

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

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Book Review

Vol. XXXVII

September 1966

No. 8

The "Jesus of History" and the "Christ of Faith"

In Relation to Matthew's View of Time — Reactions to a New Approach

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The expression "Jesus of History — Christ of Faith"¹ is a relatively recent idiom, the roots of which can be traced back to a lecture delivered in 1892 by the German systematician Martin Kähler, who entitled his address "The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ."² In the last decade this idiom has come to specify a particular problem that has engaged the interest of New Testament scholars with great intensity. The problem is given with the fact that Jesus died about A.D. 30 but that all of the written materials we possess about Jesus were set down after this date, more exactly, after the Resurrection, when the disciples came to a mature faith in Jesus as the Messiah, or Christ. In recognition of this, New Testament scholarship has attempted to find sat-

isfactory answers to the following two queries: (a) Is it possible to sift through materials that have been written by individuals who already believed in Jesus as the Christ (the Christ of Faith) in order to recover a factual, historiographical picture of Jesus as He appeared to men before Easter (the Jesus of History)? (b) And, if this is possible, by what method is such a task to be accomplished?

Understood in this manner, the dual concept of the Jesus of History — Christ of Faith is foreign to the evangelists to whom we owe our gospels, because the latter were at one with those early Christians who simply made no differentiation between Jesus the man "as He really was" and Jesus the Christ as the object of faith. Nonetheless, implicit in our slogan is a question concerning time that was, to be sure, very acute for the evangelists, namely, the relationship between the "time of Jesus," which came to an end with the close of the third decade after the birth of Christ, and the "time of the church," which we shall identify with the emergence of the synoptic Gospels in the years 65—100.

Since the Synoptists were confronted with a discrepancy between their own time of the church and that of Jesus, it is interesting to observe how the one or the other of them may conceivably have related his own age to the age of Jesus. Willi Marx-

¹ A popular variation of this formula is "The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ." Cf. *Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus*, edited by H. Ristow and Karl Matthiae (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1960).

² *Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Christus*, 2d ed. (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1956), trans. and ed. Carl E. Braaten, *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c. 1964).

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sen,³ James M. Robinson,⁴ and Marxsen's pupil Alfred Suhl⁵ argue that Mark, for example, chose to allow the time of Jesus to coalesce with the time of the church. The result is that the age of salvation initiated by Jesus is regarded in the second gospel as a present reality that extends on throughout the remainder of history, reaching its climax in Jesus' Second Coming.

When we turn to the third gospel, we find that this same difference in time may have been handled quite differently. Hans Conzelmann⁶ contends that Luke was so keenly aware of the years that separated him from Jesus that the third evangelist, in looking back over history, felt compelled to draw a sharp distinction between what he considered to be several periods of time: the time of Israel, the time of Jesus, and the time of the church. In this scheme Conzelmann asserts that Luke regards only the time of Jesus as the age of salvation, and that he rigorously depicts this as a thing of the past. From the vantage point of his own day, Luke holds that the time of Jesus has given way to the time of the church, a period during which the faithful under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are to brave the forces of persecution in carrying out the Christian mission. But once the mission has been completed, Luke looks forward to a renewal of the age of salvation, the beginning of which will be marked by Jesus' Second Coming.

³ *Der Evangelist Markus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956).

⁴ *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Markus-Evangeliums* (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1956).

⁵ *Die Funktion der alttestamentlichen Zitate und Anspielungen im Markusevangelium* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1965).

⁶ *Die Mitte der Zeit* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1954).

To what extent the scholars just cited have captured the true intention of Mark and Luke is a matter we cannot develop in this brief study. The importance of their work at this point lies in the fact that it illustrates the problem of time that we should like to pursue in cursory fashion with reference to the Gospel of Matthew. In this connection the monograph of Georg Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit*,⁷ is of immediate interest, for Strecker claims in effect that Matthew handles the concept of time in much the same manner as Luke.

To Strecker's way of thinking, Matthew concerns himself, at least formally, with the history of salvation in a comprehensive sense: from Abraham to Jesus' Second Coming. In structuring this history, the first evangelist uses the approach of the time-line. Accordingly he divides the history of salvation into consecutive periods of time: the time of the fathers, the time of the prophets, the time of Jesus, the time of the church, and the consummation of time, i.e., the Second Coming. Yet his primary interest lies with the time of Jesus. From his own position in history, Matthew looks upon the time of Jesus as that of the "holy past" (*heilige Vergangenheit*), and he construes the document he writes as a historical-chronological-biographical presentation of the "Life of Jesus" with respect to its significance for the history of salvation.

Against this background we now propose to explore the question of Matthew's understanding of time in terms of the manner in which he views the age of the

⁷ Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962. See also the author's postscript to this article, p. 509.

Old Testament, reflects in his gospel his own age of the church, and relates his age of the church to the age of Jesus.

MATTHEW AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

Matthew views the Old Testament under the category of promise and fulfillment. To our knowledge there is no prominent scholar today who contests this. It is in the attempt to define this category so as to pinpoint Matthew's particular use of it that differences of opinion arise.

Strecker holds that Matthew understands promise and fulfillment from the standpoint of historical temporality.⁸ Thus Strecker appeals to the genealogy (1:2-16) as evidence that Matthew wants to work with a distinct "time of the fathers" (*Zeit der Väter*).⁹ On the basis of the standardized introductions to the so-called formula quotations,¹⁰ which read in some forms as "this was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, saying. . . ." Strecker maintains that Matthew sees the time of the fathers as succeeded by the "time of the prophets" (*Zeit der Propheten*). The formula quotations themselves indicate that this prophetic age is itself succeeded by the "time of Jesus" (*Zeit Jesu*).¹¹ Therefore in Strecker's eyes, what is most "peculiarly Matthaean" about Matthew's use of Old Testament materials in general and the formula quotations in particular is his employing them to document "historical-biographical factuality."¹²

⁸ Ibid., pp. 49—122.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 89 f.

¹⁰ Cf. 1:23; 2:6, 15, 18; 4:15 f.; 8:17; 12:18-21; 13:14 f., 35; 21:5; 27:9 f.; and Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew* (Lund: C. W. F. Gleerup, 1954), pp. 97—127; Strecker, pp. 49—85.

¹¹ Strecker, pp. 89 f., 188.

¹² Ibid., p. 85.

There is good reason, however, to believe that Matthew places the schema "promise and fulfillment" predominantly in the service of his dogmatics rather than in the service of a historical construction, as some maintain. For example, the most striking feature of the genealogy is its characterization of Jesus as the descendant of both Abraham and David. The primary significance of this is typological, for it singles Jesus out from the very beginning, to use the words of Edgar Krentz, as "messianic king" (David) and "ideal Israelite" (Abraham).¹³ This is also Anton Vögtle's conclusion, who summarizes his penetrating studies of the Matthean genealogy¹⁴ with the following statement: "the truth which the evangelist intends to proclaim and establish with his 'birth certificate of Jesus Christ,' i.e., with Chap. I, should most likely read as follows: Jesus and no other is the Messiah who has been promised and sent by God."¹⁵ But if the position we have just outlined is correct, it follows that what is most peculiarly Matthean about the genealogy is Matthew's use of a special genus of material, namely, a family tree, to express the conviction that Jesus is the Messiah. In this case one can

¹³ "The Extent of Matthew's Prologue," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXXIII (1964), 411.

¹⁴ Anton Vögtle, "Die Genealogie Mt 1, 2-16 und die matthäische Kindheitsgeschichte," *Biblische Zeitschrift*, VIII (1964), 45—58, 239—262; IX (1965), 32—49; "Das Schicksal des Messiaskindes," *Bibel und Leben*, VI (1965), 246—279. Hereafter we shall refer to these respective articles as Vögtle, "Genealogie," I, II, or III, and "Messiaskind."

¹⁵ "Die Wahrheit, die der Evangelist mit seiner 'Urkunde der Abstammung Jesu Christi,' d. h. mit Kap. I verkünden und begründen will, dürfte somit lauten: Jesus und kein anderer ist der von Gott verheissene und gesandte Messias," Vögtle, "Genealogie," II, p. 246.

seriously question the legitimacy of using the genealogy, even derivatively, as the basis for asserting that the writer intended to carve out of the past a "time of the fathers."

An investigation of the formula quotations will likewise disclose that the controlling element in the evangelist's use of promise and fulfillment is his dogmatic conception that Jesus is the Messiah. We can see this already in Chapters 1 and 2, where we find a group of no less than five such quotations. The first one occurs at 1:23. That it is christological in character cannot be disputed; the debate, then, necessarily revolves around the Matthean accentuation of this passage. So it is that while Strecker admits that v. 23 has far-reaching theological implications, he still chooses to stress the first half of the statement and underscore the sheer fact of the virgin birth.¹⁶ Now Krister Stendahl has called attention to the circumstance that Chapter 1 is a chapter of names,¹⁷ and from the immediate context (v. 21) we learn that the specific name we are to consider is "Jesus." But Jesus, which means "God saves,"¹⁸ is essentially a synonym for Emmanuel ("God is with us"), the name that appears in our quotation. Accordingly Stendahl is certainly right when he declares that the emphasis in v. 23 lies on the name

Emmanuel,¹⁹ and Vögtle is equally accurate when he states that Matthew's purpose in v. 23 is, first, to characterize the miraculously-born Child Jesus as the Messiah, and, second, to specify His mission as fulfilling "the promise in His name," viz., to "act for God or as 'God with us' to save his people from their sins."²⁰ In the light of this, what is most peculiarly Matthean about 1:23 is its messianic-soteriological accent; the biographical datum of the birth is to be seen as serving this focal point.²¹ Yet once it becomes clear that the *principal* function of v. 23 is not to document an event as such in the "time of Jesus," there is little basis to suppose that v. 22, the introduction to our formula quotation, was meant to be interpreted temporally as referring to a specific era in Jewish history, namely, the "time of the prophets." Again, the relationship between promise and fulfillment is the dogmatic truth that Jesus is the Messiah.

This leads us to the four formula quotations in chapter two (vv. 6, 15, 18, 23). If Chapter 1 is a chapter of personal names, Stendahl shows that Chapter 2 is a chapter of "geographical names,"²² because each formula quotation highlights one specific locality: Bethlehem (v. 6), Egypt (v. 15), Ramah (v. 18), and Nazareth (v. 23). Strecker readily acknowledges this, but insists that the first evangelist employs the four formula quotations as geography in support of biography.²³ Stendahl, on the

¹⁶ Strecker, pp. 56 f.

¹⁷ Stendahl, "Quis et Unde?" *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche* (Festschrift für Joachim Jeremias), edited by W. Eltester (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1960), p. 100. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Stendahl, "Quis."

¹⁸ *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, translated from the German by S. P. Tregelles (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1954), p. 339.

¹⁹ Stendahl, "Quis," p. 103.

²⁰ Vögtle, "Genealogie," II, pp. 224 f. F. V. Filson, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1960), p. 54.

²¹ Stendahl, "Quis," pp. 103 f.

²² Ibid., p. 97.

²³ Strecker, pp. 57 f., 63, 93.

contrary, claims that the formula quotations in Chapter 2 represent "christological geography,"²⁴ i. e., Matthew constructs the chapter to explain "how it came to pass that the Messiah came from Nazareth" and not "Bethlehem as expected."²⁵ To accomplish this, the writer portrays how God Himself leads Jesus from Bethlehem to Nazareth.²⁶ Vögtle adopts Stendahl's insights but places these formula quotations rather in the service of typology. His thesis is that Jesus reenacts the history of the children of Israel, principally as Israel but also as the second Moses.²⁷ According to Vögtle, the formula quotations in Chapter 2 are singularly Matthean in that they are messianic: they confirm that Jesus is the "Messiah promised and sent by God."²⁸

However one may evaluate the several details of these views advanced by Stendahl and Vögtle, the importance of their argumentation is that it demonstrates that what is peculiarly Matthean about the formula quotations in Chapter 2 is their Christological orientation. This of course means that Matthew did not intend these passages to be interpreted as "biographical" geography with a temporal frame of reference. Strecker's insistence that it is a unique function of these passages to indicate that one period of time ("the time of the prophets") has been superseded by another ("the time of Jesus") misconstrues Matthew's treatment of these materials. To repeat, the relationship between promise and fulfillment here is not chiefly one of time but of subject matter: Jesus, the Mes-

siah, fulfills the prophecy of the Old Testament.

Thus, in summary, it seems to us that Matthew does not approach the Old Testament from the standpoint of the time-line. For him the whole of the Old Testament is prophecy, and this prophecy has come to its fulfillment in Jesus, the Messiah. Time plays a role in this scheme only insofar as prediction necessarily precedes its fulfillment. In this restricted sense Matthew does look back upon an age of the Old Testament, but there is no evidence to support the contention that he was disposed to break this age down into successive periods of time such as that of the fathers and that of the prophets.²⁹ What is most "peculiarly Matthean" about the evangelist's use of Old Testament materials is not the temporal but the Christological application he gives them.

MATTHEW AND THE CHURCH

Any attempt to determine how Matthew understands his own age, the age of the church, in his gospel demands an explication of the role that he ascribes to the disciples. By way of definition, it should be noted that he, unlike the other evangelists, does not operate in terms of a smaller and wider circle of disciples; the disciples of Jesus are synonymous with the Twelve. (Cf. 9:37 with 10:1 f.; 11:1 [20:17]; 26:20; 28:7 f. with 28:16)

Basically there are two views regarding Matthew's concept of the disciples. The one, advocated by Strecker, has been advanced by other commentators.³⁰ The cen-

²⁴ Stendahl, "Quis," p. 98.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 98, 100.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 98.

²⁷ Vögtle, "Genealogie," II, pp. 255 f., "Messias-kind," p. 274.

²⁸ Vögtle, "Genealogie," II, p. 253.

²⁹ Cf. W. Marxsen, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 2d ed. (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1964), pp. 131 f.

³⁰ Cf., e. g., W. C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 3d ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1922), pp. xxxiii—xxxv.

tral idea is that the disciples belong with Jesus to the "holy past," and that Matthew has seen fit to "idealize" them.³¹ With this position as our point of orientation, we turn directly to a brief study of the text.

Without a doubt the most striking feature in Matthew's description of the disciples is the ability he attributes to them to comprehend the word and work of Jesus.³² Mark, for example, describes the disciples as being generally unaware of His messianic nature until after the Resurrection. Luke, in turn, deals with the same question by turning his entire 24th chapter into a protracted illustration of how the disciples finally came to a proper understanding of what Jesus had come to teach and to do. Nor does the fourth evangelist make any pretensions about the disciples; John states that the "disciples did not understand this at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered . . ." (12:16; cf. 2:22, 16:4). In Matthew's Gospel, on the other hand, there is none of this. Even where the disciples appear not to have grasped the message of Jesus (cf. 13:36, 15:16, 16:9, 17:10), the situation is typically one of teaching, and Matthew regularly indicates that such lack of comprehension is only temporary (cf. 13:51, 15:16 ["still"], 16:12, 17:13). Indeed, not only does the first gospel contain no pericope in which the main point has to do with the overcoming of the disciples' inner blindness following Easter, but it goes so far as to intimate that the disciples actually entered into the events of

the Passion with some measure of awareness (cf. 26:2). In brief, Matthew's overall sketch of the disciples is plainly designed to picture them as the enlightened followers of Jesus who know and do the Father's will. (Cf. 12:50; 13:16 f., 23)

To say this, however, is not to overlook the circumstance that these same disciples can also exhibit any number of spiritual foibles. Here, in fact, is where the argument that Matthew idealizes the disciples displays its limitations. Even if we exclude the Passion account, Matthew still reports that the disciples doubt (14:31; 28:17), can be reluctant to accept one of Jesus' precepts (19:10), are weak of faith (6:30, 8:26, 14:31, 16:8), fearful (14:26, 30), cowardly (8:26 — Mark 4:40), and indignant (20:24; cf. 26:8). In addition, there is Peter's massive affront against Jesus (16:22 f.), which incidentally, takes on sharper profile in the first gospel than in the second. (Cf. Mark 8:32 f.)

In consideration of such a variegated picture of the Twelve, it seems most probable that the principle that guided Matthew in drafting their portrait was a concept of the disciples that made of them the representatives of the evangelist's own church. This explanation commends itself for three reasons: (1) it helps us to understand why Matthew attributes insights to the disciples before Easter that, according to the other evangelists, they did not attain until after Easter; (2) conversely, it reveals why the disciples so often prove themselves to be men of "little faith," an idiom that, linguistically and conceptually, is distinctively Matthean; (3) it enables us to avoid the type of contradiction into which Strecker falls, namely, that of relegating the disciples exclusively

³¹ Strecker, pp. 193 f.

³² Cf. G. Barth, "Das Gesetzesverständnis des Evangelisten Matthäus," *Überlieferung und Auslegung im Matthäusevangelium*, 2d ed. (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), pp. 99 to 104.

to the past, that is, the time of Jesus, yet arguing that Peter is to be regarded typologically as representing the Christian in the age of the evangelist.³³

If the position is tenable that Matthew does for a fact look upon the disciples as the representatives of his community, we may draw the following conclusion concerning the topic of Matthew and the church: Matthew utilizes the disciples to reflect his own age of the church. And since the disciples are the disciples of Jesus, we may formulate a second thesis regarding the manner in which he relates his own time of the church to the time of Jesus: Matthew allows the time of Jesus and the time of the church to coalesce.

By way of illustrating and confirming these two assertions, we may glance at the section 9:35—10:42, which incorporates the great discourse on the mission and discipleship. In 10:2-4, Matthew draws up a list of the twelve disciples whom Jesus proposes to send out through all Israel. By reporting that the Twelve are to proclaim the same message as Jesus (cf. 10:7 with 4:17), perform the same works (cf. 10:1, 8 with 4:23 f.; 9:35; 11:5), and visit the same constituency (cf. 10:6 with 15:24), Matthew underscores the continuity between Jesus and the disciples. At the same time, he also underscores the continuity between the twelve disciples and the church. Thus when Jesus relates that His disciples will be delivered up to councils, flogged in synagogues, and dragged before governors and kings "to bear testimony before them and the Gentiles" (10:17 f.), we have a catalog of experiences that first came to their fulfillment in the time of the church. Matthew, however,

gives no indication in the text that two ages are envisioned. Between vv. 15 and 16, where scholars are accustomed to locate the transition, there is neither an editorial remark nor a change in setting to suggest that the material to come corresponds, strictly speaking, to the time of the church rather than to the time of Jesus. On the contrary, what we encounter in this section is the highly significant phenomenon that Jesus' address to the Twelve is likewise an address to the evangelist's church of another age. Therefore on the basis of Chapter 10 our argument stands: Matthew does not hesitate to establish the Twelve as the representatives of the church of a later day, and the time of Jesus and the time of the church coalesce.

MATTHEW AND JESUS

We can now proceed to treat the Matthean coalescence of time with regard to the figure of Jesus Himself. The following three examples should suffice to illustrate this.

George D. Kilpatrick and Reinhart Hummel, in their specialized studies of the first gospel, examine the various Jewish groups with which Matthew deals. These scholars point out that while Mark, for example, pictures Jesus during His ministry in contact with numerous parties such as the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, and most of all, the common people (*'am ha'arez*), Matthew mentions the Herodians only once (and that in a Markan parallel, 22:16—Mark 12:13), aligns the scribes exclusively with the Pharisees, and pays proportionately less attention to the common people.³⁴ As a result of Matthew's

³³ Strecker, p. 205.

³⁴ George D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), pp. 106, 117, 120 f.;

editorial activity, the Pharisees emerge in the first gospel as far and away the predominant representatives of Judaism. This state of affairs, however, admirably reflects the situation of the years following the Jewish War (66—70 A. D.), when the Pharisees did gain an ascendancy that was never again seriously challenged by any other segment of Judaism.³⁵ Consequently it appears that Matthew in his treatment of the Jewish parties may have allowed situations that were characteristic of his own age to determine his handling of materials that had to do with the age of Jesus, so that one must reckon with the possibility that Jesus' major partners in debate tend to be the Pharisees of Matthew's day.

Another noticeable feature in the first gospel, to which Günther Bornkamm has called attention,³⁶ is the manner in which people address Jesus. On the one hand, strangers, enemies, and Judas Iscariot always greet Jesus with "teacher," or "rabbi," but never with the equally respectful title of "sir," or "master" (cf., e. g., 27:62 f.). The disciples, on the other hand, as well as those who search out Jesus in the belief that He can heal and save, never accost Jesus with "teacher," or "rabbi," but always with "sir," or "master." These distinctions assume a striking character when we notice that Mark, by contrast, does not differen-

tiate in this fashion, with the result that "teacher," for instance, is a salutation in the second gospel that can be found on the lips of both the disciples of Jesus and His enemies. Now the Greek word for "sir," or "master," is κύριος, which also bears the religious designation of "Lord." In the mouths of early Christians "Jesus Kyrios" was a confession of faith. The word "teacher" (διδάσκαλος), however, never seems to have attained a comparable status. On the basis of these two facts, perhaps the following working hypothesis may explain why Matthew carefully reserves the word *kyrios* in his gospel for disciples and believers but permits "teacher" to cross the lips of Jesus' enemies: Matthew's distinctive use of these titles has been influenced by the special significance that these terms came to have in Christian circles. Hence we have a second possible example of how the age of the church in Matthew's Gospel may be reflected in his treatment of the age of Jesus.

Our final illustration has to do with the verb προσέρχομαι (to "come," "approach"). This vocable is one of Matthew's preferred terms; he employs it 52 times as opposed to Mark's 5 times and Luke's 10 times. In 49 instances this word designates the approach to Jesus of others. In attempting to account for Matthew's predilection for the term, we should note that it has strong cultic overtones, for it is used to signify one's stepping before God (LXX) or a king (Josephus). This suggests that Matthew utilizes this verb to affirm that all in his gospel who "come" to Jesus do so with an air of reverence that befits a king or deity. Yet this becomes an unusual trait when we observe that Matthew applies this word not only to the

Reinhart Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1963), pp. 12—26.

³⁵ Cf. Kilpatrick, pp. 113 f.

³⁶ Günther Bornkamm, "Enderwartung und Kirche im Matthäusevangelium," *Ueberlieferung und Auslegung im Matthäusevangelium*, 2d ed. (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), pp. 38 f.

disciples and other pious individuals but to the unbelieving crowds and Jesus' enemies as well. In other words, we are confronted with the anomaly that people who reject Jesus approach Him with a demeanor that attributes divine dignity to Him. But this is not a strange phenomenon at all if Matthew, in his use of *προσέρχομαι*, is writing from the perspective of the church of his day, an institution that confessed and proclaimed the divinity of Jesus. So perhaps here, too, the line between the age of the church and the age of Jesus remains fluid.

If these illustrations are valid and do indeed demonstrate that Matthew is inclined to harmonize the time of Jesus with the time of the church, they raise the question of why it is that he proceeds in this manner, deliberately choosing, as it were, not to establish any clear lines of demarcation between his own time and that of Jesus. The answer, we venture to say, lies in Matthew's view of Jesus' person. Reduced to a formula, this view is the following: Jesus, the Messiah, is the exalted Lord, or *Kyrios*.

It was to prove that Jesus is the Messiah that the evangelist introduced the formula quotations into his gospel, and this can also be said for his desire to picture Jesus as the son of David.³⁷ By the same token, it is to affirm that Jesus is the exalted Lord, or *Kyrios*, that Matthew depicts Jesus' enthronement in power in 28:16-20. But Matthew's confessional thesis that the Jesus who proved Himself to be the Messiah is the exalted Lord calls for him to establish identity between the Jesus who walked with His disciples on earth and the Jesus who has been enthroned in power. The Jesus who has been enthroned in power,

however, is, according to Matthean conviction, first of all the Lord of the church. On this point Matthew is not in the least ambiguous, because he describes the resurrected Jesus as coming to the disciples with the solemn promise: "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (28:20; cf. 18:20; 1:23), while Luke portrays the resurrected Jesus as taking leave from His disciples (cf. Acts 1:9 ff.). Accordingly when Matthew maintains that Jesus, the Messiah, is the exalted *Kyrios*, he asserts that the earthly Jesus continues to reside with His followers to the end of time, doing so as the Lord of the church.

This view of Jesus' person, which stresses continuity, is the basis for the Matthean coalescence of time. In Matthew's eyes, Jesus lives: "then" (i.e., before Easter on earth) and "now" (i.e., after Easter in the church). This means that, from his perspective, the expression "time of Jesus" should not be restricted to Jesus' earthly career. Instead, it calls for a "comprehensive" definition, because it comprehends both the "pre-Easter" time of Jesus on earth and the "post-Easter" time of Jesus in the church. Understood comprehensively, the idiom "time of Jesus" corresponds to that correlation that the writer draws between the person of Jesus (earthly Jesus — *Kyrios*) and the age of Jesus (pre-Easter — post Easter).

Conclusion

The results of this study may be summarized as follows. Matthew's approach to the age of the Old Testament is not principally that of historical temporality, and therefore one can speak of the evangelist's having applied the time-line to past centuries only in a restricted sense. Far from establishing successive periods

³⁷ Cf. Hummel, pp. 116—122.

of time such as those of the fathers and of the prophets, Matthew understands the whole of the age of the Old Testament as the age of prophecy, and this age has come to its fulfillment substantially in Jesus, the Messiah. In parallel fashion, neither does Matthew establish successive periods of time in relating his own age of the church to that of the historical Jesus. The disciples can serve as the representatives of the church, the Jesus proved to be the Messiah is one with Jesus *Kyrios*, and Jesus resides in the circle of His community and will continue to do so until the close of the age: these factors demonstrate that Matthew does not think in terms of a pre-Easter time of Jesus that, in turn, has been superseded by a post-Easter, *independent* time of the church, but that he rather construes both periods comprehensively as the "time of Jesus."

Author's Postscript: This brief investigation was completed in April of this year. After submitting it, this writer discovered that Strecker had summarized and restated his position in a February article entitled "Das Geschichtsverständnis des Matthäus," (*Evangelische Theologie*, 26 [1966], 57 to 74). Two points in this article call for specific comment. First, if one is going to speak of Matthew's having understood history in terms of the time-line, then the time-line must be defined—to reaffirm the burden of our study—to reflect the fact that Matthew appears to deal with only two periods of time, the time of the Old Testament, which is seen as the age of prophecy, and the time of Jesus. What some scholars today call the time of the church is, according to Matthew, not independent from the time of Jesus but an extension of the same.

In the second place, Strecker's contention that it is one of Matthew's major objectives to subordinate gospel traditions to the time-line is not supported by the gospel materials. Strecker grounds this thesis on an appeal to Matthew's infancy narratives, his use of the time-formula ἀπὸ τότε (4: 17; 16:21; 26:16), his fixed geographical references to the "house," and his insertion into the gospel of the twin logia, 10:6 and 15:24. (a) With respect to the Matthean infancy narratives (Chs. 1 and 2), it is difficult to prove the assertion that Matthew has suffixed these pericopes because of a *biographical* interest concerning the initial phases of Jesus' life. In support of this standpoint, Strecker refers to the first two chapters of Luke. But if Luke goes into exhaustive detail in describing the birth of both John the Baptist and Jesus, incorporating into his story the attendant circumstances, Matthew says nothing of John's birth and treats that of Jesus in such a fashion that Stendahl declares that, strictly speaking, Matthew does not even provide us with an account of the birth of Jesus.³⁸ Yet a well-rounded portrayal of Jesus' birth is exactly what we should expect were Matthew really concerned to apply the biographical time-line in expanding on the "Life of Jesus."

(b) Regarding ἀπὸ τότε, Krentz has demonstrated the importance of this expression for understanding the manner in which Matthew has *structured* his Gospel.³⁹ Strecker goes on to claim that it points up the time-line. To be valid, however, Strecker's claim must be judged on the basis of the entire chronological-topographical com-

³⁸ Stendahl, "Quis," pp. 100—105.

³⁹ Krentz, *passim*.

plex of the first gospel. But in this connection Wolfgang Trilling has correctly observed that the whole of Matthew's Gospel is chronologically and topographically "without sharp relief."⁴⁰ So again one finds the exact opposite of what should be expected were Matthew intensely preoccupied with placing the imprint of the time-line on earlier Gospel traditions. It becomes questionable whether one can press ἀπὸ τοῦτε in this direction as Strecker does.

(c) As far as the "house" is concerned, Strecker maintains that because it is given a concrete reference in the first gospel and is not of typological significance as in Mark, it is a prime example of Matthew's applying the time-line to Gospel materials. In reply to this, we should call attention to Trilling's comment that Capernaum stands out as the Galilean counterpart to Jerusalem.⁴¹ It seems that Matthew has assimilated the house in Capernaum, the city of Capernaum, and the region of Galilee to the temple in Jerusalem, the city of Jerusalem, and the region of Judea, respectively, with the intention of establishing a certain *formal* parallelism between the Galilean and Judean sections of the gospel. Thus the way in which Matthew

deals with the house tells us more perhaps about his compositional technique than his view of history.

(d) In terms of 10:6 and 15:24, Strecker holds that these logia point back to the earthly time of Jesus but in substance have nothing to do with Matthew's own age of the church. Now the context of 10:6 is 9:35—10:42, and that of 15:24 is 15:21-28. In both instances the text touches at once on the two themes of particularism (the Jewish mission) and universalism (the mission to all nations). Contrary to Strecker, this seems to be indicative of the situation of Matthew's community, for the evangelist's church was, to be sure, universally oriented, yes, within this framework it was still very much in contact with the Pharisaic Judaism of its day.⁴² This includes also a Jewish mission.⁴³ Accordingly the significance of 10:6 and 15:24 is not exhausted with Jesus' earthly career. To sum up, it is unlikely that one of Matthew's primary goals was to subject gospel traditions to the time-line. Further, it would seem, that, at most, he operates with only two periods of time.

⁴² Cf. Hummel, *passim*.

⁴⁰ Wolfgang Trilling, *Das wahre Israel*, 3d rev. ed. (Munich: Kösel Verlag, 1964), p. 131.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁴³ Cf. also F. Hahn, *Das Verständnis der Mission im Neuen Testament* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1963), pp. 110 f.