann's thesis which is based on a unity of purpose and theme.¹⁷⁴ According to W.F. Howard "the literary unity of the Fourth Gospel has been challenged upon the ground that a careful reading of the text reveals numerous seams and sutures".¹⁷⁵ Howard shows how this problem has occupied the attention of Spitta, Wendt, Schwartz, Welhausen, Warburton, Moffat and Bernard.¹⁷⁶ To varying degrees all of these scholars support the view that the Gospel has been hastily thrown together and could be improved from a literary point of view by certain rearrangements of the text. While contemporary scholarship seems to favour the view of Dodd that it is "the duty of an interpreter at least to see what can be done with the document as it has come down to us before attempting to improve in it",¹⁷⁷ the arguments of Bultmann and

¹⁷²ECW, p. 58, note 1.

¹⁷³Cited by Howard on Pp. 109, 166, 86, 119, 115 respectively.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., p. 167.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., Pp. 96, 97 and 126.

¹⁷⁷Dodd, Interpretation, p. 290

others cannot be lightly dismissed. Their research means that one can only speak of the unity of John's Gospel with considerable reserve. And it also means that Cullmann's exegesis, which utilizes the theological purpose of the evangelist as a principle of interpretation, lacks any kind of unanimous scholarly approval.

(vi) Two matters of Logical Consistency

Finally, two criticisms must be levelled against the simple logic of Cullmann's thesis. The first criticism pertains to Cullmann's cumulative argument, the way in which he builds on previous assumptions. He approaches the exegesis of the healing at the pool of Siloam on the basis that "our explanation of the miracle at Bethesda is correct."¹⁷⁸ And then in the section on the miracle at Bethesda he says: "after the previous chapters which refer explicitly or implicitly to Baptism in the Christian community, the connexion with Baptism here too is quite compelling."¹⁷⁹ Commenting on the conversation with the Samaritan woman Cullmann says: "the connection between 'living water' and Baptism is made more credible by reason of the parallelism with the 'bread of life' chapter 6:35ff, where the theme is the other sacrament."¹⁸⁰ In almost every section Cullmann builds his case by referring to what has been "established" elsewhere. There is no firm position from which this circuitous reasoning begins. Occasionally Cullmann speaks of a passage as a "key" to his entire interpretation,¹⁸¹ but the descriptive exegesis of such key passages as the discourse following the feeding or the spear-thrust did not reveal secrets for the

¹⁷⁸ ECW, p. 103. ¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 86.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 83.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., Pp. 115 and 95.

interpretation of the entire Gospel. The way in which Cullmann approaches the exegesis of individual passages must be judged as irresponsible,¹⁸² and the "key" which Cullmann uses is obviously not the evangelist's but his own.

Secondly, Cullmann argues that his case depends not on the exegesis of the individual passages but on the whole Gospel. But since a whole is always made up of its parts, Cullmann's hypothesis is faulty. If the parts had been able to bear the interpretation which Cullmann brings to them, then it would have been permissible for him to make an hypothesis about the whole from what had been determined from the parts. But since Cullmann himself admits that the individual passages cannot bear his interpretation in isolation (and the descriptive exegesis confirmed this), his understanding of the whole completely contradicts any scientific approach. Freedman suggested that an inductive approach to scripture could include the attempt to find an over-all unity in any particular book.¹⁸³ But Freedman was careful to state that any hypothesis concerning the unity or the material must be based on the established results of exegesis, Cullmann's exegesis is deductive in that it is based on certain prior assumptions about time and history. These presuppositions have been applied to the material and the material has been manipulated to support the presuppositions.

12. RESULTS OF THE STUDY OF JOHN'S GOSPEL

Cullmann's entire case for redemptive history in John depends upon

¹⁸²The irresponsibility is particularly evident in statements such as: "even in passages where the writer does not expressly say so, as in 3:14, there are references present to further acts of Christ in the history of salvation". ECW, p. 52.

¹⁸³Supra, p. 56.

a speculative view of the evangelist's purpose. Whatever can be stated about the purpose of the Gospel must be expressed in a broader framework than Cullmann's work permits. Cullmann is correct in treating the Gospel as a theological document, but the theological purpose of the author has been shown to be other than the relating of contemporary worship to the life of Christ. Cullmann's book shows the dangers inherent in the application of a theological exegesis to a theological document. The result can only be described as a Cullmannian construction. His theological presuppositions are not inherent in the biblical material but have been imposed on it. Cullmann says that "it must be the aim of exegesis to work out the interest of the narrative for the Christian Community of the time".¹⁸⁴ What Cullmann has done in his book on John's Gospel is to work out the interest of the narrative for his own time. This is no doubt an important task which must be performed by the theologian, but when it is combined with the exegetical endeavour it can only be detrimental to the understanding of what the text meant when it was first written. Exegesis cannot therefore be concerned with what the text means now, but must be confined to the descriptive role. The examination of Cullmann's work on the Fourth Gospel has demonstrated the necessity of a separation between exegesis and theology.

¹⁸⁴ HCW, p. 85.

A CRITIQUE OF CULLMANN'S THEOLOGICAL EXEGESIS

The comparison in chapters III and IV between Cullmann's theological exegesis and a descriptive exegesis provides the basis for criticizing his theological presuppositions which were outlined in chapter II. Chapters III and IV show that Cullmann's theological presuppositions are not inherent in the New Testament material. The fifth and summary chapter utilizes the results of the comparative study to draw the further conclusions (i) that the presuppositions are imposed upon the material, (ii) that the presuppositions include an unwarranted assumption about the unity of the material, (iii) that the presuppositions prevent an honest scientific and historical examination of the material, and (iv) that the presuppositions include contemporary philosophical and theological notions. For all of these reasons Cullmann's theological exegesis militates against understanding the material in its own terms. The failure of Cullmann's theological exegesis to allow the material to "speak for itself" suggests that some other method, such as a descriptive exegesis free from theological presuppositions, might better account for the data.

1. THE PRESUPPOSITIONS ARE IMPOSED UPON THE MATERIAL

In Christ and Time Cullmann attempts to synthesize biblical data and theological presuppositions. The book is a systematic presentation of

New Testament data arranged around the theological implications of time and history. There is a selection and organization of the data on the basis of theological principles. Cullmann's entire presentation is based on the assumption that the theological presuppositions are inherent in the biblical material.

The main evidence which Cullmann produces to substantiate his presentation centres around the earliest Christian confessions which, he says, distinguish the central from the peripheral in the New Testament. A careful examination of Cullmann's exegetical method in Christ and Time and The Earliest Christian Confessions does not reveal any evidence to support this thesis. The exegetical method whereby Cullmann examines the earliest Christian confessions involves the same theological presuppositions that lie behind Christ and Time. Always the theological presuppositions are brought to the biblical data rather than emerging from it. In The Earliest Christian Confessions Cullmann comes closer to a descriptive exegesis than in any other of his works, but the theological presuppositions are operative here as well. The interpreter can only judge that the presuppositions have no foundation in the biblical material and that their subsequent application is unwarranted. Cullmann's chapter on terminology for time and his exegetical work on the Fourth Gospel are two good examples of the way in which the theological presuppositions are imposed upon the biblical material.

2. THE PRESUPPOSITION OF AN OVER-ALL UNITY

An underlying assumption of Cullmann's exegetical method is an

essential unity present in the diverse documents of both the Old and the New Testaments. The grounds on which such an assumption is justified is the recognition in faith that Jesus Christ is the "absolute divine revelation"¹ to man. A theological exegesis begins from this point and attempts to show how all the material reflects the central faith-affirmation of Christians. When Cullmann says that the earliest confessions of faith represent an exegesis of the entire New Testament he means, of course, a theological exegesis. A descriptive exegesis, on the other hand, confines itself to the individual documents; an over-all unity is sought only after an exhaustive examination. Support is lacking in the biblical material for Cullmann's presuppositions concerning the unity of the whole; furthermore, Cullmann's synthetic approach militates against the understanding of the material in its own terms.

Cullmann's theological presuppositions that the Christ-event must be regarded as the temporal mid-point of the entire biblical history is not valid for biblical interpretation. With respect to the Old Testament it is simply not true. Howard M. Teeple says that "a theological presupposition is even more dangerous and more liable to fetter the mind when the interpreter regards that presupposition as central for faith and believes that the Bible should be interpreted in that context (which to him automatically becomes the context; and if he is a Christian it becomes the Christian context)".² Teeple goes on to say that "when

¹ Christ and Time, p. 23.

² Teeple, Howard M., "Notes on Theologians' Approach to the Bible", Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. LXXIX, 1960, p. 165.

Christ is viewed as the total context, part of the context is inevitably omitted. For with that concept of the total, the interpreter shuts his eyes to evidence which shows that Christ is not the total. The total context is nothing less than the total of everything in the historical situation which contributes to the correct understanding of the Bible. The view that Christ is the total automatically excludes part of the historical context".³ Cullmann's theological exegesis leads to a reduction which fails to do justice to the breadth and variety of the biblical documents because it elevates one major theme to the level of a principle of interpretation for the whole. Cullmann's synthesis attempts to account for all the data, but any synthesis is bound to overlook or misconstrue details which do not conform to the over-all pattern. The comparative examination of both the terminology for time and the Gospel of John has revealed many examples of the way in which Cullmann has overlooked evidence which would contradict his theological presuppositions. On occasion even the evidence which was cited was forced to fit the mould of his presuppositions. The examination of Cullmann's theological exegesis confirms Freedman's observation that "we should be sceptical of attempts to find the same truth everywhere in scripture, or a general pattern under which all the different segments of the literature can be subsumed".⁴

An essential task of Christian theology is to expound whatever

³ Teeple, p. 166.

⁴ Freedman, p. 315.

unity is in the scriptures.⁵ But the important question which an examination of Cullmann's work raises is whether this task should be performed in the name of exegesis. Because Cullmann's attempt to expound the scriptures around a central unifying theme actually militates against an understanding of the material in its own terms, his work points to the necessity of a separation between exegesis and theology.

3. THE PRESUPPOSITIONS CANNOT BE TESTED

A fundamental problem raised by Cullmann's theological exegesis is that there is no scientific way of testing whether or not the interpretation is correct. The theological presuppositions elevate the entire endeavour beyond the realm of scientific investigation. This problem has been evident in the foregoing analysis in several different ways.

In chapter II it was noted how all the components of Cullmann's theological synthesis must stand or fall together. By means of a theological exegesis Cullmann arrived at a view of linear time as well as a moderate realized eschatology. Because the same method was used to arrive at both positions, the one cannot be separated from the other. Scholars such as Paul Minear⁶ and T.F. Torrance credit Cullmann for making a significant contribution to the understanding of New Testament eschatology, but they are unwilling to accept his view of linear time. In

⁵Heinrich Schlier, writing in Dogmatic vs. Biblical Theology, p. 92, says that theology "presupposes a hidden inner unity which is always present. This is precisely what is indicated by its systematic character. The end and object is to draw the hidden unity out of its concealment as much as possible and to make it known".

⁶Supra, p. 52.

his assessment of Cullmann's work Torrance says: "there seems little doubt that the New Testament gives us teaching on eschatology without committing itself to any specific conception of time".⁷ James Barr also suggests that there is no one view of time in the New Testament, and that any discussion of time belongs properly to the domain of philosophical theology rather than exegesis.⁸ Yet, in Cullmann's synthesis linear time is bound up with eschatology in such a way that any separation of the two, as recommended by Barr, Torrance and Minear, is impossible. In a theological exegesis based on faith there are no criteria for assessing the worth of some insights in relation to others.

In a similar way Cullmann's theological presuppositions remove his treatment of the salvation-history to a realm beyond critical scientific examination. When salvation-history is viewed as the essential core of the New Testament revelation then it follows logically that a theological exegesis is the only way to understand the material. For, as Cullmann says, only he who recognizes Jesus as the absolute divine revelation can discern the line which leads from Israel to Christ and from Christ to the Church. Exegesis and theology must be combined in order to link together the various events in the history of salvation. For the exegete without faith to discern the plan of salvation the New Testament remains forever sealed.

A descriptive exegesis uncovers no evidence from the documents themselves to confirm Cullmann's view of salvation-history. Barr's

⁷"The Modern Eschatological Debate", Evangelical Quarterly, Vol. XXV, 1953, No. 4, p. 224.

⁸Barr, J, Biblical Words for Time, p. 249.

criticisms show that there is no scriptural basis for the linking of the events in the history of salvation; and Cullmann's treatment of the Fourth Gospel is an example of how salvation-history is imposed upon the material. In any scientific enquiry, when the evidence produced to establish a particular theory is discredited the enquiry ceases. But in the case of a theological exegesis it cannot be said that the enquiry has ceased: the whole question of salvation-history has simply been elevated further into the theological sphere. Cullmann may be correct in his assertion that salvation-history is central to the New Testament, but so also may those followers of Bultmann who stress revelation through the Word as the central theological affirmation of the New Testament. The problem is that there is no scientific basis for judging between the two positions because both are based on theological presuppositions. The choice between a theological exegesis based on faith and a descriptive exegesis is really no choice at all for him without faith to discern the plan of salvation. And there are good reasons why even he with faith should permit a descriptive exegesis to establish its results before the theological implications of the material are expounded.

A theological exegesis raises serious problems of scholarly-integrity. The biblical material cannot be understood in its own terms when it is approached with theological presuppositions because the presuppositions are determinative in the selection and presentation of the data. The comparative examination has revealed the extent to which Cullmann's presuppositions actually determine the results of his exegesis of both individual passages and also entire books of scripture such as the Gospel of John. In other words, the scriptures are used to support

a theological position, and this precludes from the start any understanding of them in their own terms.⁹

From the comparative examination of chapters III and IV it must be concluded that a theological exegesis cannot combine an honest historical enquiry within the context of a theological exposition of the biblical material. Cullmann's article on "The Necessity and Function of Higher Criticism" attempts to restore the range of critical scientific disciplines to their legitimate autonomy. But the article fails to achieve its desired end because of the assertion that the exegete must be historian and theologian at the same time. A theological exegesis is a denial of the very thing that Cullmann set out to accomplish in his article, because historical-critical studies are bound up with theological affirmations. When theology is the principle for the selection and organization of the data, the historical-critical findings are inevitably subservient to the theological presuppositions. And the historical-critical work of scholars is no longer within the range of scientific examination and testing because it has been elevated to the theological sphere. The fact that theology always involves the removal of historical events from the plane of normal historical investigation suggests that biblical studies and exegesis must be permitted to apply historical criticism without the restrictions of a particular theology.

⁹In this connection, note the interesting suggestion of James Barr in Biblical Words for Time, p. 150, that for Cullmann "the urge to investigate the whole matter has arisen not simply from a descriptive study of the biblical material but from a sense that certain general theological-philosophical problems can be solved, and the disagreements among exegetes in certain respects overcome, through a special concentration on the subject of time".

An inductive and descriptive approach to the scriptures, as suggested by Stendahl and Freedman, allows the material to "speak for itself" in a way that is impossible under a theological exegesis.¹⁰ The scientific approach of Stendahl and Freedman also involves presuppositions, but these presuppositions are built upon evidence, and do not rest merely on the "faith" of the interpreter. As Teeple says, "scientific presuppositions, including those of sound biblical scholarship, are arrived at inductively, whereas theological presuppositions are usually based on faith".¹¹ Neither a theological approach nor a descriptive approach is free from the subjectivity of the interpreter. In both cases presuppositions are involved, but in the former case the theological presuppositions are consciously applied to the material, whereas in the latter case a deliberate attempt is made to uncover the presuppositions and eliminate them as far as possible so that the original intention of the author may become increasingly evident. In the recognition that the material can never "speak for itself" in any absolute sense (except when it is repeated word for word), it has been shown that a descriptive exegesis approximates more closely to the ideal because it is based on hypotheses which can be checked against the evidence of the material itself.

¹⁰"Many examples of what theological presuppositions can do to biblical interpretation occur in the literature of the covenanters at Qumran. The covenanters held the false theological presupposition that the history of their sect and the future of the world were predicted in the O.T. The effect of that assumption was just what a historian would expect, namely, gross misinterpretation of the scriptures". Teeple, p. 165.

¹¹Teeple, p. 166.

4. THE INFLUENCE OF CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

Cullmann's theological exegesis provides a particularly vivid example of how contemporary philosophical and theological interests can influence the selection and organization of the data.

(i) The influence of contemporary philosophy

Frederick Sontag says that "Cullmann's Christ and Time would be completely unintelligible on the basis of the New Testament alone, and is understandable only against a background of continental philosophy".¹² The influence of Hegel's philosophy upon Cullmann is immediately recognizable in that the issue of history is central in all of Cullmann's works. But the important question is whether there is a view of history in the New Testament which corresponds to Cullmann's view of history. The comparative examination of chapters III and IV reveals that Cullmann's view of history is foreign to the New Testament. The obvious conclusion is that the view of history which Cullmann considers to be the "silent presupposition" lying behind the New Testament material is in fact a product of contemporary thinking about history which is still dominated by Hegelian notions. It is from Cullmann's twentieth century perspective that there appears to be a "thorough orientation to revelatory and redemptive history"¹³ in primitive Christianity. Cullmann reads into the New Testament his twentieth century notion that revelation takes place solely in history. Cullmann's theological exegesis includes presuppositions which are derived from a German philosophical tradition which regards

¹²"Philosophy and Biblical Theology: A Prologue", Religion in Life, Vol. XXXIII, Spring 1964, No. 2, p. 225.

¹³Christ and Time, p. 18.

history as the source of all knowledge including the knowledge of deity.¹⁴

And these presuppositions militate very strongly against understanding the material in its own terms. A descriptive exegesis seeks to discover, as far as possible, what the documents meant when they were first written.

Cullmann's exegetical method, because it includes a contemporary view of history as the silent presupposition behind the material, is unable to uncover the original intentions of the writers of the New Testament.

(ii) The influence of contemporary theology.

Cullmann is not unaffected by the theological climate of his time. The theological presuppositions with which Cullmann approaches his exegetical work include his understanding of the nature of faith and his conception of revelation as taking place solely in history.

Cullmann's view that faith always involves the comprehension of the history of salvation has been criticized as an unwarranted assumption from the New Testament data. Here it must be noted that this comprehension is, for Cullmann, a very personal and individualistic matter. "Faith in the New Testament sense means to be convinced that this entire happening takes place for me, that Christ died on the cross for me, that for me also this central event represents the mid-point".¹⁵ Cullmann defines faith exclusively in terms of the response of the individual. A conception of faith as a gift of God mediated through the community of faith is foreign to Cullmann, as it is to many Protestants who are unable to conceive

¹⁴Other philosophical influences can be detected in Cullmann's work: Jean Frisque (Oscar Cullmann, p. 231) says that Cullmann's treatment of faith reflects positivistic notions concerning what can be known.

¹⁵Christ and Time, p. 219.

of faith apart from their own faith. Cullmann's theological exegesis reflects his view that "faith is the way by which the past phase of redemptive history becomes effectual for me."¹⁶

Cullmann's conception of revelation as taking place solely in history reflects the contemporary emphasis on historical thinking. Cullmann makes the historical character of revelation the fundamental principle of his theology: "all Christian theology in its innermost essence is Biblical history".¹⁷ Cullmann says that "the New Testament writings for the first time give to all revelation an essential anchorage in time."¹⁸ The revelation of God takes place through an organized series of historical events. In Cullmann's view the action of God is wedded to the historical events which constitute the history of salvation: no revelation can be given independently of historical events. On this view of revelation it is imperative to emphasize the historicity of the revelatory events. Thus when Cullmann makes the resurrection the decisive event of revelation, and places it at the centre of all history, he is bound to assert that it is a historical event. The result is that Cullmann approaches the exegetical task with presuppositions concerning the historicity of the events of revelation. In Cullmann's theological exegesis the results of the enquiry are to a considerable extent determined in advance by the theological presupposition that revelation takes place solely in history.

Cullmann's one-sided view of faith and his exclusive preoccupation with revelation through history are incorporated into his theological exegesis. His own theological presuppositions influence the selection and

¹⁶Christ and Time, p. 249.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 38.

organization of the material, and the result is a synthesis between New Testament data and Cullmann's theological presuppositions. But since theology always involves the attempt to synthesize, the solution to the problem posed by Cullmann's theological exegesis lies in a separation of exegesis and theology. The solution lies in a recognition of the inevitable discrepancy between biblical documents and modern systematic interests, and thus the biblical accounts must be permitted to stand as they are. Then the theologian can construct systematically whatever he feels necessary and he can justify his efforts solely on systematic grounds. A biblical theologian such as Cullmann is caught in a hopeless dilemma when he tries to perform the task of an exegete and a systematic theologian at the same time.

A theological exegesis will always militate against the understanding of the biblical material in its own terms because it is the task of theology to give contemporary expression to the central events of the Christian revelation. In other words, the task of theology must always be begun anew, whereas the biblical record remains substantially the same. Cullmann's theological exegesis of John's Gospel shows how an attempt to express the contemporary relevance of the recorded events can obscure the primary purpose of the author in certain passages. And the influence of contemporary philosophy and theology upon Cullmann's exegesis lends further support to the argument that exegesis must be separated from theology. "A theologian must begin at the point where the biblical records leave off".¹⁹

¹⁹Sontag, p. 236.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY FOR BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

This study has demonstrated the necessity of a clear separation between exegesis and theology. When the material is approached with theological presuppositions the presuppositions affect the results of the exegesis, and the possibility of understanding the material in its own terms is eliminated. Theological presuppositions also eliminate the possibility of checking against the material itself whether an interpretation is correct. And insofar as theological presuppositions reflect the contemporary theological and philosophical climate they are external to the biblical material. A separation between exegesis and theology, on the other hand, permits an honest historical investigation of the biblical material which can be shared by believer and non-believer alike. Theology begins at the point where the historical investigation leaves off. The separation between exegesis and theology thus frees theology to perform its important task of expressing the Christian faith in a way that is meaningful to successive generations. In view of the many and varied attempts to "translate" the New Testament into meaningful terms for the present generation, it is all the more imperative that the "original" be spelled out in its own terms.

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