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## The New Temple

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# **The New Temple**

## **A Study of the Origins of the Catechetical 'Form' of the Church in the New Testament**

**Alan Cole, Ph.D.**

### **THE TYNDALE NEW TESTAMENT LECTURE, 1950**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

This study does not claim to be exhaustive, nor indeed dare it claim to be truly scholarly in the full sense of that much-abused word. Nevertheless it does claim to be truly exegetical, and if it succeeds in introducing non-specialist students to the fascinating study of Christian origins, and thereby strengthening their faith in the integrity and homogeneity of the Christian message as contained in the pages of the New Testament, the author will be well content. Where the New Testament evidence is concerned, an attempt has been made as far as possible to restrict the choice to Matthaean material, along with that to be found in the earlier chapters of Acts. Here, if anywhere, is the mind of orthodox Hebrew Christianity expressing itself quite apart from Pauline formulation. Few Protestant scholars would support a chronological primacy of Matthew, but its indisputable 'psychological primacy' makes it invaluable in a study of this nature.

A full bibliography on the general subject of the Church may be found in any of the three works listed under Section 1 below. It has therefore seemed necessary to draw attention only to those works specifically mentioned in the text, and, as far as possible, to those which are easily accessible to the 'non-specialist.' The same reason has led to the restriction of reference to the most recent books and articles on the subject, while Section 4 below must be regarded as a mere random sample, taken from books lying to hand, of a vast wealth of Jewish material, accessible to all in any of the excellent anthologies or translations of the Talmud, or, more directly, in the monumental work of Strack-Billerbeck in German and those of Abrahams and Montefiore in English. Those who desire to explore this fascinating avenue will find sound guidance in *The Earlier Rabbinic Tradition*, by R. A. Stewart (Tyndale Press, 1949).

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#### **ABBREVIATIONS IN THE TEXT**

The following works are usually cited by the author's surname, along with page reference:

1. *Recent Books on the Church*

Flew, R. Newton: *Jesus and His Church*. Epworth Press, 1938.

Johnston, G.: *The Church in the New Testament*, C.U.P., 1943.  
Schmidt, K. L.: *The Church*. Black, English translation, 1950.

## 2. *Recent Articles in Periodicals*

Campbell, J. Y.: In the *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1948. pp. 130-142, for the meaning of the word *Ecclesia*.  
Manson, T. W.: In the *John Rylands Bulletin*. Vol. 32, No. 2, March 1950; article, 'Son of Man.'  
Moule, C. F. D.: *Journal of Theological Studies*. April 1950; article, 'Sanctuary and Sacrifice in the Church of the New Testament.'

## 3. *On the First Gospel*

Kilpatrick, G. D.: *The Origins of the Gospel according to St. Matthew*. O.U.P., 1946.  
McNeile, A. H.: *The Gospel according to St. Matthew*. Macmillan, 1915.

## 4 *Selection of Illustrative Jewish Material*

*Aboth, Pirke: Sayings of the Fathers*. Edited by J. H. Hertz, London, 1942 (with translation).  
Edersheim, A.: *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. Longman, 1906.  
Herschon, P. I.: *Genesis with a Talmudic Commentary*. Bagster, 1883.  
Marshall, J. T.: *Manual of the Aramaic Language of the Palestinian Talmud*. Brill (Leyden), 1929. (Texts, with Translation.)  
Mauro, P.: *The Hope of Israel*. Boston, Mass., 1929.  
*Mishnah*. Translation by H. Danby. O.U.P., 1933.

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# THE NEW TEMPLE

## CHAPTER I

‘This fellow said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and build it in three days.’ Such was the accusation of the two final witnesses at the trial of Christ, but what did the charge mean? Well might the High Priest ask ‘Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?’ But Jesus held His peace (Mt. xxvi. 61-63). Why did Christ hold His peace? And what lay behind the charge? In this paper the contention will be made that the accusation as given in the Synoptic account was, in part at least, true, true at a far deeper level than either false witnesses or Jewish authorities realized, and that such an accusation necessitates both the Saying and Interpretation given in Jn. ii. 19-22, to account for its origin and persistence.

The first Evangelist is insistent on the point that High Priests and Council are hunting for evidence that will be sufficient to condemn Christ to death (Mt. xxvi. 59), but are unable to secure this (Mt. xxvi. 60), in spite of the fact that many witnesses are deliberately suborned. From the phrasing of verse 60—where the R.V. should be contrasted with the A.V.—it is not absolutely clear whether the two witnesses last mentioned are considered as coming under the same category as the rest or not. True, a careless reading of the passage might suggest that they too are ‘false witnesses,’ but a more careful inspection shows that the R.V. (with excellent manuscript authority) does not directly charge these two with falsehood. The slight elaboration in the *Textus Receptus*, which makes all the difference to the sense, is just the sort of explanatory note to be expected from a harmonizing scribe. Thus we may well expect to find a certain amount of truth in this charge, at least in the eyes of the first Evangelist, however distorted it may have been. At all events, there must have been some Saying of

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Jesus which lent colour to such an accusation, or why choose it in preference to any other fictitious count?<sup>1</sup>

It seems plain that the Evangelist attaches some peculiar importance to this final count, both from the fact that he instances it alone by name, while making general reference to many other items, and from the fact that it alone he does not specifically designate as false. Mk. xiv. 56-59 will be considered below. Here, it is enough to say that, while the statement there could be dismissed as a mere generalization, it seems fairer to take it as showing that the charge, at least in the sense in which it was understood, if not in the form in which it was given, was untrue. It seems equally plain that the reference to the Destruction of the Temple had a peculiar importance in the eyes of the High Priest, to judge from his immediate and exasperated outburst.

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<sup>1</sup> See Tischendorf, ed. 1869, p. 188, for Origen’s remark ‘*non arbitraris Matthaëum duos hos testes sine causa falsos dixisse, cum vera viderentur esse testimonia eorū ex eo quod ex-onit Johannes Christum dixisse,*’ showing that while he knew the disputed reading he also saw the cogency of the above point, and the connection with the Johannine saying.

Of course, this outburst might be explicable by assuming the Temple-accusation in itself to have been merely the culmination of a long series of charges against Christ of opposition to the faith and practice of Israel, to none of which He answered in court. For instance, in view of the stress in the Gospels on the question of Sabbath-observance as a major cleavage with the Pharisees, it is extremely likely that the charge of Sabbath-breaking was brought against the Lord at His trial. This is all the more likely since, in the Synoptists, 'Temple' and 'Sabbath' are closely linked, and it was because of the Lord's peculiar position *vis-à-vis* the Temple that He claimed such liberties in dealing with the Sabbath. This will be discussed below; but reference may be made here to the Sabbath-healing controversy in Mt. xii. 10-14, which is the point of time, according to the first Evangelist, at which the Jewish leaders first definitely decide on the Lord's death.

By Mosaic authority, a breach of the Sabbath Law was

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punishable by death (Nu. xv. 32-36). It must therefore be either that, on some technical point of Rabbinic law, the Lord could not be found guilty, or that, albeit grudgingly, the religious leaders admitted the cogency of the Lord's general argument. This was at least subsequently recognized by the Rabbis, as can be seen from the numerous 'provisions of mercy' in the Mishnah tractates 'Shabbath' and 'Erubin,' strange as some of them may seem to the modern reader.<sup>2</sup> The problem of how to condemn Him was peculiarly acute—particularly on a charge of breaking the law, as was their goal—in view of His insistence to the last, not only in private but in public teaching, on the duty of strict obedience to the Mosaic code, and equally firm insistence that His treatment of Sabbath customs, cavalier though it might seem, was but observance of the Sabbath Law. Nay, more, He claimed that here, as at all other points, He was not destroying but fulfilling the Law. True, as regards the Sabbath the Lord claimed a peculiar position, the significance of which will be discussed below, since it stands in direct relation to the peculiar position also claimed by Him with reference to the Temple. Yet this position was certainly neither seen nor allowed by the Rabbis; therefore the obvious conclusion remains that, for all His deeds of mercy on the Sabbath (Mt. xii. 10-13), and for all the actions dictated by need that took place therein (Mt. xii. 1-3), He could not be found ἔνοχος θανάτου 'guilty on a capital charge' (Mt. xxvi. 66) until the 'blasphemous' claim to be the Anointed, the Son of God (Mt. xxvi, 63, 64). He was not therefore considered to have broken the Torah by the Council at large, whatever the Pharisaic party may have held.

Especially in the first Gospel, stress has been laid on the Lord's acceptance of the Torah. Mt. v. 17 is, as it were, the keynote of His ministry—that His task is not to destroy, but to fulfil. Mt. xv contains His great defence against the Pharisees. To their accusation that His disciples are break-

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ing the 'Tradition of the Fathers,' He counters with the charge that this very Tradition, so often designed as a protective 'fence' (Aboth i. 1, etc.) for the Torah, itself annuls the Torah. Thus He might be regarded as a proto-'Karaites' or Jewish 'Puritan,' but not as a law-breaker. Mt. xxiii. 2, 3 is very significant as the preface to the last public discourse of the 'unlettered'

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<sup>2</sup> Edersheim, L.T., 2. 57, footnote, gives an interesting citation from Maimonides. Indeed, his Appendix XVII, L.T. 2.777, gives a useful conspectus of Talmudic Sabbath Law.

Rabbi from Galilee (i.e. having attended no recognized Rabbinic 'School,' presumably), delivered, it appears from Mt. xxiv. 1, in the environs of the Temple itself. 'The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.' True, the crowds are warned against copying the 'works' of scribe or Pharisee, but this is purely because 'they say, and do not' (verse 3)—a criticism compatible with the strictest Judaic orthodoxy.

It seems clear from the Synoptic evidence that the charge which the Jewish leaders were anxious to establish against the Lord was one of 'contempt of court' towards Temple and Torah, by a denial of their respective authority. That the first Evangelist sees no truth in the charge of disrespect towards the Torah is shown not only by his brief dismissal of any such accusations collectively as 'false witness' at the trial scene, but, also by his constant stress throughout the Gospel on Christ's obedience to the Law and acceptance of its validity. The thoroughly Jewish nature of the material in the Matthaean 'Sermon on the Mount' in chapters v-vii is a good illustration of this stress. But the other point, that concerned with the Lord's attitude to the Temple, is more delicate, and Matthew is careful not to dismiss the charge so summarily, although in itself it can scarcely have been one from which a death penalty could normally result.

Yet attitude to Temple and Torah cannot be fundamentally distinguished. This is well shown in Mt. xii, where the close psychological link existing for the Jewish mind between Temple and Torah, and especially between Temple and Sabbath, is shown. The opening eight verses of this chapter will repay careful examination, especially in their

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Matthaean form. The Lord's disciples are charged with a multiple breach of the Sabbath Law by their pulling, husking and eating of standing corn on the Sabbath. He, as their acknowledged Rabbi, and as actually in their company when the offence takes place, is held responsible, and is asked for a 'precedent' or 'Scripture' justifying such a breach. The Lord, in brief, justifies His disciples' action by the overmastering 'rule of need.' But He does not quote an instance of Sabbath-violation from the Old Testament to support His position. Instead, He quotes an instance of the apparent violation of a similar ceremonial law having reference to the House of God, when David committed virtual sacrilege by eating (and even giving his troops to eat of) the hallowed Presentation Bread! The common point between this story and the action in question of the Lord's disciples in the cornfields is the 'not lawful' repeated in verse 4 from the indignant charge of verse 2. Presumably the argument is *a priori*. If the religious leaders can allow a major breach of the ceremonial code (for is not Temple greater than Torah?) they must perforce condone a minor, by the law of 'heavy and light,' קָלָ וְיָמֵד (qal w'chomer), as the Rabbis said. So much lies patent on the surface: but it does not seem far-fetched to see a deliberate reason in the choice of this particular instance by the Lord to justify and explain His attitude to the Sabbath. The sole justification that He will give to defend His Sabbath-claim is a greater claim still. It is because of His position *vis-à-vis* the Temple that He justifies His position with reference to the Sabbath. Here are the first rumblings of the coming storm that lead, in verse 14 below, to the Pharisaic decision that He must die.

Lest this seem fanciful, the Matthaean context below makes explicit what has been hitherto implicit: for in Mt. xii. 6 the crescendo continues. David's action, in eating 'Presentation Bread,' is condoned in Scripture, but a greater breach still is actually commanded. The story

of David is only from the ‘Former Prophets’ (1 Sa. xxi. 6 *et seq.*), but this is in the ‘Law’ itself (Nu. xxviii, 9, 10—

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ἐν τῷ νόμῳ must surely be a deliberate stress here). ‘On the Sabbath day the priests in the Temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless’: so says verse 5, and so, perforce, agreed Rabbis and all orthodox Jews. Here, the accepted Jewish argument was that the service of the Temple justified the ‘breach.’ At once comes the Lord’s rejoinder. If the mere claims of the Temple have a validity greater than that of the ceremonial Torah (considered here in its particular aspect of Sabbath Law), then the whole question of a ‘Sabbath-breaking’ by Him is at once lifted to a new level, since τοῦ ἱεροῦ μεῖζόν ἐστιν ὧδε — something greater than the Temple is here’ (where the idiomatic use of the neuter need not be pressed, as will be pointed out below).

This Saying is peculiar to the first Gospel, and all the more remarkable in view of the strongly Jewish nature of the document, as stressed above. Such a Saying, familiar to the modern reader, must have sent a thrill of horror through a Jewish audience. Before examining the phrase itself, however, it will be well to see its context. In verse 7, immediately below, is quoted (from Hos. vi. 6) ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice’—whose meaning may perhaps be ‘Targumized’ as ‘What I look for is loving response, and not ritual obedience.’ Thus the Saying comes in the context of a trenchant attack on the ‘outwardness’ of the prevalent ritual system, an attack very frequent in the Prophets of the Old Covenant—so trenchant there that at times it might seem to the casual reader as if the whole Temple System itself, and not just its abuses, was being roundly condemned. (See, e.g., Am. v. 21.) Coupled with this attack is the claim in verse 8 that the Son of Man is ‘lord of the Sabbath.’ What does this claim mean?

It is not possible in a study of this length to plunge into attractive by-paths, and discuss at length the Synoptic meaning of ‘Son of Man’: in any case it is an old ‘crux’ with scholars, and little would be gained thereby. At the risk of seeming arbitrary, the position is adopted there that, from the first, when used in relation to the Sabbath controversy, the term was ambiguous. In the Marcan parallel, when found in a context such as ‘the Sabbath was made for

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man and not man for the Sabbath’ (Mk. ii. 27), the phrase must surely have been used in the generalizing sense of ‘mankind.’ Even if with Manson (*loc. cit.*) the text be emended to ‘the Sabbath... for the *Son* of Man,’ this seems true. So, presumably, the Pharisees would always understand it, for they could scarcely be expected to grasp the ‘nuance’ of a name known only to the chosen few, and possibly not even to them until after Caesarea Philippi (Mt. xvi. 13). This would be quite sufficient to account for the Pharisaic rage at Jesus as a ‘Sabbath-breaker.’ It was not as yet, in their eyes, that He set Himself above the Sabbath, but that He set mankind as such above it, which must have seemed intolerable.

But it would be extremely foolish to insist on a purely ‘generic’ interpretation of ‘Son of Man’ in every case. However the Pharisees may have understood the phrase, it is perfectly clear that the first Evangelist in this context intends it ‘personally,’ as a title of Christ, as it must surely be taken in at least some cases elsewhere, especially when on His own lips. This becomes clear by a comparison of the passage with the different wording of the corresponding section in Mk. ii. 23-28.

In any event, it is well to remember that, even where the primary reference is to mankind generically, this can never be the exhaustive reference, to the exclusion of the personal interpretation. Anything true of mankind generically is doubly true of Him, the representative man (*peccato excepto*, of course, for He is the archetype of ideal, unfallen mankind). In some Synoptic contexts, it is perhaps arguable that it is only by such a process of ‘narrowing-clown’ that ‘Son of Man’ can be made to refer personally to Christ at all, but this does not seem so in Matthew. The first Evangelist, alone among the Synoptists, deliberately brings verses 7 and 8 into collocation with verse 6—the Son of Man is ‘lord of the Sabbath.’ Further, His claim to ‘lordship’ is *a priori*, since ‘here is something greater than the Temple.’

Can the neuter in this last phrase be ‘personalized’? If the force of the neuter ‘something greater’ were to be

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pressed, it would be tempting to take this as a reference to the concrete whole made by the Lord and His disciples, and see this as the embryonic Church, the ‘something’ greater than the Temple. An undertone of this should not be ruled out, in view of the Matthaean stress on the ἐκκλησία in xvi. 18 and xviii. 17: but these are troubled waters, and have in any case been recently explored by scholars like Flew and K. L. Schmidt and Johnston. Such a ‘corporate’ exegesis cannot, however, be either exhaustive or exclusive, in view of the precisely similar forms of expression in verses 41 and 42 below. Here the R.V. margin is wisely but perhaps pedantically ambiguous. It translates the neuter by ‘*more* than Jonah is here’ and ‘*more* than Solomon is here’ respectively, without committing itself to the personal interpretation involved in the familiar ‘*a greater* than Jonah,’ etc., of the A.V. Yet here, in view of the strictly ‘personal’ nature of the context, it is hard to see how the comparison can be taken otherwise than as inferring a direct personal reference to the Lord. The neuter, then, will be simply idiomatic in all three cases. Again, supporting this ‘personal interpretation,’ in verse 40 immediately above, the allusion to the ‘Son of Man,’ who is to be ‘three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,’ can scarcely be taken as other than a direct ‘individual’ reference to the Lord, whatever wider meaning may be attached to the expression elsewhere in the Synoptists. But see again Manson (*loc. cit.*), who argues powerfully for a ‘collective’ meaning for ‘Son of Man’ in Mt. xii. 8, which he interprets as ‘Jesus and His disciples.’ This might support a similar ‘collective’ meaning for the neuter in xii. 6 and even elsewhere.

Granted, then, the personal nature of the reference in verses 41 and 42, and, therefore, by analogy, of that in verse 6, the question remains to be asked, Why is Christ ‘greater than the Temple’? There can be only one all-embracing answer. It is because God’s presence is more manifest in Him than in the Temple. On Him, not on the Temple, now rests the Shekinah, as later Judaism was to see it rest-

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ing on those who studied Torah.<sup>3</sup> The Temple is no longer seen as God’s localized dwelling-place, but simply as the ‘House of Prayer’ (Mt. xxi. 13). Yet if this be so, the whole rationale of the ritual system and temple cultus is no more. The Lord Himself is the true Temple, or

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<sup>3</sup> See the Mishnah, tractate ‘Aboth,’ iii, 3, for the famous dictate of Rabbi Hananiah.

rather 'Tabernacle,' Meeting-Tent; He is the Word of God 'under canvas' (Jn. i. 14). It is on these grounds that He claims authority over the Sabbath.

More, He claims that it is thus His peculiar right and privilege to do deeds of mercy on the Sabbath day.<sup>4</sup> Luke sees a peculiar fitness in the healing of Israelites upon this day by Him (Lk. xiii. 16). Just as the Temple, *quâ* God's House, is 'lord' of the Sabbath, so the Messiah, *quid* God's dwelling place, is the Sabbath's lord. He has, as it were, a peculiar right to the Sabbath. Thus the Sabbath controversy is not merely an isolated struggle against one aspect of Jewish legalism, nor was it by chance that the Lord challenged Pharisaic Judaism on this point rather than another. The whole doctrine of the manner of God's presence amid His people is ultimately at stake.<sup>5</sup>

The rest of chapter xii of Matthew shows the virtual impossibility of isolating one strand of Biblical truth from the complex skein in which all are ravelled. True, verses 9-13 give an immediate test of the application of the principle of the Son of Man's 'Lordship' (perhaps better translated as 'authority, precedence, overriding claims') over the Sabbath in the shape of a 'test case,' put forward by the Pharisees. The extent of their opposition is seen in verse 14: already His death has been determined. The account of the actual healing of the maimed man is restricted to what

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amounts to a brief factual footnote to the narrative. So far, the same thread of thought is followed: but in verses 15 and 16 comes an almost imperceptible 'glide.' The healing of this man on the Sabbath leads to a more general reference to Christ's ministry of healing. This in its turn leads to a quotation from the very heart and core of the Servant-Songs as applicable to Jesus (Mt. xii. 18-21, corresponding to Is. xlii. 1-3).

Now the fact that it is in such a context that the first Evangelist sees this Old Testament 'testimonium' as meaningful and applicable to Christ is not without importance. The first part of verse 18 is an implicit claim that Jesus of Nazareth is Himself at that moment the true 'Remnant' of Israel, that in Him both corporate and individual interpretations of the 'Servant' portrayed by Isaiah are linked. This, in a context in which the Lord has claimed to be greater than the Temple, because God's presence rests peculiarly on Him, is most important to the argument below, but here it will suffice to call attention to the fact. Verse 18 bears out that it is indeed because the true Shekinah rests on Jesus that He is 'greater than the Temple.' Indeed, one of the points of similarity between the 'Servant' of the Isaiah-Songs and the living Jesus of Nazareth, and one of the 'proofs' to Matthew's mind that He indeed fulfils this prophecy, is His indwelling by the Spirit of God. ('I will put My Spirit upon him,' verse 18b).

Further, not only is there some 'corporate-individual' sense seen by Matthew in the claims of the Lord: not only is His indwelling by the Spirit characteristic of His Messiahship, but also this mysterious person 'will declare judgment to the Gentiles' (verse 18b, R.V.). This by itself might mean merely a vindication of Israel and proclamation of God's vengeance on the heathen, but verse 21 is more explicit: 'in His name shall the Gentiles trust.' It is God's plan

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. His right to judgment, also 'because He is the Son of Man' (John v. 27).

<sup>5</sup> Manson, as cited above, would interpret the 'Lordship' slightly differently; he sees the 'collective' Son of Man, that is, Jesus and His disciples, as 'engaged on a task whose requirements override those of the Sabbath laws.' This argument is certainly used in the Sabbath controversy, but it does not seem to exhaust the New Testament evidence.

to destroy the old exclusivism and broaden to worldwide limits the Remnant that has been so narrowed down. Thus while the primary reference of ‘Son of Man’ in Mt. xii. 8, for example, seems to have been personal, there may well have been a collective ‘nuance,’ at least to the Evan-

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gelist’s mind writing ‘*post eventum.*’ This would fit with Manson’s view, as quoted above, but whether a ‘corporate interpretation’ is possible *before* the death and vindication of the ‘Servant’ is another question.

Now, of course, the application by the Lord of the ‘Servant-Songs’ to Himself as one of His favourite categories of self-explanation and ‘terms of reference’ (like ‘Son of Man’ and the whole Sacrificial analogy) is well known, but the importance of such an application in a context like this has not always been stressed. In Matthew, of all Gospels, the context and arrangement of incidents must be carefully considered—Matthew, the most thoroughly Jewish of all, whose very form was possibly suggested by the fivefold division of the Torah, who is meticulous to record the attitude of the Lord to Temple, Law and Customs. If, then, there is any significance, not only in the Matthaean choice of material but also in its grouping and arrangement, it is significant that in verse 23 there is the unrebuked suggestion by the ‘common people,’ the ‘Am ha-Aretz,’ that He is the ‘Son of David’; for it had been foretold that David’s Son should build the Temple, the task forbidden to David himself.<sup>6</sup> The Pharisees reject this ‘popular’ explanation of His obvious supernatural powers, and counter with the blasphemy of verse 24—the suggestion that He is no ‘temple’ of God’s Shekinah, but demon-possessed. At once comes the strong answer of verse 28: this manifest presence of God in power, indwelling His new Tabernacle, is a very proof that the Kingdom has come.

Farther below still, in verse 38, comes another link with the last Jerusalem week, when ‘scribes and Pharisees’ ask for a sign.<sup>7</sup> It is not immediately clear from the context for what purpose the sign was sought—particularly as He had just been performing miracles of healing, as in verse 22— but presumably it was to justify His claim, implicit throughout this chapter, to be greater than Temple and

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Torah. If so, the sign is extremely appropriate, for the sole sign to be vouchsafed will be the acted parallel between the prophet Jonah and Himself. The Son of Man is to be, like Jonah, three days in darkness, and then, like Jonah, is to reappear as a sign and portent to the impenitent. It seems clear that it is the mysterious reappearance, not the mere absence for three days, that constitutes the ‘sign.’ This is implicit from the start, for, after all, the whole point of the Jonah-story lies in the fact that Jonah did *not* remain in the ‘whale’s belly.’ Mt. xvii, after the Transfiguration, makes it explicit to the disciples, though it seems clear, both from the grief of the disciples in the Matthaean context and the explicit statement of Mk. ix. 32, that they still failed to grasp the full meaning of the ‘sign.’

Before leaving this Jonah-context, a few final remarks should be made as to its meaning. First, it seems perverse to restrict with some scholars (e.g. McNeile) the actual ‘sign’ to the

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<sup>6</sup> See 2 Sa. vii. 13—this temple-building by David’s Son later became an important point in Christian Apologia, as will be mentioned below.

<sup>7</sup> See Edersheim, L.T., 2. 68, 69, for Rabbinic parallels.

‘preaching of Jonah.’ This would involve a rejection of the Matthaean saying, and a consequent false isolation of the third Gospel’s version (Lk. xi. 29-32). Secondly, the nature of Jonah’s mission is highly significant. He is the great Old Testament ‘prophet to the Gentiles,’ called initially to such a task by God, true; but uniquely constituted as such by his experience of virtual death and resurrection. Thirdly, and most significant of all, here, in a Temple-context, where the Lord has claimed to be Himself greater than the Temple, is the direct reference to the ‘three days’ and a tacit reference to ‘rising again.’ Is this the germ of the charge of the false witnesses at the trial of Christ? If so, perhaps they had penetrated deeper than they knew with their blundering accusation. It may well be that they refer to no isolated Saying, but a consistent aspect of the teaching of Jesus. Fourthly, by the claim to be ‘a greater than Jonas’ (verse 41), the Lord may well have meant not only One greater in person, which is obviously true, but also a greater in ‘evidential value,’ as it were in His capacity as a God-given ‘sign’ to men. Thus He may have meant to hint to His disciples that His ‘reappearance’ would be an even more

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startling proof of God’s power than was that of Jonah. That they failed to understand the point of the reference is not extraordinary, in view of their failure to understand the meaning of His plain statements elsewhere on ‘rising from the dead’ (e.g. Mt. xvii. 23, etc.). Fifthly, while it was stigmatized above as perverse to *restrict* the force of the ‘sign of Jonah’ to Jonah’s preaching, yet it is obvious both from Matthew and Luke that the preaching of the ‘resurrected’ Jonah is not just the ‘backcloth’ of the story, but an integral part of the Sign. If this be so, it is surely fair to see in the simile a hint not only of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, but also of the subsequent preaching of the Resurrection as an evidential ‘sign,’ as so frequently in Acts.

Even if it be admitted that, as early as Mt. xii, ‘seed-thoughts’ of the accusation may have already existed, yet during the closing weeks of the Lord’s life must there not have been some Sayings which brought the subject again to the fore? Mt. xxiv. 1, 2 (with Synoptic parallels), containing the prophecy of the destruction of the material Temple, seems to have been delivered solely to disciples, not to the people at large. In any case, it contains neither any statement that the coming destruction is His work nor any prophecy that the Temple will rise again from its ruins. Possibly Mt. xxiii. 38, just above, might be interpreted as a veiled threat of coming doom for the Temple because of Jerusalem’s crowning sin in rejecting the Christ—‘Behold, your *house* is left unto you desolate.’ But this is a very tenuous link: in the first place, ‘desolate’ ought perhaps to be omitted on textual grounds, and in the second place, ‘house’ is very probably to be understood here in the more generalizing Semitic sense, familiar from the Old Testament. Thus the reference will be a purely general one, glancing at the coming sack of Jerusalem. Possibly Mt. xxiv. 15, with its reference to the ‘abomination that makes desolate,’ is a further amplification and explanation of the doom that is to overtake the Temple. Yet this again is no more than a hint, veiled in language

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at once ambiguous and ‘safe,’ since it belonged to the orthodox apocalyptic of Daniel (ix. 27, xi. 31).

How can such references alone and in themselves explain the words of the witnesses in Mt. xxvi. 61? So far, it does not appear that the Lord had expressly said anything which could

lend colour to such a charge. Yet a proof that this charge was not only the final exasperation to the High Priest on the night of the trial, but was also deep-rooted in the popular mind, is given in Mt. xxvii. 40, by the derisive remark of the crowds that pass by the cross: 'Thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross.' If this be allowed as an incidental (and therefore valuable) psychological proof that Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be God's Son, it must equally be allowed as evidence of a claim approximating to the first part of the taunt. To say that the crowds were simply taking up the charge of the witnesses at the trial will not do, for the Lord admitted neither this nor any other similar charge in court. The whole point of the gibe would then be lost: the Lord is being taunted with His own claims (cf. "for *He said*, I am the Son of God"—Mt. xxvii. 43). In addition, if the trial were the first place that the charge appeared, it is surely difficult, if not impossible, to imagine that, the very next morning, casual passers-by would be familiar with it. Finally, there is a certain amount of grammatical and syntactic evidence for asserting that the passers-by regarded this as a habitual or well-known claim of His: but this will be amplified below. Certain evidence drawn from the Temple purge and the parables of the last week support this syntactic and psychological probability.

From the nature of the challenge ('come down from the cross') it is obvious that, whatever the exact form of the (at present hypothetical) Saying was, the common folk took it as a claim to be able to perform a literal work of magic, the promise of a supernatural sign of the sort already sought in vain by the Pharisees in Mt. xii. 38, as an attestation of His position as Son of God. It is hardly necessary to add that this temptation had been decisively put from

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Him by the Lord in Mt. iv. 5-7. There the specific suggestion seems not only to have been the temptation to prove Himself the Messiah, by appearing miraculously, as expected, in the very Temple courtyard (Mal. iii. 1, so interpreted by the Rabbis) or as the Son of Man, floating down mysteriously from the 'clouds of heaven,' as in Dan. vii. 13, but also the temptation to hazard His life deliberately, that God's miraculous power might be the better seen in preserving it. The connection between this rejected 'sign' and the sole promised sign (that 'of the prophet Jonas') is obvious: but with the difference that here was no self-chosen 'temptation of God,' to exert His power.

But the crowds could not possibly have understood 'the sign of the prophet Jonas' as involving a claim to magical powers. It seems highly improbable that they understood it at all: certainly the disciples were mystified. The first Gospel records in fact no instance at all of a Saying of Christ's that could be interpreted as a claim to the possession of magical powers. Matthew is particularly careful to point out that Jesus consistently refused to promise any 'sign' other than that 'of the prophet Jonas.' Yet here are the crowds at the cross, in this same Gospel, insistent that the Lord *had* promised another sign, which they at least interpreted in terms of magic. If there is a way out of this impasse, it does not seem that it can be found from the first Gospel alone. But before a solution can be attempted there are some further lines of evidence to be considered. It may, however, be tentatively suggested here that, if the existence of another promised 'sign' can be established, it must, to satisfy the Matthaean stress, be an equivalent to the Jonah-sign.

In the first place, the very syntactic form of the gibe in Mt. xxvii. 40 (ὁ καταλύων ... καὶ ... οἰκοδομῶν) suggests that this was, to the crowd, either a constant or at least a well known claim of the Lord's. A casual reference or a single unsustained court charge will scarcely bear.

the grammatical weight of the participles; nor will it satisfy all the ‘nuances’ of the Temple purge or the parables of the last week. In the second place, it may be significant that the

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religious leaders did not trouble themselves with this quasi-magical charge in this hour of their triumph. Obviously, to their minds, at least in the form in which the charge was seen by the crowd, it was a paltry fiction, an absurdity, well enough perhaps as a make-weight in the excitement of a trial, but irrelevant in the cold light of a condemnation. Their sneer (verses 42-44) is ‘He “saved” others—He cannot “save” Himself.’ True, they too invoked Him to come down from the cross, that they might see and believe, but it is obvious from the first bitter sentence that they did not for a moment expect Him to do so. There is not so much as a hint from them that He ever, to their knowledge, claimed magical powers; surely they could not have forborne to quote it, had there been such a claim. Mt. xii. 28, ‘If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God,’ could scarcely be so regarded—the more so as in verse 27 it is tacitly allowed that orthodox Jewry exercises the same divine power in the same function. How much the Pharisees actually *believed* in the possession by the Lord of supernatural powers it is hard to say. Certainly in Mt. xii. 24 they appear to acknowledge, as evidenced by demon-expulsion, His command of supra-human powers while they attribute them to a satanic agency. But, apart from the fact that this reads more like a spiteful remark than a view soberly and consistently held, exorcism, as mentioned above, stood in a rather different category from works of magic. Even if they *had* regarded Him as a magician, it does not seem that the possession of magical powers would have been regarded as *per se* culpable, unless the source were an evil spirit.<sup>8</sup> The sneer of the religious leaders is, therefore, as significant by what it omits as by what it includes of the popular gibe.

What is the way out of this impasse—a way which may take into account the evidence, spoken and inferred, of the ‘Am ha-Aretz’ (the common folk), the religious leaders,

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and the two witnesses at the trial of Jesus? The contention of this study is that the incidental references in the first Evangelist necessitate and indeed presume the Saying and interpretation found in Jn. ii. 19, ‘Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ Nothing else recorded in the Gospel tradition can even remotely account for the charge of the witnesses in Mt. xxvi. 61: ‘This man said, I am able to destroy the Temple ... and build it ...’ It has been seen that the Evangelist attaches peculiar importance to this count. Further, it has been argued that he does not state outright that, in his eyes, the charge is false. If this close argument from Matthew’s wording be deemed in itself a slender thread, there is the more weighty psychological argument that, had the Christian community seen no truth whatsoever in the story, it is hard to account for the preservation of it in preference to any other of the many fictitious charges at which the Evangelist glances (Mt. xxvi. 60).

Matthew therefore knows of some Saying which could at least be interpreted, possibly in the light of some of the other Sayings mentioned above, as a threat to destroy the Temple, and also as a promise to rebuild it in three days. Further, he knows that the common folk interpreted this literally, as the promise of a magical ‘sign’ which should vindicate this

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<sup>8</sup> See Marshall, extracts 132-134, for later Jewish traditions as to magical powers possessed by Rabbis. As these stories come from the Palestinian Talmud, they may be presumed to be early and fairly representative of Palestinian orthodoxy.

prophet from Galilee. He also knows that the religious leaders found the charge exasperating, but did not, apparently, interpret it literally, as a 'sign.' They may have taken it merely as a poetic indication of His presumed intention to sweep away the Law and Cultus: but, if so, the clear Synoptic evidence shows that they failed to establish such a charge at the trial. In addition, the whole stress throughout the first Gospel makes it clear that, at its face value, such a charge was untrue, at least in the sense that the Jews of that day understood it. The clear testimony of Matthew is that the Lord came 'not to destroy, but to fulfil' (Mt. v. 17).

If, then, this still hypothetical Saying contains in some sense the promise of a 'sign,' as the common folk understood it, and yet if this sign is not 'literal,' nor yet merely

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a figurative picture of the overthrow of Law and Temple Cultus, what other figurative sense can it bear? Perhaps the answer is to be seen in re-examining the strong Matthaean contention that the *sole* 'sign' promised publicly to the Jewish leaders was the sign of Jonah (Mt. xii. 39) which, in view of the Lord's later sayings (e.g. Mt. xvii. 23), cannot well be understood except as a reference to the Lord's Resurrection. Matthew, *post eventum*, sees, like all the New Testament writers, that it is the Resurrection which attests *par excellence* the position of Jesus of Nazareth as God's Son: see Mt. xxviii *passim*, especially verses 18 and 19. Yet, knowing all this, and having emphatically stated that the only sign which Christ promised was this 'sign of Jonah,' understood as referring to His Resurrection, the first Evangelist nevertheless allows to go un-rebuked the suggestion that there was some second 'sign' promised. Further, he suggests that it was couched in some Temple-saying, and that although interpreted literally by the crowds it was not (ultimately at least) so taken by the religious leaders—and, most emphatically, was not so understood by the Evangelist himself. In addition, it cannot have been taken simply as a figurative picture of the overthrow of the Cultus, for the first Evangelist is careful to show that the Lord is meticulous in observing its demands. It seems, therefore, that just as the reasoning above compelled an acceptance of the authenticity of the Saying reported in Jn. ii. 19, so the reasoning here likewise compels an acceptance of the fourth Evangelist's interpretation of the Saying, in Jn. ii. 21—'But He spake concerning the temple of His body.' Only so can the self-consistency of Matthew be retained, for this makes the Temple-sign one with the Jonah-sign, and gives the required non-literal interpretation. Here is yet another indication of the intricate by-play of statement and assumption that links the Johannine with the Synoptic evidence, and makes it impossible to separate the Christ of John from the Messiah of Matthew.

## CHAPTER II

A further question may now be asked: Why does the first Evangelist record the mocking words of the crowd at the cross? Is it merely that the Lord's triumphant resurrection may convict them out of their own mouths? Surely not: this would satisfy both Saying and Interpretation in Jn. ii, true, but will not satisfy the Synoptic 'overtones' (let alone those in the fourth Gospel), especially those involved in the claim to be greater than the Temple. In other words, while a physical resurrection from the dead of Jesus of Nazareth might fulfil the letter of the double sign, in and by itself it cannot exhaustively answer to the spirit of it—particularly in view of one significant clause in the Synoptic account of the trial scene. The time for a close examination of this has now come, the more so since the jeer at the cross is in virtually the same words as the accusation at the trial (compare Mk. xiv. 57-59 with Mk. xv. 29, 30, and Mt. xxvi. 61 with Mt. xxvii. 40). What other 'nuance' can there be, in the resurrection of His physical body?

Here, for the first time, the Marcan version will be considered in preference to the Matthaean, as being more detailed. In this case, as in the case of one other significant Marcan addition which occurs in connection with the Temple-cleansing ('for all nations,' in Mk. xi. 17), there is good reason, from the congruity with other early Christian evidence, to suppose that Mark alone has preserved an invaluable link in the chain of reasoning. In xiv. 56 he, like Matthew, has glanced at the many false witnesses with their vexatious charges, adding the detail that their evidence was not self-consistent. In verse 58 he records the evidence of what are presumably the same two witnesses as those singled out by the first Evangelist, but gives it in a fuller form that at once throws light on, and receives light from, the Johannine utterance discussed above. Their statement in court is that they heard the Lord say, 'I will destroy this Temple that is made with hands (*χειροποίητος*), and in

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three days I will build another made without hands' (*ἀχειροποίητος*). True, in verse 57, Mark bluntly classes this as 'false witness' too, and the force of this statement must be considered below.

It is, of course, a frequent 'note' of the fourth Gospel that the Jews crassly misunderstand the Lord's words by taking them in a materialistic sense, for example the Saying concerning 'bread from heaven' in Jn. vi. 42, to take a random instance. This Saying was no exception. Jn. ii. 20 gives the indignant and incredulous answer of the Jewish hearers on this occasion: 'Forty and six years was this Temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?' True, Jn. ii. 20 gives the quiet comment and interpretation of the Evangelist, but ii. 22 makes equally clear that the true meaning of the Saying was lost even to the disciples till after the Resurrection. In fact, verse 22 suggests that, like so many of His Sayings that they failed to understand, it was not only uncomprehended but forgotten till then. The story of the 'leaven of the Pharisees' in Mk. viii. 14-21 shows that even the disciples were still capable of a grossly materialistic interpretation of the Lord's words. However *they* may have understood the Lord's words in the context of the Temple-saying, it is clear from the Synoptic account of the trial and crucifixion scenes that the common folk, as John says, interpreted them bluntly, in terms of sheer magic, 'black' or 'white,' according as they followed the blasphemous remark of the Pharisees in Mt. xii. 24, or classed Him with the magic-working Rabbis of the

Talmud. That this was the consistent later view of the common folk, diligently fostered by the jealous Jewish Rabbis, can be seen from numerous Talmudic passages,<sup>9</sup>

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which show the persistence of the popular belief that He had made some claim to the possession of supernatural powers.

The Evangelist's brief comment on this last charge is illuminating. Verse 59 dismisses the evidence with the remark 'and not even so did their witness agree together.' This would seem to point to independent testimony by these two witnesses, preserving two independent accounts of the same Saying or incident. This in itself is surely a double guarantee of the authenticity of such a Saying as John reports, allowing for the verbal divergencies that led to 'conflicting evidence.' This automatically made their twofold testimony invalid in the eyes of Jewish law, even if the 'crime' had been one punishable by death.<sup>10</sup> If the Johannine report of the Saying in Jn. ii. 19 be accepted as verbally accurate, the Lord used the second person plural of the Imperative, not the first person singular of the Future, so that His saying could not be, in itself, construed as a threat (but cf. the other sayings discussed above). In view of the fact that the fourth Evangelist may here be reproducing loosely in Greek what was probably an Aramaic saying originally, it may be unsafe to press this point, although Aramaic would normally keep the two forms perfectly distinct. Nevertheless this slight alteration may possibly account for the fact that Mark definitely places these two among the general category of 'false witnesses' (Mk. xiv. 57), in slight contradistinction to Matthew, as pointed out above. In addition, Mark's emphasis on the 'false witness' may simply be directing attention to the point that, in the senses in which witnesses and Court understood it, the charge was groundless and, indeed, known to be so, if the full force of *ψευδοματυρέω*, 'give lying witness,' be pressed.

The point which all the above is designed to make is that there is no *a priori* reason for rejecting the testimony

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of the witnesses as recorded in Mark as sheer fabrication, neither if the evidence be considered as a whole, nor if it be considered in particular, with reference to the important pair of adjectives preserved by Mark, but not by Matthew (i.e. *χειροποίητος* and *ἀχειροποίητος*). True, there is one way in which the argument already used in this very discussion could be turned back on the author. Since Matthew is slightly less definite than Mark in describing these witnesses as 'false,' and since the sole difference between the two Synoptic versions of their statement, on which they are apparently judged 'false' or no, is this pair of correlative adjectives in Mark, may not the Marcan quality of 'false witness' also reside in just these two words? If possible, then, their authenticity must be proved. Otherwise,

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<sup>9</sup> See McNeile, p. 19, for Patristic accounts of various Jewish traditions as to the Lord as a magician, and especially Rabbi Eliezer's version. This last is preserved in tractate 'Shabbath,' folio 104, column 2: it is accessible to the English reader in Herschon G.T.C., pp. 445, 446. The saying is 'Has not the "son of Sitda" [i.e. Christ] brought out witchcraft from Egypt in an incision made in his flesh?' Apparently travellers from Egypt were searched (so the Rabbis!) for magical formulæ, and there is much evidence for the tattooing of magical formulæ—such as the name of God—on the skin of would-be magicians.

<sup>10</sup> See Dt. xvii. 6 for the Torah, and see Rosh-ha-Shanah, folio 22, column 2, for divergent witnesses resulting in a failure to establish a case—admittedly, one of a purely 'liturgic' nature: v. Herschon p. 50.

the next stage of the argument falls to the ground, and it will be impossible to find what, if any, ‘nuance’ the risen ‘body of Christ’ had for the pre-Pauline Church.

This authenticity cannot, obviously, be proved from the context alone, but before departing to a wider survey, two considerations may be raised: (1) The difference between the respective Synoptic accounts is so ‘slight that it is at most no more than ‘make-weight’ psychological evidence for a slightly differing attitude on the part of the evangelists towards the charge (if it is even warrant for so much as this). It certainly would not support the view that the first Evangelist deliberately suppressed one ‘limb’ of the charge, as being utterly groundless, in order to avoid stigmatizing these two witnesses as liars. He may easily have omitted it for other reasons. (2) Even if it were allowed that this pair of adjectives were *not* authentic Sayings of Jesus, but known by Mark to be false, deliberately characterized as such by him, and simply quoted here as an example of a lying charge, it remains to ask simply: Why then remember and record this detail? It is inconceivable that this item should have remained stored in the minds of the Christian community unless it had some peculiar relevance in their eyes, either then or later. In fact, to secure the preservation of the Saying at all, it is probable that at least one part of the antithesis seemed meaningful even at the time—the refer-

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ence to the destruction of the χειροποίητος, ‘manufactured’ Temple.

What was this relevance? Moule<sup>11</sup> well points out that this distinction, with its pair of correlative adjectives ‘made with hands’ and ‘not made with hands,’ is part of a developed system of catechesis running through the New Testament; Acts vii. 48, xvii. 24 give examples of its use in apologia. Of course, such a distinction was familiar, not alone to Hebrew prophets, but also to the highest religious thought of Graeco-Roman paganism. The fourth Gospel merely notes that the reference of the saying in ii. 19 is to the Temple of His body. While, however, a reference to the physical body of Christ may satisfy the brief form of statement in Jn. ii, it does not exhaust the terms of reference of the Synoptic verse now under study. There is, further, no guarantee that the testimony of the witnesses at the trial refers solely to the incident quoted in Jn. ii. Indeed, as suggested above, in view of the words of the mocking crowd by the cross it seems likely that on several occasions the Lord made a similar statement; or that, as suggested elsewhere, it was a constant point in His teaching through the last week at least.

Some idea of the issues at stake can now be gathered. It is no exaggeration to say that the establishment of the validity of these two Marcan adjectives is a necessity to the understanding of the early ‘pre-Pauline’ nature of the evidence for the Biblical concept of the Church. If this part of the witnesses’ statement be true, then John’s explanation in ii. 21 (‘He spake of the temple of His body’) gains a richer meaning. Not only will the coming Sign of destruction and resurrection (‘the sign of the prophet Jonas’—Mt. xii. 39) refer to His physical body, but also to some change which will take place in that method of God’s intercourse with man which is worship. The old man-made Temple with its outward forms will be destroyed, swept away. There is abundant evidence that the Lord foretold this even apart from the Saying under discussion. Yet the cataclysm of A.D. 70 was only the outward and visible sign

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<sup>11</sup> J.T.S., April 1950, article ‘Sanctuary and Sacrifice...’

of what had already taken place in the purpose of God. Jewish tradition may record the bursting open of the gates from within and the mighty voice saying 'Let us go forth,' but the Temple had been but a lifeless shell for a generation. A new Temple, 'not made with hands,' had taken its place as the resting-point of the Shekinah, and God's covenanted meeting-place with men: that was why the destruction of the old was inevitable.

The double meaning thus given to 'the temple of His body' would be a thoroughly Johannine trait. 'Truth at two levels' is very congenial to the fourth Evangelist: compare the familiar Johannine ambiguity in the use of 'lifted up' in Jn. iii. 14 and Jn. viii. 28, etc., to take one example at random. On the third morning, His physical body, claimed by Him to be the Tabernacle of God among men, which Jew with Gentile had 'destroyed,' was 'built up again.' On that same morning began the Christian Church, the body of Christ, the new Temple. True, the Church of God dates from the call of Abraham, but the mystical 'body of Christ' can date only from the first Easter morning.<sup>12</sup> This alone explains the oft-reiterated note in John's Gospel (see ii. 22, in the context under discussion) that it was not until after the Resurrection that the disciples understood the deeper meaning of the Lord's Sayings. Therefore Johnston (p. 52) seems right in maintaining that the title 'Ecclesia,' in its full sense, must be kept for that society which knew the difference made by the Resurrection. The position might be put even more strongly. There might perhaps be a 'Messianic Community' earlier: there might even be a corporate 'Son of Man' concept, embracing Jesus and His disciples (though not all will find this thesis convincing in the particular form adopted by Manson), but there could be no such society as the 'body of Christ' until after the Resurrection.

But this is to run on too fast. First, can the validity of

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this pair of Marcan adjectives be established? Perhaps the best way to attempt such a task will be to examine the contemporaneous evidence of early Church beliefs and teaching on the one hand, and lines of Jewish attack on the other. From a study of both of these, it may be possible to establish two facts—not only that the 'charge of the two witnesses' continued to exist, but also that it had some substance to it, in a particular sense which at least confirms the authenticity of this pair of correlative adjectives ('made with hands' and 'not made with hands'). The first is comparatively easy to establish: for the second, the evidence must be largely inferential and psychological, since the early Church is rarely self-conscious enough to set down its teaching in dogmatic form, as, say, in the later Epistles.

The Jewish atmosphere and background of the first seven chapters of Acts has often been stressed and need not be laboured here. The *milieu* is still very much that of the first Evangelist. Disciples are found congregating in Solomon's Porch (Acts v. 12). Their leaders preach and teach in the Temple precincts (Acts v. 21 and 42).<sup>13</sup> This evidence might in itself be dismissed as simply indicating Christian use of the Temple for propaganda purposes, as

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<sup>12</sup> In the form in which the proposition is put here, it seems indisputable, but of course endless discussion is possible as to the exact date of the constitution of the Church. See Johnston, p. 46. He, among several modern scholars, takes the above view.

<sup>13</sup> See Mt. xxvi. 55 for the Lord's own evidence as to His frequent teaching in or about the Temple, and Jn. x. 23 for His 'peripatetic' teaching in Solomon's Porch. See also Edersheim, L.T. p. 742, Appendix X, for the rejection of any idea of the existence of a regular 'school,' 'Beth-ha-Midrash,' in the Temple, or a 'Temple synagogue,' but *de facto* the Temple precincts were obviously used as such by Rabbis.

Paul might use the synagogues later (see Acts xvii. 2, where 'as his manner was' is significant, indicating a deliberate strategy). If the references had been purely to teaching and discussion conducted by the Apostles, this argument might have passed muster. But Acts ii. 46 and iii. I suggest orthodox Temple worship by the infant Jewish-Christian Church. Obviously, therefore, any rift with the Temple was not of their deliberate making. They were prepared to remain true Temple-worshippers even under persecution. Johnston (p. 61) is quite right when he says that although at first some were able to remain within the national fold of

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Judaism, yet 'the logic of their position led to a rupture with their fellows.' True, but until the days of Paul, the force of the logic does not seem to have been appreciated at large from the Christian side; Jewish logic was clearer than that of the Christians. Admittedly, individuals within the Church seem to have grasped the true position at least as early as the days of the 'Seven.' Nevertheless, it is inconceivable that the Church as a whole at this stage should deliberately invent or teach Sayings or doctrine which would hasten this breach which it obviously neither sought nor welcomed. Modern ecclesiology sees the break with Judaism as inevitable, but there is no warrant at all to be found in Acts for saying that it was equally 'inevitable' to the eyes of the early Church. It is not, therefore, permissible to argue that, although neither seeking nor welcoming the breach with the Temple, the Church yet foresaw its inevitability, and therefore felt free to teach doctrine which would necessitate this as a logical conclusion, unwelcome as it might be. The only possible explanation left is that the infant Church continued to teach what it regarded as the authentic Sayings of Jesus, simply because they were treasured as Dominical utterances. Neither their full meaning nor their logical implications were as yet grasped, and therefore there can be no 'tendentious' reason for their preservation, let alone fabrication. In view of the reluctance to split from what must have been still regarded as the 'parent body' of Judaism, such a view as the last would be ludicrous, to say the least. Indeed, it may possibly be that this reluctance to force a breach is the reason for the omission of the two adjectives in the first Gospel, which, psychologically at least, precedes the 'great schism,' as truly as do the opening chapters of Acts.

On the other hand, the Jewish grasp of the logical implications of the teaching of Jesus as to the New Temple was complete. Expulsion was, from their point of view, a national necessity as well as an inevitability. Christianity was not merely another pietistic sect within Judaism, like, for instance, the 'Damascus Covenanters.'<sup>14</sup> Nor was it even

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a quasi-heretical body, regarding itself as possessing a higher, inner 'gnosis' and its own distinctive method of interpreting and spiritualizing the Torah. Such were the various sects of Jewish Gnostics, but such could be tolerated. The Sanhedrin at least saw that in Christianity there was logically no room at all for the old 'Temple made with hands,' and that the Torah had received at the hands of the Founder of this new sect or 'way' (Acts ix. 2) an inner meaning which, while it may have 'fulfilled' it (Gk. πληρώω as in Mt. v. 17, etc., corresponding to the Old Testament *male*, מלא), in so doing altered it beyond recognition.

But it is striking that it is none of these things in themselves to which the Jewish authorities take exception. It is any hint that the old 'particularism' is gone, that Israel as a chosen folk is

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<sup>14</sup> Schmidt, p.49.

no more, that the door has been thrown wide open to the Gentiles, which at once arouses bitter opposition. They obviously regarded Christianity as a danger to their national life as a distinct people. Their reaction to Paul's Aramaic speech in Jerusalem is the classic example, but there are many hints earlier, and Jn. xi. 48-50 is thus abundantly confirmed. The objection was thus national rather than theological.

Yet the two issues, abolition of the old material Temple and inclusion of the Gentiles, are closely linked both in the Sayings of Jesus and in the later Catechesis of the Church, so that the two problems are fundamentally one and the same. That the fourth Evangelist realized this is shown by his use of the 'Coming of the Greeks' as a 'sign' to Jesus that His hour was coming, when the Temple must needs be destroyed and built up again in three days (Jn. xii. 20, *et seq.*). If the apparent Synoptic chronology be accepted, and this incident follows the Temple purge, which itself follows the triumphal entry at the commencement of the last week, then the link is even stronger. The Jews do not seem to have realized the connection between the two issues, except perhaps subconsciously, in that the Temple, with its rigorous exclusion of Gentiles, was the very bulwark of their national life and at once guarantee and symbol of their privileged position as a chosen folk.

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The 'except perhaps subconsciously' is, however, an important reservation in view of such passages as Acts xxi. 28, where Paul is accused of teaching 'against the people, and the law, and this place' (i.e. the Temple). Further, he is accused of polluting the Temple by bringing Gentiles into it. This last accusation brings the problem fairly and squarely into view. Teaching 'against the people' could only mean an attack on Jewish particularism, and it is linked by the Jews with teaching 'against this place.' Again, the latter must have been some line of teaching consistent with the introduction of Gentiles into the Temple itself. Although Paul was not actually guilty of this offence in the immediate case of Trophimus the Ephesian (Acts xxi. 29), the very charge is significant as indicating the general Jewish complex of grievances against the Christians. These might perhaps be dismissed in Acts xxi as a later accretion, due to 'Pauline influence.' But in the first place, this is purely a Jewish charge, not a Pauline statement of the doctrine he preached; and, in the second place, traces can be found much earlier in Acts. It is no accident that the attack on Stephen, forced by the Jewish authorities, leads directly, by clarifying the issue, to a Christian attack on the Jewish concept of a strictly visible 'church,' with its ordered worship and hierarchy. Again, it is no accident that this realization by the Christians leads to the opening of the door to 'the peoples.' Once the premisses are clear, the conclusion follows.

Yet it cannot be too frequently emphasized that this is a new and almost unwelcome realization by the Christians of the full implications of the doctrines which they hold, alike with reference to the abolition of the material Temple and to the inclusion of the Gentiles. It need hardly be pointed out that the mobbing of Paul in Acts xxi. 28 takes place in a context where Paul (possibly halfheartedly) and the Jerusalem elders (certainly wholeheartedly) are endeavouring to avoid a breach with the Jewish authorities, for the sake of the 'many thousands of Jews ... which believe,' all being 'zealous of the law' (Acts xxi. 20). These may well be the party of Acts xv. 5, to become Paul's 'Judaizing'

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opponents later, but the wording suggests a more innocent attitude as yet—simply a failure or reluctance on the part of the vast body of Jerusalem Christians to see the implications of the teaching on the ‘New Temple.’ There is tremendous tension in the few words in Acts vi. 7, ‘ a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith,’ coming, as it does, just before the great cleavage. Once more let it be repeated: it is inconceivable that, in circumstances like these, Sayings or Catechesis which deliberately aimed at forcing a rupture with Judaism (on the question of the extension of covenant privileges to ‘the peoples’) would be either fabricated or tolerated by the body at large. If such Sayings were preserved or such Catechesis given, in this case, too, it cannot have been tendentious. It can only have been given because it represented to the mind of the Church authentic Dominical tradition, not always understood, but faithfully repeated—repeated with such naïveté that its ultimate consequences come almost as a shock to the Church. Nor can such Sayings or Catechesis be dismissed as *post even turn*, for they belong to strata which can be dated as being ‘pre-schismatic,’ either chronologically (as the early chapters of Acts) or psychologically (as the first Gospel and James’s speeches in the later chapters of Acts).

The stage is now set for the struggle between Stephen and the authorities, which is to be used here as evidence for early Christian beliefs, and more especially as incidental and therefore valuable evidence for the authenticity of the Marcan version of the testimony of the two witnesses. The paragraphs above have been largely by way of a demurrer, showing that there is no *a priori* ground for rejecting such evidence on questions like Temple, Torah, or admission of Gentiles. Rather, the psychological evidence is all in its favour, in view of the unforeseen and unwelcome nature of its consequences to the Christian Church. The only other demurrer which must be made is that Stephen’s ‘advanced’ character as a ‘Hellenist’ (purely inferential, of course, though extremely likely, in view of the nature of the dispute in Acts vi. 7 if. and the Greek names of the seven men chosen) must not be overstressed, as has often

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been done in the past. He is eloquent, true: but the wording of Acts vi. 5 and vi. 10 shows that he was acting only as spokesman of the community; his words and actions are mentioned with obvious pride and approval. His speech in Acts vii is as thoroughly Hebraic as any of Peter’s. (See, e.g., Acts ii. 14-40, at Pentecost.) Finally, even when the storm has broken, Stephen is not disowned by the community (Acts viii. 2). His beliefs as to the teaching of Jesus were their beliefs: his ‘Temple’ Catechesis was their Catechesis. The only contribution made by Stephen’s wider ‘Hellenist’ thought background was that he (like Paul later) was far-seeing enough to discover the conclusion of the Christian premisses which all held, and bold enough to follow it through. It is possible that for a Hellenist ‘Temple’ had less emotional associations than for the Jerusalem disciple who had lived under its shadow all his days. However, some would draw the opposite conclusion, so that such a psychological adducement is double-edged. But the devotional life and associations of the Hellenist would inevitably be centred in the local synagogue. Further, he would have broader human sympathies than the Palestinian Jew, whose relations with the Gentile were embittered by constant national as well as theological grievances.

Stephen, then, having performed miracles (Acts vi. 8), is accepted by the people at large: there is no suggestion of a charge of ‘magical powers’ now. In Acts vi. 9 he engages in dispute with One of the Jerusalem synagogues—almost certainly, in view of verse 10, a full-dress debate with their ‘Sages’ as to whether Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ or not. Compare Paul’s thesis later, in Acts ix. 20, where unfortunately the true reading is uncertain in detail, although

the main sense is clear, or compare Acts xiii. 16 and following, if Acts ix be not accepted as directly relevant. This, be it noted, is no narrow Old-Jewish synagogue, but a synagogue as 'Hellenist' in constitution and sympathy as was Stephen himself. Worst of in the debates, the Hellenists turn to hired perjurers.<sup>15</sup> The parallel with the trial of the

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Lord, already close, becomes yet closer. 'Evidence' of blasphemy against Moses and God is thus procured—and it was for βλασφημία that the Sanhedrin had found the Lord ἔνοχος θανάτου, 'deserving of the capital penalty' (Mt. xxvi. 65, 66). In vi. 12, Stephen is arraigned in full council, and the same charges as those made against the Lord reappear: 'This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.' From the trial of Jesus to the mobbing of Paul in Acts xxi. 28, the Jewish accusation is constant and almost unvarying. Granted, then, that the charge is persistent, the question that must now be considered is whether it is true in any sense, or purely vexatious. Is the Lord, on Stephen's express testimony (Acts vi. 14, 'we have heard him say...'), undermining Temple and Torah? 'Are these things so?' 'as the High Priest says (Acts vii. 1 linking with the exasperated question of Mt. xxvi. 62). If the persistence of the charge on the Jewish side is significant, far more significant is Stephen's defence.<sup>16</sup>

*Ex hypothesi*, these are 'false witnesses,' but, as in the case of the Lord's trial, there must have been some colour for the charge. Johnston (p. 60) well says that Stephen must have given at least some grounds for the charge levelled at him of disrespect for Temple and Law. Here, too, the same psychological arguments hold good as those used above in support of the authenticity of the statement at the Lord's trial. Unless the Christian community had seen some relevance or meaning in the charges, even if it be one far from the minds of the accusers, there is no very obvious reason for their preservation and survival. It is clear from the numerous parallels between the trial of Christ and the trial of Stephen, which are deliberately stressed by the narrator (some of these have been noted above), that the community realized that the accusations made against Stephen were the very charges already directed

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against their Lord, however understood in both cases. Also, both in the case of the witnesses against Stephen and of those at the Lord's trial, the reference to the 'lying' nature of the evidence should not be overstressed. The Church may well have seen here a fulfilment of such Old Testament scriptures as Ps. xxvii. 12 and xxxv. 11. In the New Testament, the words 'false witnesses,' μάρτυρες ψευδεις, Acts vi. 13, are thus virtually within 'quotation marks.' It would be quite sufficient, to justify its application, that the Christian community knew that the charges, in the sense in which the prosecution understood them, were not only untrue, but known to be so, and yet deliberately brought forward.

Nevertheless, from the irritated words of the Jews in verse 13 of chapter vi, πάυεται λαλῶν, 'is for ever saying,' it is obvious that, as in the case of Christ (see discussion above), this charge, however much deliberately distorted, is not based on some one rash and isolated

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<sup>15</sup> See Rosh-ha-Shanah, fol. 22, col. 2, for this practice condemned but nevertheless instanced: Herschon, p. 50.

<sup>16</sup> There is a brief but valuable section on this point in Flew (pp. 126-128): see also Johnston (pp. 60, 61 and 68).

utterance by Stephen, thrown out in the heat of a Jewish controversy. It is directed at his whole line of teaching (cf. the sweeping nature of the charge made against Paul in Acts xxi. 28). This teaching of Stephen's is interpreted as a continuous blasphemy against Moses and God (Acts vi. 11— probably the order here is meant as a crescendo of horror). It has been noted above that it was for 'blasphemy' (probably גִּדּוּפִין 'gidduphin') that Jesus of Nazareth had been condemned to death from the Jewish point of view, whatever the reason in the eyes of the Roman civil government (Lk. xxiii. 2 and Jn. xix. 12). Now, to judge from the Synoptic record, the 'blasphemy' in the case of the Lord consisted solely in the admission (Mt. xxvi. 63, 64) that He was the Anointed, the Son of God, and also the supernatural Son of Man destined to be God's instrument to judge the world in a still future 'Visitation of Judgment.' The 'blasphemy' was thus in no sense connected directly with His teaching as to the suppression of either Temple or Torah. Yet, although it proved to be this same claim for the position of Jesus that was fatal to Stephen (Acts vii. 55-57), this was not the charge against him in the first place.

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When, in vi. 14, the false witnesses particularize the 'blasphemy,' it appears to have been a statement or statements to the effect that Jesus of Nazareth is to 'overthrow this place,' καταλύσει τὸν τόπον τοῦτου, and to 'change the customs (ἔθη) which Moses gave us.' The abrogation of the latter, presumably the Torah considered in its ceremonial aspect, would account for the 'blasphemy against Moses,' thus disposing of one count in the charge. The 'blasphemy against God' must thus at least include, to their minds, the proclaimed abrogation of the material Temple (which they likewise assert, on Stephen's own authority, to be part of the 'Teaching of Jesus'); for the Temple *per se* has nothing to do with Moses, while to talk of its destruction is to deny the 'Presence' there.

True, Yoma, folio 9, column 2, denies that the Shekinah rested even on Ezra's restored Temple. Still, apart from the fact that this is based on a curious exegetic argument, it seems simply a *post eventum* explanation of the possibility of any Sack of the Temple. God, said they, had never really been there. In any case, Zebachim, folio 118, column 2, asserts that the Shekinah rested on the Temple as much as on Shiloh or Gibeon, so that the above cannot have been universally held by the orthodox, even after the Sack, let alone before it. Admittedly Zebachim does not specify here which Temple is meant, but its wording 'everlasting House' sounds like a generic phrase covering all the sequence of Temples, *quâ* Temple.<sup>17</sup>

The reference to 'this place,' τὸν τόπον τοῦτου, must surely be specific, to ὁ ἅγιος τόπος, the Holy Place, as a Jewish periphrasis for the Temple. Compare the Lord's quotation of Daniel ix. 26 in Mt. xxiv. 15, and the reference to the 'holy place' there, where the LXX and Theodotion both have τὸ ἅγιον. This may just possibly explain the use of τόπος in Jn. xi. 48, and, as mentioned above, is clearly illustrated in Acts xxi. 28, the occasion of Paul's mobbing in the Temple by the Asiatic Jews. There the

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<sup>17</sup> See Herschon, pp. 19 and 25 respectively: but Rashi believed that while the Shekinah had rested on the First Temple, it never did on the Second. (Commentary on Genesis ix. 27.)

phrases ‘this place’ and ‘this holy place’ are clearly used interchangeably. The Sanhedrin would then have been held in one of the many chambers or colonnades adjoining the Temple court, where Rabbis also taught or disputed, and Christians apparently gathered.<sup>18</sup>

Stephen’s actual defence is striking in that it must be an example of the usual apologiae of the early Christians to such attacks. Broadly speaking, he counters the accusation of law-breaking by denying in his turn that the Jews have themselves kept the very Law which they protest that they are defending (verse 53, ‘who received the law... and kept it not’). The other charge concerning the Temple he makes no attempt to parry. Instead, he virtually pleads guilty, but defends and justifies himself by showing that ‘*in vetere testamento, novum latet*’—that the ‘New Testament’ concept of the Church is the same as that held by the very Patriarchs, and that it is the contemporary Jewish doctrine of the Temple which is in error. Stephen’s speech thus resolves itself into a great defence of the doctrine of the Church Invisible, based on a broad survey of the history of the people of God, and culminating in the point-blank statement that God does not dwell in man-made temples. That this is the admitted view of the full Old Testament revelation is proved by a citation of the necessary ‘scripture,’ in verses 49 and 50. The ‘People of God’ is itself the ‘Holy Place’ of God’s special activity and presence on earth, for verse 38 tells of the manifested Presence and the words of Revelation to the nomad Ecclesia in the desert.<sup>19</sup>

There is a constant ‘divine impatience,’ a restlessness, in Stephen’s speech: he seems to insist that this is a nomad Church, ever on the move. This is surely no accident, if God Himself is not a static ‘Absolute’ but the ‘living God’

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of the Hebrews, fully Personal and ever active. Further, underneath the surface of Stephen’s speech, there is all the time the suggestion that ‘natural man’ could never understand God’s way of working, and that to follow God’s way has ever meant cleavage and rejection, even within the Chosen Folk. God’s way is seen by Stephen as a constant denial and refusal of the outward and the obvious, because God’s way of working is not the same as man’s. Abram must leave his kindred (verse 3); he has no outward sign of the promised inheritance (verse 5). Already, in verse 9, the very Patriarchs are opposed to God’s plan; opposition by the Egyptians was understandable (verse 19). Stephen is busy laying the foundations of his argument deep in Israel’s pre-history: but, up to the Joseph-story, there are only hints here and there of what is to come. Orthodox Jewry could listen only with approval to such exegesis.

The climax of the speech in many ways is the Moses-story: for it is of blasphemy ‘against Moses and against God’ (vi. 11, 14) that Stephen is accused. Here again the parallelism to the Lord’s attitude at His trial is complete: for Stephen rebuts the charge by going behind it to deeper and more far-reaching principles. The thesis is that Moses, so far from being the ‘obvious man,’ the universally acclaimed national law-giver, was in actual fact another stone rejected by the builders, whom nevertheless God had made the cornerstone of Israel’s religious life. Stephen makes, in fact, the same accusation against the Jews as the Lord has done in Mt. xv. 3, etc., that they themselves were totally misunderstanding (and thus failing to

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<sup>18</sup> See Edersheim, L.T., 1. 244-5. (It may even be that, as Mauro suggests, the Christians were assembled there on the Day of Pentecost: this would link with Ezekiel xlvii.)

<sup>19</sup> It is outside the scope of this paper to consider the exact meaning and associations of this word to first-century Jews: Schmidt and Johnston have exhaustive treatments of the subject, and there is a most convincing article by Campbell in the J.T.S. 1948, pp. 130-142.

keep) the very Mosaic law which was their pride. The hints of the coming storm are seen in verse 25, 'For he supposed his brethren would have understood... but they understood not.' So total was the contemporary Hebrew rejection of God's way in the Age of the Exodus that in verse 35 Moses can be described as 'This Moses, whom they refused.' Yet Stephen insists, and they tacitly agree, 'the same did God send...' This may be regarded as disposing satisfactorily of one of the two counts, from the Christian viewpoint at least. Now there remains a charge more difficult to meet, though more

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germane to the subject matter of this paper—that of the foretold destruction of the Temple by Jesus, involving, as it did to Jewish eyes, virtual 'contempt of the Shekinah.'

Consistently throughout the Old Testament, the ideal period of Israel's history is seen as her desert 'honeymoon' with God. Examples of this attitude could be multiplied from the prophets and religious historians. Hos. xi. 1-4 will serve as an instance of the conviction as firmly held by the early prophets, and Je. ii. 2 uses the actual 'honeymoon' metaphor. Stephen's speech is fully in the prophetic tradition here. To him, the erection of the Temple is a declension from God. Better in his eyes is the Meeting-Tent in the desert where God and His folk may ever be on the move, than a material building which attempts to 'localize' God—an attempt hopeless from the start, as the very builders realized (1 Ki. viii. 27). At this point Yoma, folio 9, column 2 (Herschon, p. 19), may again be cited. By admittedly curious exegetical methods, this denies the presence of the Shekinah in the Temple of Ezra, and asserts that 'the Shekinah rests only in the tents of Shem' (whereas of necessity the sons of Japhet were called in to help build the material Temple). There may here be a groping after the same truth: and it is scarcely necessary to remark that the author of 'Hebrews' draws his symbolism from the ideal Tent rather than the actual Temple. (It is only fair to say that the stress in Yoma is on 'Shem' and not on 'tents,' to judge from the immediate context.)

This contrast is doubly pointed in Stephen's apology, first in verses 38ff., where the rejected ideal life under Moses is portrayed; and secondly in the brevity of verse 47, 'But Solomon built Him an house.' Moses was with the Ecclesia in the desert, the gathering of God's folk. In its midst there was a divine Presence—for the 'angel' (e.g. in verse 38) seems to be only a later reverential substitute for the Godhead, possibly referring to the column of fire or cloud as its constant manifestation; but see Ex. xiv. 19, etc., for the explicit reference). Thirdly, as well as Gathering and divine Presence, there was constitutive, creative Word. Compare Acts vii. 38, still referring to Moses, 'who

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received the living *logia* to give us.' Here, surely, in the most primitive strata, are already the roots of the fully developed New Testament concept of the Church of God. Orthodox Judaism would admit all these as historic facts in the days of Moses: it might not so readily contemplate verse 39, telling of Israel's rejection of this ideal desert worship, when 'in their hearts' they 'turned back again into Egypt.'

Yet this was historically just as incontrovertible. Not only had Israel rejected Moses, God's man, in the first place, but they had also rejected God's Self-chosen manner of dwelling with men in favour of something more 'visible' and 'natural' (Acts vii. 41-43) in the shape of the Bull-symbol and later the full paraphernalia of Baal worship. So soon had the declension

come: so soon had Israel failed to listen to its prided revelation, its prided prophet. All this was in spite of the passionate protests of the prophets, as verse 42 shows, by its quotation of Amos v. 25-27 (which is but one example taken from many). But was there no Temple then? Was there no visible sign and place of God's dwelling with men on earth? Yes, there was the 'trysting-tent,' as Moffatt well translates it—the 'Tent of the Testimony' of verse 44, for so the LXX translates מוֹעֵד (*mo'edh*), where God dwelt in the midst of His people. This was no static dwelling-place: it was the covenanted meeting-place of God and man: it was the Gathering-Tent, dependent for its existence on the Congregation, the Presence, and the Word of Covenant.

Now Stephen, in verse 44, allows the desert meeting-tent. He is careful to stress, like the author of 'Hebrews,' its divine ordination and planning (Acts vii. 44 and Heb. viii. 5, following Ex. xxv. 40). In verse 46, David's desire 'to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob' is noted, quoting Ps. cxxxii. 5. The context suggests a general approval, yet verse 47, the phrase, 'but Solomon built Him an house,' can only be disapproving, as pointed out above. This is made doubly clear by the outburst of verse 51, directed against the Jews, but obviously suggested by Solomon's action. Therefore it seems fairly clear that it is the

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popularly held Jewish 'doctrine of the Temple' which Stephen is really attacking when he accuses the Jews of opposition to the Holy Spirit. Yet this particular instance is linked in his mind with the constant opposition of Jewry to God's ways of dealing with men, and in particular it is linked with their rejection of Jesus (verse 52). Thus, to his mind, the Jewish rejection of the true Messiah is linked with their faulty Temple doctrine. Their rejection of Him is tantamount to the action of their forefathers in rejecting the Tabernacle for the Temple: so much is clear from the thought-sequence of the speech.

Two conclusions seem at least highly probable. The first is that Stephen considered Jesus of Nazareth as the true 'Tabernacle.' Secondly, it may be inferred that the Jewish charge against Stephen was partially true. He did, it would seem, teach a supersession of the Temple 'made with hands' in favour of some other form of worship which is not directly particularized in his speech, but is analogous to the Tabernacle worship, and is connected with Jesus of Nazareth. To judge from Stephen's outburst, his view was totally different from that of orthodox Jewry, and yet in accord with Old Testament Revelation.

Further, as has been argued above, if Stephen taught this it was with the obvious approval of the whole Christian body. This is shown both by the nature of the approving references to Stephen throughout (e.g. Acts vi. 5, 8, 15 and Acts vii. 55), and by the way in which his whole trial and martyrdom is seen by the community as a following in the footsteps of Christ. In addition, after his death, no attempt is made to disown his teaching. But if this teaching, leading to results which were unwelcome (e.g. the rupture with Jewry thus forced), was yet acknowledged and endorsed by the community, there can be only one answer: they acknowledged and recognized Stephen's teaching as the teaching of the Lord. Thus the sole 'Hellenist' feature of Stephen's contribution is that, while all sections of the Church cherished the Sayings about the Temple, only the Hellenists saw their full force. Only they were sufficiently divorced (or at least detached) from Palestinian orthodoxy

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to press the Sayings to their conclusion. But it is as well to remember that by the very nature of circumstances it must have been Palestinians, not Hellenists, who recorded and retold the Sayings in the first place. Even the rigidly Jewish-Christian church of the first Gospel believed in the coming destruction of the Temple. This ‘broadening’ is, then, no Hellenist accretion but an integral part of the Evangel.

Both from the form of the Jewish accusation and from the wording of Stephen’s reply, it seems an inescapable conclusion that Stephen knew of some of the Lord’s Temple-Sayings, and probably, in particular, of the Marcan Saying including the pair of correlated adjectives, to which reference has been made above (Mk. xiv. 58). The form of the accusation in Acts vi. 12-14 at least presumes that Stephen was in the habit (cf. v. 13, ‘ceaseth not’) of quoting some Saying of Jesus which foretold the downfall of the material Temple, whether with an inner ‘nuance’ or not. The occurrence of the key word χειροποιήτος in vii. 48, linking as it does with Paul’s Areopagus speech in Acts xvii (especially verse 24), not to mention later New Testament contexts, suggests a unified Christian Catechesis on the subject. This may well go back to the Saying of the Lord already noted as presumed in the Synoptists and preserved in germ in Jn. ii. 19.<sup>20</sup> But the quotation of such verses at such a juncture at the very least suggests that Stephen was acquainted with the similar Saying of the Lord in Mt. xxiii. 22, in a Temple-context. To judge from the first Evangelist, in the Jewish-Christian churches of Palestine or possibly Syria<sup>21</sup> such Sayings were usually preserved in ‘catenae’ or strings, and therefore it is a possible assumption that Stephen knew, not only of the allusion by

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the Lord to Is. lxvi, but also of the Temple-context, in which it was apparently preserved and recounted.

Amid much that must remain speculative, what may be considered as definitely established? First, Stephen had a consistent scheme of teaching about the Temple and the relation to it of Jesus of Nazareth. Secondly, in particular, he sees a close parallel between the rejection of the Tabernacle in favour of the Temple, and the rejection of Jesus—again in favour of the Temple. Both acts alike are characterized by him as resistance to God’s plan and purpose. Thirdly, while he mentions with approval David’s desire to build Him a ‘bivouac’ (σκήνωμα), yet he obviously does not consider that Solomon’s Temple fulfils this desire. Yet, as a good Jew, he must have accepted 2 Sa. vii. 12, 13, the promise that a ‘Son of David’ would build God a ‘house’—the same ‘Son of David’ whose kingdom was to be established for ever. Therefore, presumably, he still looked for a fulfilment of this promise. Fourthly, from Pentecost onwards it is a constant claim of the Jewish Church that it lives in the ‘Messianic age’ of fulfilment. Fifthly, from the whole tone of the speech, it is obvious that this fulfilment cannot be in the form of any material temple, ‘made with hands.’ Sixthly, while he nowhere directly equates Jesus with the New Temple, yet it has been noted above that, to him, the climax of Israel’s rejection of God’s self-chosen way of worship is not Israel’s desert-idolatry (vii. 41), nor even their rejection of Tabernacle for Temple (vii. 47), but their rejection of the person of the ‘Righteous One.’ Of course, it might be argued that this may be no more than the supreme specific instance of the general thesis of Israel’s rejection of God’s

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<sup>20</sup> See Moule, J.T.S., April 1950, ‘Sanctuary and Sacrifice ...’ for this line of Catechesis. It may also be significant that Stephen in verses 48-50, to support the statement that God does not have a static material dwelling place, claims (like any good Jew) ‘the prophet’ as authority (i.e. Is. lxvi. 1, 2, with a possible sidelong glance at Ps. xi, 4).

<sup>21</sup> See Kilpatrick, pp. 132-134.

way of working. It may also be argued that there is, in the reference to Jesus, no direct reference to methods of worship. In view, however, of the fact that Stephen's speech is so much concerned with God's revelation in the sphere of worship, such an explanation does not seem adequate, while in any case the general here too contains the particular. The whole theological teaching of the Old Testament could be broadly summed up as dealing with two questions

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—what God is, and how, consequently, He is to be worshipped by man (cf. the Lord's two statements to the Samaritan woman in Jn. iv. 24). Therefore to reject any new Revelation of God was bound to impinge on the sphere of worship.

Stephen, in Acts vii. 52, had pointed out that the Jewish opposition to the prophets was bitter, and that this opposition to the prophetic message culminated in the opposition to the Messiah. But it is scarcely necessary to note that much of the prophetic message was concerned with Israel's faulty apprehension of the true way in which God was to be worshipped: this is a constant theme of the prophets from Amos to Jeremiah. Lest it be objected that this aspect of prophetic teaching was not prominent in Stephen's mind at the time, it is noteworthy that, in verses 42 and 43 above, Amos v. 25-27 is cited with reference to this very aspect of worship. Thus the 'resistance to the Holy Ghost' exemplified in the rejection of the prophets, and *par excellence* in the rejection of the Anointed, is intimately connected with the question as to the method of worshipping God.

It does therefore seem that several lines of evidence converge to point to the identification, in Stephen's mind, of Jesus with the New Temple—or rather New Tabernacle—that was to make the material Temple superfluous. Certainly in its coming destruction all 'parties' of the Church believed, and believed it on the grounds of some Dominical utterance. A further point, linking with the original Saying, is that Stephen thinks in this context of no earthly Jesus. Instead, verses 55 and 56 show that it is the risen, glorified Christ of whom he thinks, and again in terms, and even words, which suggest acquaintance with the Lord's Sayings at the trial scene (cf. Mt. xxvi. 64 in particular). If so, the Christian Catechesis on the 'New Temple' would seem to have been both unified from the start, and firmly based on Sayings of Jesus.

For the existence of these Sayings there is not only the indirect Synoptic and direct Johannine evidence, but also the evidence of the persistence of the charge of the two witnesses. Moreover, from this context in Acts, it

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appears that the Jews, Stephen and the Christian community alike held that this Temple-teaching, however much or little understood, derived from the Lord Himself. For the nature of the Catechesis, there are again the various Evangel-sayings and interpretations, along with the developed apologia of Stephen. This, from the very fact that it is recorded not only without disownment but with actual approval, must represent the mind of 'Judaic' as well as 'Hellenist' Christianity. Such evidence of unanimity between two sections as diverse as these, particularly in the heated atmosphere of the dispute within the Church in Acts vi, is most important, especially since the actual results were so unwelcome to at least one of the parties. A similar example of unanimity, again in spite of results un-welcome to one party, is shown by Paul's appeal in Gal. ii amid the 'Judaizer' controversy, to the common gospel.

By the terms of this paper, it is not permissible to move into the later 'Pauline' strata of the New Testament. Nevertheless, did space allow it, a detailed examination of the speech of James at the Council of Jerusalem, Acts xv. 13 ff., would supply valuable evidence. (Here Mauro has some shrewd remarks.) The chief point of interest at the moment is the quotation of Amos ix. 11, 12 in verses 16-18. In brief, the conclusions to be drawn from (a) the use of this quotation in such a context, and (b) its application by James as a proof-text to a case like the admission of the Gentiles, are as follows: (1) James, *inter alia*, claims the present fulfilment of a prophecy concerning the rebuilding by God of the fallen and ruined 'Tabernacle of David'; (2) this prophecy is intimately linked with another, promising (at least in the form in which James quotes it) an in-gathering of Gentiles; (3) the link between the two is so intimate that, in both the original Amos-context and in Acts, the second is regarded as at least a direct result of the first—or, to give the particles their full force, the first is regarded as taking place 'in order that' the second may ensue. In view of the use of ἵνα for ὥστε in New Testament Greek, this 'final' aspect cannot be stressed, but at least it suggests a close link; (4) this prophecy is unani-

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mously accepted by the Jewish-Christian Church of Jerusalem, as being the necessary 'scripture' warranting the admission of the Gentiles: therefore they, like James, obviously accepted it as immediately applicable to their own circumstances; (5) but if so they must have also regarded the restoration of the 'Tabernacle of David' as a present, or immediately past, event. James may have regarded the 'restoration' as taking place before, and as a necessary condition of, the 'ingathering': or he may have regarded the two as synonymous. A common Old Testament idiom would then allow the use of the ἵνα. Some relevance to the 'admission of the Gentiles' James assuredly saw in the reference to the rebuilt Tabernacle or he would have scarcely begun his quotation when he did. To say that the seemingly irrelevant verse is quoted as a smooth introduction is foreign to all Semitic ways of thought. Both New Testament and Rabbinics provide too many examples of the abrupt introduction of mere fragments of verses as proof-texts to justify such a view. (6) True, this proves only that James himself saw some relevance in this particular verse. The rest of the Council may have simply been swayed by the reference to the Gentiles in the second part of the quotation. Yet there is always the argument that the Christian community must at least have seen the relevance of James's full quotation afterwards, or there is no psychological reason for its preservation, endorsement and ultimate recording. (Can they have seen a correspondence between the ἀνοικοδομήσω, 'I will build up,' of verse 16, and the δύναμαι... οἰκοδομήσαι, 'I can build,' of Mt. xxvi. 61, the trial scene?)

In view of the other early evidence in Synoptists and Acts, it does not seem unreasonable to assume that the 'rebuilt' Tabernacle of David is, here at least, equated with the Risen Lord. Compare again Jn. xii. 21 (the Sign of the Coming of the Greeks) with the Lord's reaction to the request, in verses 23 and 24. The Church certainly realized some intimate, if often unexplained, connection between the death of Christ and the admission of the Gentiles). If so, various other pieces of the jigsaw fit into place—notice-

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ably Stephen's reference to David's 'Tabernacle' in Acts vii. 46, side by side with his obvious disapproval of Solomon's 'house.' On this whole question Mauro has much that is suggestive, amid much that seems fanciful—e.g. his theory that David's temporary Tabernacle-worship of

God was virtually non-priestly and non-sacrificial in any full liturgical sense. But while it may well be that the full ritual of later Levitical Temple-worship was not practicable, and that the king might act himself as priest on occasions, there had been regular priests and regular sacrifice before the Ark at least since Shiloh-days (see the opening chapters of 1 Sa. *passim*) and the priests of Nob continued it (1 Sa. xxi). True, from 2 Sa. vii. 2 it is clear that, during all David's days at least, the Ark remained 'under canvas,' and it is presumably the symbolism of this which appeals to the New Testament writers.

It must be admitted that it is not at all clear exactly what James understood by 'the Tabernacle of David.' Was he referring to the tent that David pitched for the Ark, or merely to David's household and kingly line? While the first interpretations would be more congenial to the rest of the evidence in the New Testament (see Acts vii. 46, for instance), the second must not be totally ruled out. In either case the reference could be to the Resurrection of Christ as being of the House of David, so that the question is not of the first importance. Indeed, possibly both explanations were accepted, thus giving 'a double level' of truth, congenial to the early Church, as seen through Johannine eyes at least.

This identification of the Resurrection of Christ with the 'raising-up' of David's Tent may perhaps be found elsewhere. Peter's speech on the Day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 14 ff.) shows that, from the very start, the Christian Church believed that the Lord's Resurrection was in direct fulfilment of promises made to (and prophecies made by) David. Once again, for the purposes of illustration, a glance may be taken at some of the earliest 'Pauline' evidence in the New Testament. Acts xiii. 16 ff. contains the apologia delivered in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch. Amid

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many points of similarity to the early speeches of Acts, Paul, in verse 34, sees the raising-up of Christ as a fulfilment of a boon promised to David.<sup>22</sup>

The importance of this should not be underestimated. Here is a 'complex' of ideas, all separately drawn from the Old Testament, where they are distinct strands, and all first seen to meet in Christ by the early Church. Christ is the Son of David by natural descent, and yet not only that but more (Mt. xxii. 42, 43). A 'Son of David' is destined to build 'a house' for God, and yet this 'Son' was not considered to be Solomon (Acts vii. 47). In fact, the 'house' was not to be a material dwelling place at all (Acts vii. 48 ff.). To this, James's speech in Acts xv (which can hardly be accused of 'Pauline' influence) adds the important details that, in this new age, there is to be an ingathering of Gentiles (verse 17), and that this ingathering will have been preceded, and indeed caused, by a rebuilding of the overthrown 'Tabernacle of David' (verse 16). This is the fulfilment of God's promises to David and His covenant with him—which is, after all, the constant ground of Israel's appeal to God in later days (Ps. lxxxix. 49, etc.).

But it has been shown above that, from the days of Acts ii onwards, the physical resurrection of Christ was considered as fulfilling, *par excellence*, the Davidic promise. Therefore the only logical conclusion is that the crumbling and then rebuilt 'Tabernacle of David' is equated with

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<sup>22</sup> The exact meaning of the LXX τὰ ὄσια, both here and in Is. lv. 3, must surely be understood in the light of such Old Testament passages as Ps. lxxxix. 28, where God's eternal חֶסֶד (*chesed*), 'merciful love' to David, is again linked with the Everlasting Covenant, as in Is. lv. 3. In Ps. lxxxix. 28 even the LXX has ἔλεος.

the 'destroyed' body of Christ, which God raised up again as a prelude to the admission of the Gentiles. But if so, and if Jesus was seen by the early Christians as 'Son of David,' and if they were looking for no materialistic fulfilment of the promise that David's son would build the House, then 'the House' must be equated with the 'Tabernacle of David.' There does not seem to be any other possibility. The early Christians cannot have

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considered the promise about 'building the House' as unfulfilled. If so, they would not have mentioned it so freely as a proof-text in their apologetic, for it would have been an obvious weak point on which their Jewish foes would pounce. Neither did they consider it as still in the future; or at least, if they did, there is no sign of it in Acts. Throughout this period, the emphasis is on 'realized eschatology': these are the 'last days,' says Peter in Acts ii. 16, 17, and James in Acts xv. 16, 17 concurs. Apart from an imminent Parousia and Vindication, all is fulfilled and present. The explanation must thus be one simple and ready to hand, taken as a matter of course by the Church and hence often unexpressed. If so, the double equation of the Temple and Tabernacle of David with the Lord's risen body seems the only solution.

That the Christians preferred to speak of Him in terms of 'Tabernacle' is very understandable, both in view of the fact that the symbolism of 'Tabernacle' is consistently preferred to that of 'Temple' throughout the New Testament (i.e. 'tent' rather than 'house'), and also since the material Jewish Temple was still standing, although the Church believed it doomed. As seen above, most of the Palestinian Christians at least seem to have had no wish to abandon the old order. They still used the Temple as the Lord had done—as a 'house of prayer'—and had thus no wish to force a breach by stressing the existence of a new Temple.<sup>23</sup> After the breach with Jewry, the use of the 'New Temple' concept becomes freer, until in 'Hebrews' the stress becomes almost defiant.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> A similar caution, directed Romewards, may perhaps be seen in the avoidance of the 'Christ the King' concept in the New Testament Epistles.

<sup>24</sup> See Moule again, 'We have a Temple,' etc., *loc. cit.* (p. 37) on Heb. viii, x.

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### CHAPTER III

As result of this study, two facts seem to be clear. One is that, as argued in the first section, the members of the Christian community knew of some Saying or Sayings of Jesus that, at least in the Resurrection-light and after Pentecost, were capable of bearing such an interpretation. Otherwise, the origin of such a belief is inexplicable. The other conclusion, as argued in the second section, is that there are no major aspects of the full Pauline teaching on the 'body of Christ' which cannot be found in germ and essence in the earliest strata of New Testament Christianity, in a fully Jewish *milieu*, before the decisive breach with the Temple. James's speech in Acts xv is purely a chronological, not a psychological, exception to this: for it can be seen from Acts xxi. 18-26 that James remained at a virtually 'pre-rupture' stage to the last. (So, too, both the Epistle of James and Jewish tradition suggest.) The significance of these facts must now be considered, the first briefly, the second at greater length.

The first requires little comment. The study of contexts drawn from Acts has but reinforced the argument drawn from a study of Synoptic, especially Matthaean, material. The decision to restrict the evidence to this particular Gospel was deliberate, not from any beliefs in its primacy, but from the simple fact that it obviously emanates from a strongly Jewish-Christian church, and therefore is far from any suspicion of 'Hellenist' or 'Pauline' influence. Similarly in Acts, even where, as in the case of Stephen, 'Hellenist' material has been used, an attempt has been made to show that this is derived from a 'common pool' of traditions and teaching, shared with, and endorsed by, the whole Jewish-Christian community. The persistence of what was virtually the same Jewish charge against Christianity from the days of the Lord to the days of Stephen, and then onwards to the days of Paul, is significant: but the full force of this will be considered below.

It is enough at the moment to reiterate that all the data,

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particularly the psychological evidence, demand the following conclusions: (1) There was a certain amount of truth in the charge of the two witnesses at the trial of the Lord, as in that of the witnesses at Stephen's trial. (2) The fuller Marcan version of the Saying, especially in respect of its pair of correlated adjectives, represents what the early Church fully believed to be the teaching of the Lord. (3) These points are inexplicable unless the Saying recorded in the fourth Gospel at the account of the Temple purge (Jn. ii. 19) be accepted. (4) The interpretation there given is not merely 'Johannine mysticism,' but corresponds to the primitive post-resurrection belief of the Church at large.

But if this is so, it leads directly to the second main thesis. Not only is the authenticity of the Johannine Saying vindicated, but, *mutatis mutandis*, there is nothing in the fully developed Pauline system of teaching on the Church which does not exist in the earliest New Testament strata, either explicitly or implicitly. The Church is, from the start, convinced that the Risen Lord—who had even in His earthly lifetime been God's Tabernacle — is the New Temple. His risen body is the New Temple 'not made with hands,' and, however much or little understood, this truth cannot at least have been taken in any materializing sense. Nevertheless,

it may be claimed that there is no evidence that the community as yet identified itself with this body of Christ, this new Temple. This may be upheld as the distinctive Pauline contribution (e.g. Johnston, p. 75), accompanying the Pauline doctrine of the *'unio mystica'* between Christ and the believer.

Space will not permit a full discussion here, but, in brief, a claim like the above at once involves an assertion that a self-consciously Messianic community was incapable of identifying itself with its constitutive Messiah. In view of the justifiable stress today on the Semitic concept of 'corporate personality,' and the researches into the 'corporate-individual' nature of the Messianic figure in Jewish thought, this is a dangerously weak position.<sup>25</sup> The most

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that can legitimately be allowed is that such a belief, while probably inherent before, is not in fact made explicit until Paul's formulation of it in theological terms. The very fact that such steps in the argument are omitted or tacitly presumed merely proves the bona fide nature of the primitive evidence. If these strata had been 'touched-up' in the interests of later Pauline Christianity, as extreme critics might suggest, then it is inconceivable that such 'gaps' should exist. To suppose that later writers deliberately omitted important links in the chain, in the interests of reproducing a bastard patina of primitive simplicity, is to assume an artistic subtlety which does not appear in the most blatant of surviving heretical Gospels or Acts.

If, then, these early strata be accepted at their face value, as bona fide accounts of the beliefs and teaching of primitive Christianity, it is of the greatest significance that the teaching on such a subject should remain virtually constant throughout the whole conspectus of the New Testament period, from at least Pentecost onwards, and probably from the Resurrection. It implies, as stated above, that such a belief is firmly based on the remembered Sayings of Jesus. It further implies the existence of a definite 'Catechesis,' or Christian teaching, along these lines—in which, presumably, Paul, like all other converts, would be trained.

The evidence for the existence and content of such a catechetical form has been admirably presented by C. F. D. Moule, in his article in J.T.S. entitled 'Sanctuary and Sacrifice in the Church of the New Testament.' Although Mr. Moule's paper was actually read at Oxford in November 1949, it did not become generally available until its appearance in the J.T.S. for April 1950, by which time this paper was well-nigh finished. Any similar conclusions have, therefore, been reached as a result of independent study and investigation of the evidence. This, when sifted, seems to point irresistibly to the existence of such a 'form' whose broad outline is clear, whatever dispute there may legitimately be as to its detailed content at various stages.

Certain provisos must, however, be made. There is a danger of imagining such 'forms' as deliberate and self-

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conscious in origin, and stereotyped in result. Psychologically and historically this seems false to the world of Acts, whatever truth it may have when applied to the didactic or hortatory

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<sup>25</sup> But see Johnston's footnote on p. 55 criticizing Manson.

portions of the Pastoral Epistles. ‘Rabbinic Schools’ are not strictly in point: until Paul, there can have been few Rabbinic students numbered in the Church. Further, there is the danger of seeing the stereotyping as simply the mechanical result of a process of infinite repetition. There may, however, especially in the case of this ‘form,’ be another explanation, more satisfying theologically.

For this is not merely one ‘form’ among many ‘forms,’ not merely an ‘Apologetic Form’ (addressed to Jews in Acts vii, and to Gentiles in Acts xvii), as others may be ‘Ethical Forms’ or ‘Evangelistic Forms.’ True, both Jew and Gentile alike would ask the outraged questions, ‘Why have you no Temple, why no priesthood, why no sacrifice?’ (Moule, p. 39.) This, however, was not a serious issue until the major cleavage with Judaism—possibly not until the final destruction of the Temple, or at least the Jewish wars of A.D. 66-70, with the flight of the Christian community (thus stigmatized as ‘fifth columnists’) to Pella. Yet from the dawn of Christianity this ‘form’ is prominent, and prominent although its full fruits are neither foreseen nor welcomed by the Jewish-Christian community. It cannot, therefore, have been called into being solely by the needs of controversy, although this last must have played a part in its shaping: men were, after all, presumably exhorted to give a reason for their Christian hope before the days of 1 Pet. iii. 15.

Since, then, this Catechesis is something firmly based on the Sayings of Jesus, and was not called into being by controversy, but rather retained even in the face of controversy which it unwillingly provoked, it is a justifiable claim that here is something deeper and more far-reaching than just another Catechetical Form, that here is part of the basis and bedrock of Christianity. If so, it is not surprising that it appears in the basic strata of Christian history, since it belongs to the *esse* of Christianity, and is part of the

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very ‘Form of the Gospel’ itself. So neither the teaching about the New Temple ‘not made with hands’ nor the abolition and destruction of the old material Temple ‘made with hands’ are accidents or after-thoughts to Christianity: they are of its *esse*, inevitable corollaries of its central message. If these corollaries be denied, with some branches of modern ecclesiology, then the very central proposition of the Gospel itself is denied also. This is, however, another question, and demands another answer.

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