
The Quest for the Christ of Faith

BY KERRY S. ROBICHAUX

In recent years we have seen an increased interest in the life of Jesus among a variety of sources, both secular and religious. National television networks broadcast special documentaries heralding the latest research into the historical study of Jesus. News magazines devote major articles and even precious cover space to the historical Jesus. Newspapers popularize the labors of the scholars, announcing good news of great joy concerning who Jesus really was. The media heralds appear on the cultural horizon always in season—the week before Christmas and the week before Easter. If you missed it last year—or the year before that—do not fret; another round is as certain as Christmas, or Easter, or the morning paper itself.

More likely than not, the bottom line in all these pronouncements on the historical Jesus is that what we read concerning Jesus in the New Testament should not be taken to be historically factual; rather, scholars in this endeavor would have us understand that the accounts in the New Testament are the church's rendition, not history's recounting, of Jesus. A spectrum of evaluative judgments are made on the quality of the church's rendition, scholar by scholar taking a position on the relative historical merits of the New Testament. At one extreme is the opinion that the New Testament accounts of Jesus are early Christian tales fabricated by His early followers, much like the "cleverly devised myths" of 2 Peter 1:16. At the other extreme is the view that the accounts were not motivated by deceit but by the genuine beliefs of the early Christian community. Yet apart from the evaluations, the consensus among this band of scholars is that the actual life of Jesus and the actual person Jesus were historically quite different from the New Testament reports thereof.

There is a definite band of scholars dedicated to the "historical study" of Jesus, called the Jesus Seminar; but the historical study of Jesus is an endeavor that engulfs more

than the members of the Jesus Seminar. While the Jesus Seminar captures most of the media attention, and thereby the appetites of the masses, the much larger conglomeration of biblical scholars in this endeavor does not often concur with the proclamations of the Jesus Seminar, and many of them outright reject the Seminar as a noisy sideshow. The entire endeavor of investigating the historical Jesus, including some of the less scholarly activities, has been informally called "the quest for the historical Jesus," and it is this title that I parody in the title of this article.

The Quest for the Historical Jesus is actually the English title of a book by Albert Schweitzer, published in 1906, that relates the progress in scholarship on the historical Jesus up through the time of its publication. Schweitzer details and analyzes the quest since its inception in the work of Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768) through its final critic prior to Schweitzer, William Wrede (1859-1906). In the final analysis, Schweitzer identifies the quest up until that time as either a "thoroughgoing skeptical" or "thoroughgoing eschatological" endeavor and decides that neither approach had adequately served to make the ancient Jesus any more historical than He ever was prior to the quest (398-399). Schweitzer's book actually served as a clean end to the first quest for the historical Jesus in that it clearly demonstrated that each of the histories of Jesus up until that time was shaped more by the philosophical ideal of its researcher than by the historical facts that could actually be ferreted from the documentary sources.

A period of scholarship then ensued in which historicism was abandoned in favor of a thoroughgoing "kerygmatic" interpretation of Jesus. This approach, championed by Rudolf Bultmann and his pupils in the middle third of this century, sought to understand Jesus as purely the Christ preached by the apostles and held to by the early church, rather than as the historical figure who

lived some decades before them. What mattered less were the historical gleanings that could be gathered from rigid historical research. Of tantamount importance was the Christ preached by the apostles, even if that preaching could not be backed up by hard facts from a historical study of the life of Jesus. The cross and the resurrection were the real essence of Christian faith and the genuine symbols of God's interaction with humankind, and these were the capital of the apostles and the church. Certainly the Christ of the kerygma presupposed the historical Jesus, but it did not require the historical Jesus as its object. Christian faith, they contended, is not directed at the historical Jesus but at the Christ preached by the ancient church.

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It was not long, however, before even some of Bultmann's own students began to feel queasy with this approach and inaugurated a "new quest" for the historical Jesus. Ernst Käsemann particularly sensed the inherent danger in ignoring the historical Jesus completely and recognized it as perhaps a veiled docetism. This new quest sought to ground the kerygmatic Christ, and by extension to define and limit Him, in what could be ascertained concerning Jesus through historical methods. The intent of this endeavor was to find "the germ of the kerygma of Christ already in the preaching of Jesus" by ultimately stripping away what was clearly Jewish or clearly influenced by early Christian heresies (Theissen and Merz 8).

Yet the second quest was nevertheless a theological one and therefore, to many, not purely historical enough. Hence, a third quest has been initiated in the last few decades that attempts to discover a Jesus not defined by the admixture of history and theology but a Jesus perceived from a broad range of non-theological vantage points. By definition, these non-theological views of Jesus focus on possible ways that Jesus could have lived as a human being in Palestine two thousand years ago; they cannot take into account beliefs concerning the divinity of Christ, whether they are grounded in fact or not. At first often offensive to a pious mind, the views of Jesus suggested by scholars of the third quest are generally attempts to make sense of the uniqueness of Jesus via recourse to the social and political institutions in place in Jesus' day. It has been suggested that Jesus was in fact a magician (Smith), a claim made less startling when one realizes that probably this was exactly what His contemporary opponents also thought. Others view Him as a Jewish miracle worker, one of a number of such characters known to exist at the time of Jesus' life

(Vermees). Much effort has been expended attempting to align Jesus with the Palestinian Cynics, but in more ways than not His life and ways were contrary to those of the Cynics rather than like them. Then, of course, there is the "eclectic" view of Jesus that weaves many of these views together and sees Jesus as a subversive cynic who used magic, miracles, and free meals to divert people to Himself; but as in any other field, when things "go eclectic," it is generally evidence of a lack of a unifying theory that binds all the data together and an indication that endeavors are adrift and aimless.

The quest for the historical Jesus, in all its three stages, is an attempt to get back to the Jesus who really was. For some, the interest is purely historical, and little attention

is paid to what the church ultimately believes concerning Jesus. Hence, the theological qualities of Christ are patently put aside. But to many others who have engaged in the quest, the interest is to find a historical Jesus who could be believed on in the millennia following His life and death. These, not wishing to abandon faith, attempt to find a Jesus who can be believed on and can still be fully understood as a genuinely historical figure. For them, the theological aspects of Jesus are made to at least correspond to the historical ones, and the view of Jesus that results is one that answers to faith in God as well as to confidence in historical research.

My own interest in this, though I cannot say that I am on the quest for the historical Jesus, is to find an acceptable mediation between history and faith. Yet mine is more a quest for the Christ of faith. We cannot deny that there is a Jesus of history, but a Jesus of history is not a simple idea; it is not just an accurate historical picture of the life of Jesus, ferreted from the available sources. A Jesus of history is a complex of notions defined by the actual life of Jesus, by the nature of history itself, and, yes, by faith. In the end, I believe (an expression of faith) that the Christ of faith is indeed the real essence of the genuine Jesus of history (an expression of historiography). In other words, the object of our faith is the Jesus Christ of history in the truest senses of what history actually is. It is to these senses of what history actually is that we must now turn our attention.

History and Life

The term *the historical Jesus*, or *the Jesus of history*, relies on what we understand history to be. The issue is not as trivial

as it may seem at first. First reactions tell us that history is the story of the past, and in its all-encompassing way this is actually quite true. But upon closer inspection even this simple definition is loaded with complexities. First of all, there is a distinction between the past and accounts of the past. *History* can be used to designate both. The series of events, the parade of persons, and the manifestations of ideas that have appeared in the past are history in one sense. Yet these have receded from us in time and are in actuality not accessible to us in any real sense. As we consider them, all that we have recourse to is evidence of them, indirect sources that may be very good indications of how things really were or very bad distortions thereof. History in this sense of the term is not something we actually possess, nor is it something we can actually acquire. The history that we actually possess is history in a second sense of the term. It is the history that we *do*, not the history that was. It is the history that we write, out of as careful an investigation of the history that was, derived from the evidence that remains, imperfect as it may be. As disappointing as the realization may be, this is all the history we actually have. It is the only history that exists for us, and hence, it is history in the only pragmatic sense of the term.

Second, history as “the story of the past” is fraught with immense complexities. There is perhaps a multitude of difficulties that a historian encounters when he or she “does history,” but, as Gerd Theissen has pointed out, three very major ones come to the fore immediately: historical source criticism, historical relativism, and historical remoteness (149). These pitfalls are due to the inaccessibility of history in the first sense to the historian doing history in the second sense. The first of these pitfalls relates to the quality of the evidence that we have from the past. What we know about the past comes down to us primarily through written accounts, and these suffer from a variety of imperfections. Historical documents can be linguistically ambiguous or even unintelligible; they reflect only the imperfect knowledge of the witnesses who wrote, not a full story that may not have been available to the witnesses who wrote or that some witnesses may never have written;

more subtly, they reflect a set of criteria that the witnesses employed in selecting what they felt was worthy of reporting, and very possibly their criteria may have been faulty. But at an even deeper level, historical sources must be scrutinized, and the process of scrutiny is itself quite imperfect. On this point, Edward Hallett Carr, a modern historian and philosopher of history, offers this analogy:

The facts [of history] are really not at all like fish on the fishmonger’s slab. They are like fish swimming about in a vast and sometimes inaccessible ocean; and what the historian catches will depend partly on chance, but mainly on what part of the ocean he chooses to fish in and what tackle he chooses to use—these two factors being, of course, determined by the kind of fish he wants to catch. By and large, the historian will get the kind of facts he wants. History means interpretation. (26)

Besides the problems with historical sources, there are the problems of historical relativism and historical remoteness. What was important in the past, and thus what gave some events or some persons relevance at the time, may not be important to us today or may not have the same relevance to us now. For example, the little ditty “Humpty-dumpty sat on a wall; Humpty-dumpty had a great fall” amounts to no more than a children’s nursery rhyme to us today; but in its own day it served as a political statement. We need not discount the value of its current relevance, but we must remember that relevance today was probably not in the thoughts of those who inhabited the past. Theissen reminds us that the past is remote to us and that we must avoid the danger of modernizing it to fit our situation today.

The quest for the historical Jesus has been a quest for Jesus in the first sense of the term *history*. It has been an attempt to get back to the Jesus of the past as He “really was.” But at best, all we can hope to achieve is the Jesus of history in the second sense of the term. Let us call Him the Jesus of the historians, so that we may clearly keep the senses distinct and may clearly admit our



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limitations. I do not diminish the value of what the historians are attempting to do, but I do wish to stress that no matter how hard we try, a “historical Jesus” in no way *perfectly* matches the Jesus of the past; instead, a “historical Jesus” is a written Jesus, a preached Jesus, a recounted Jesus, a Jesus at least once removed from the actual past by the process of remembering and telling. Again, as disappointing as the admission may be, this is all the “historical Jesus” that we actually have, and for this to be of any profit to us, we must accept it as it is and understand what it means to us.

What then does a historical Jesus, in this proper though perhaps disappointing sense, mean to us? That depends on what we understand the meaning of history to be.

Here we need the reflections of the eminent historians on the matter. I have already referred to Carr, whose book on the subject bears to us as its title the simple question: What is history? Another historian, Marc Bloch, whose approach to history defined the *Annales* school of the earlier part of this century, couches the question in the words of a child: “Tell me, Daddy. What is the use of history?” (3). Carr and Bloch are historians of very different persuasions, and I draw on them not only because they offer substantial reflections on the meaning of history but also because in spite of their diversity in method and orientation, their respective understandings of history are quite similar. Bloch and Carr both agree that meaning in history is not merely an understanding of the past but also an understanding of the present. Bloch exhorts us to understand the present by the past and the past by the present (39-43). Apart from the intellectual pleasures to be derived from it, the study of the past should ultimately be capable of “giving us guidance,” of helping us “to live better” in the present (11, 10). But in order to properly understand the past, we must apply to it what we know about the present, for there is a “solidarity of the ages” that makes what we now know concerning the human condition relevant to what once was (43). Historians would do well to remember, as Bloch does for us, the words of Henri Pirenne: “I am a historian. Therefore, I love life” (43).¹ This fellowship between past and present is the meaning of history. Carr is even finer in this appreciation of the interplay between past and present. “To learn about the present in the light of the past means also to learn about the past in the light of the present. The function of history is to promote a profounder understanding of both past and present through the interrelation between them” (86). Elsewhere he writes, “Great history is written precisely when the historian’s vision of the past is illuminated by insights into

the problems of the present” (44). Here are Bloch and Carr, on past and present, and the meaning of history, in one sentence.

We must admit that the Jesus of history is, for all practical purposes, the Jesus of the historians, and the Jesus of the

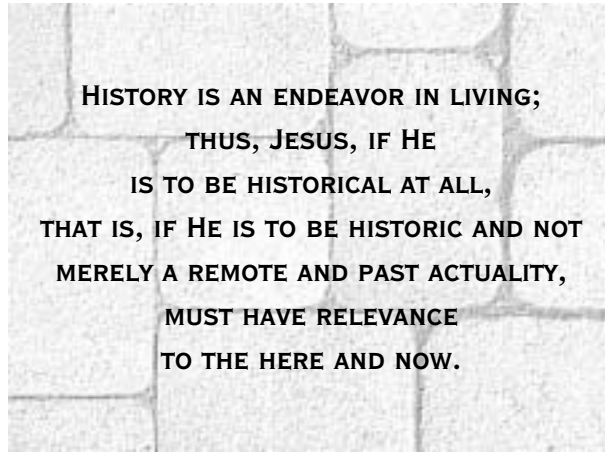
historians is the Jesus who is relevant to the present as well as to the past. Even if it were possible to know perfectly the historical Jesus in the first sense of the term *history*, the knowledge would do us little good since we ourselves do not live two thousand years ago. For our present situation, it is the historical Jesus in the second sense who profits us, the Jesus who has been interpreted by His recounters in view of their present. (I mean here particularly the

apostles.) We can never be freed from the interpretive nature of history. But would we ever want to be freed from it in the first place? We do not care about history simply because we want to know about the past; rather, we care about history because we want to understand the present and have some clue about the future. What value is there in perceiving the relevance of Jesus within His own historical context unless we go on to perform the additional task of relating that perception to our own context? History is an endeavor in living; thus, Jesus, if He is to be historical at all, that is, if He is to be historic and not merely a remote and past actuality, must have relevance to the here and now. The Jesus of history is the Jesus who lived and died and, for many, who rose in the past, and who for these reasons is significant in the present.

History and Faith

If we allow that the Jesus of history is the Jesus of the historians, one question comes to mind immediately: What is the relationship between the Jesus who lived two thousand years ago and the Jesus of the historians, in whom we believe in today? This may be the chief question of all questions that are raised after we consider the quest for the historical Jesus. But there is a larger issue that must be addressed before this final point can be satisfactorily handled. The larger issue is this: What is the relationship between history and faith? How one handles this matter determines, to a large extent, where one settles in the quest for the historical Jesus.

The relationship between history and faith became an issue very early on in the original quest for the historical Jesus. I have mentioned Hermann Samuel Reimarus, who,



Schweitzer claimed, began the quest for the historical Jesus. His work on the subject was a secret one that remained in manuscript form throughout his life, for he feared that the very radical nature of his assertions would only do him harm. In a nutshell, Reimarus believed that much of what was handed down to us concerning Jesus was the clever fabrication of His disciples, who feared the loss of a lifestyle that had entailed very little work. Fragments of Reimarus's controversial material were published after his death by G. E. Lessing (1729-1781), the most explosive appearing in 1778. Lessing, who in practicality broke the quest for the historical Jesus upon the world, took up the issue of history and faith at that time. Gerd Theissen repeats G. E. Lessing's lament regarding the tension between history and faith: "This, this is the yawning gulf which I cannot cross, however frequently and seriously I have attempted to jump it. If anyone can help me across, he should do so; I beg him to, I beseech him. He will earn a heavenly reward" (Theissen 148).² Lessing is characterizing the "gulf" between necessary truths of reason ("notwendige Vernunftwahrheiten"), which we can hold to universally, and contingent truths of history ("zufällige Geschichtswahrheiten"), which come to us accidentally and imperfectly. His contention is that necessary truths of reason cannot be proved by contingent truths of history. In other words, universal truths, which lie at the heart of any religious system, can never be proven by recourse to historical research, for historical research is never perfect and never complete. While Lessing claimed that he did not agree with the skeptical views of the fragmentist, he was certain of his own contention, and the implication is that the accounts of Jesus by the early disciples in the New Testament cannot form the basis of faith since these accounts are endeavors in the contingent realm of history.

A little over a century later the same issue became prominent in the work of Martin Kähler (1835-1912). Kähler came to much the same conclusion as Lessing but did so for completely different reasons; hence, the implication in his assertions is markedly different from that of Lessing. Kähler contended that an accurate historical picture of Jesus was an impossibility. Not only are the sources, primarily

the Gospels, too scant, but they were never intended to be historical texts in the first place. Certainly much can be learned about the life of Jesus from a reading—even a deeply analytical one—of the Gospels, but on the whole, the Gospels will never yield a picture of Jesus that would suffice as an acceptable biography of Him (48). For Kähler the purposes of the Gospels are other than historical, and for this reason use of them as a historical basis for faith is wrongheaded. Whereas Lessing rejected the Gospels because historical truths, being contingent, could never prove cogent truths of reason, Kähler accepted the Gospels because they offered something other than historical truths. A major tenet of each man's position, however, is the same striking assertion: history cannot and does not support faith. And upon careful reflection, this does indeed become manifest.

Kähler asks, "Why do we seek to know the figure of Jesus?" Ultimately, it is because we believe that, while Jesus is very much like us, He is more importantly other than us (58-61). Historical research can at best tell us how much Jesus was like us, but faith alone can tell us how much He was other than us. History, as a scientific system, must confine itself to natural laws and natural phenomena, and if that were all that we could admit concerning Jesus, there would be nothing for faith to respond to. Faith does not answer to things that are visible, to things that are natural. History, however, tells us as much as it can about what happened in the past on the level of natural phenomena. When history has painted as complete a picture as it can, even if we can trust that the picture is full and accurate and perfectly trustworthy, what we will find is not something that we can believe in but only something that we can be assured actually happened. History has no way to account for what is not seen, for what lies spiritually behind the scenes of what happens physically. History has no way to contribute a view of what faith is concerned with, that which is beyond nature and beyond sight. In Kähler's view, the results of historical research will yield us a historical figure, who may be quite superior to us in many respects but who nevertheless is much akin to us. Such a figure will not



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require our faith to believe in Him, and it is faith that we are seeking to establish in our lives if we desire to call ourselves believers in God and in His actions among humankind. In its most reduced sense, Kähler's view is not unlike Lessing's at all.

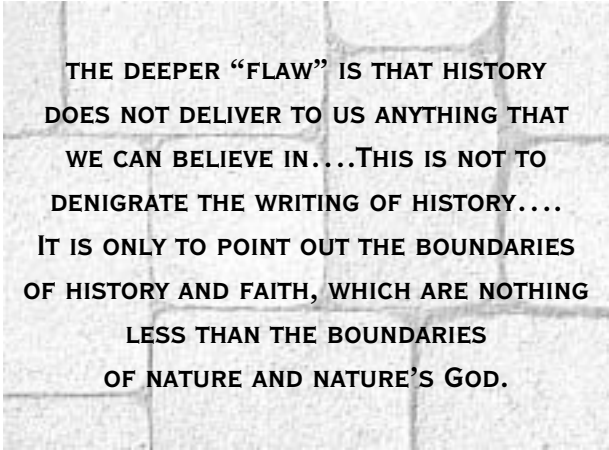
History, in the sense of what actually happened in the past, has slipped away from us and is beyond our actual grasp. And history, in the sense of how we remember and relate the past, is imprecise and subject to a multitude of weaknesses that leave us always doubting its ability to give us an accurate and complete view of the past. But the deeper "flaw" is that history, in either sense, does not deliver to us anything that we can believe in, except perhaps itself as the object of belief. This is not to denigrate the writing of history as a vain and futile endeavor. It is only to point out the boundaries of history and faith, which are nothing less than the boundaries of nature and nature's God.

History and Jesus

Historical criticism in the quest for the historical Jesus has produced a substantial level of skepticism concerning the Jesus who lived and died two thousand years ago. On the other hand, from the inception of the quest there has been a substantial level of skepticism concerning historical criticism and its ability to give us an adequate and satisfactory account of the life of Jesus. Amid all the skepticism engendered, one begins to wonder about the relevance of the historical Jesus to us today. If we attempt to probe Him, we will find that our tools cannot traverse the years and that our picture of Him is distorted and not completely trustworthy. If we think that we can probe Him deeply enough, we will ultimately end up with someone who does not command our faith. For persons of faith, is there relevance in the Jesus who lived and died and rose from the dead two thousand years ago? Rudolf Bultmann and his students have said, No. For them, the resurrection does not need to be a historical fact since the spiritual reality of it is what is most important. Faith presupposes that Jesus lived and died and rose, but faith is not focused on the historical incidents; it does not take them as its object. Rather, faith looks alone at what God does, which is beyond history.

But we need not fall to that extreme. The Bultmannians, recognizing the insufficiencies in history for

faith, characterized the Gospels as highly mythologized accounts that conformed to patterns of religion in the ancient world, and they therefore tended to ignore them. But if we discover that the Gospels do not serve well as historical sources, it does not mean that they have no relevance at all. Kähler believed that the Gospels, and by extension the life of Jesus as we know it in them, had great relevance; only the relevance was not evidentiary. Kähler writes:



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The reason we commune with the Jesus of our Gospels is because it is through them that we learn to know that same Jesus whom, with the eyes of faith and in our prayers, we meet at the right hand of God, because we know, with Luther, that God cannot be found except in his beloved Son, be-

cause he is God's revelation to us, or, more accurately and specifically, because he who once walked on earth and now is exalted is the incarnate Word of God, the image of the invisible God—because he is for us God revealed. (60-61)

Hence, for Kähler the relevance of the Gospels lies in their ability to tell us about the Christ with whom we fellowship spiritually today. Every detail of that ancient life is relevant to this present fellowship, not in a way of remembering Him but in a way of demonstrating Him.

History and Christ

It is tempting to think that Christianity is a historical religion because it is based on a historical figure and relies on historical records. We may wish to say that we believe in Christ because we believe in the historical veracity of the Gospel events. But many who first disbelieve the Gospels come to believe in Christ and later accept the Gospels as fact. For them history is secondary to faith. They encounter a Christ today who gains their acceptance on a level that is not aided by historical research.

Certainly Jesus was a historical figure, and certainly His disciples committed to paper their impressions of His life and work. But just as certainly they interpreted His life and work, as well as His death and what transpired thereafter, and committed their interpretation to paper. In doing so, they made history as well. The tendency among researchers involved in the quest for the historical Jesus has been to discount the worth of the interpretive process that became the New Testament. If Jesus were not who we believe Him to be, that is, God incarnate, it would be altogether fitting to discount the value of the New

Testament. But if Jesus is God incarnate, we have a different set of criteria at work, which, we should expect, did not cease to operate when He rose from the dead. Indeed, we should expect this operation to have continued in His disciples, and this gives to their interpretive process great validity. The documentary sources now acquire tremendous worth, not as historical evidence but as testimonies to the life of Jesus both before and after His resurrection. If, as faith confirms to us, there is a divine operation at work both in the life of Jesus and in the life of the church that came into being after His resurrection, what would be most relevant to us is not a view of Jesus prior to His death on a purely historical level, but the view of Jesus that benefits from the divine operation after His resurrection.

This is, of course, the position that Kähler takes, relying on the distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. For Kähler, it is the Christ who is preached that is the real Christ, not the historical Jesus that the historians can ferret out from the Gospel narratives. Kähler has been criticized for placing Christ under the authority of the preachers so as to rescue Him from the authority of the historians.³ But Kähler is not placing Christ in the hand of just any preachers; he is not allowing Christ to be defined and determined by all pulpits across time. This may indeed be much worse than what the historians may do with Him. Rather, the Christ preached is the Christ preached by the apostles and rendered in the New Testament. It is for precisely this reason that Kähler speaks of the “historic biblical Christ,” “historic” because of His great relevance for us today, “biblical” because of His complete revelation in the preaching of the apostles as recorded in the Bible. I believe that Kähler is correct.

Our quest for Jesus is determined by the kind of persons we are. If we are not persons of faith, we will necessarily be interested in the historical Jesus and we must honestly lay aside the layers of interpretation added upon His life. This is a most challenging quest, for as I have said

throughout, the sources concerning the historical Jesus are scant and of limited quality.⁴ If we are persons of faith, historical research is of limited value to us (though not completely void of value) for the reasons I have given above. Ours is a quest for the Christ of faith. This too is a challenging quest, for it is supported by the preaching of the apostles as recorded in the New Testament, and this preaching requires a very careful study of texts that can mean different things to different people. In a sense, we have simply pushed criticism off the historical Jesus and on to the historic, biblical Christ. Now it is the interpretations that must be scrutinized, not particularly for their veracity but for their full meaning. As the history of the church has indicated, this is certainly the more difficult quest.

In this quest for the Christ of faith, our only hope can be in the same divine operation that we believe operated in the life of Jesus and in the interpretive process of the New Testament. We must hope that the operation continues in our quest. As persons of faith we can believe that the operation continues. What we lack, however, is a way to validate the operation in our own day. We could certainly be deceived in our understanding of who the Christ is in whom we should believe, just as all others before us could have been deceived. But history, that ever-turning wheel that moves across the ages, somehow (I know it is God who operates!) validates. It allows us to look back and know that they were right or they were wrong, but it does not allow us to know that we are right or we are wrong. It is humbling to have to trust in God for the present and to always fear that we may make a grand mistake, but it is this fear and humility that keeps us always relying on Him whose Spirit leads us into a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Son who manifests Him for all time. **AF**

Notes

¹Bloch, who wrote while serving in war, is quoting from memory and offers no citation. I have not attempted to track down the original quotation since whether contrived or true, in the mouth of Bloch, it bears sufficient authority.



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²“Historical Skepticism and the Criteria of Jesus Research,” quoting “Über den Beweis des Geistes und der Kraft” in K. Wölfel (ed.), *Lessings Werke III. Schriften II*. Frankfurt: Insel, 1967. 312.

³Colin Brown, lectures delivered at Fuller Theological Seminary, July 1998.

⁴Of note for this sort of quest is Theissen and Merz’s *The Historical Jesus*.

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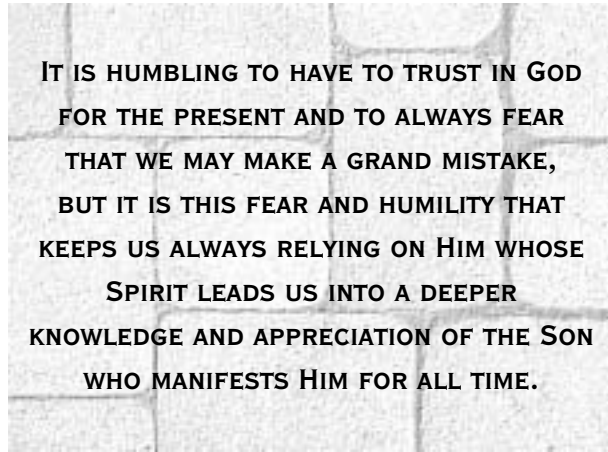
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The Present Christ

This book [Hebrews], having the concept that all the positive things are heavenly, points us to the very Christ who is in the heavens. In the Gospels is the Christ who lived on the earth and died on the cross for the accomplishing of redemption. In the Acts is the resurrected and ascended Christ propagated and ministered to men. In Romans is the Christ who is our righteousness for justification and our life for sanctification, transformation, conformation, glorification, and building up. In Galatians is the Christ who enables us to live a life that is versus the law, religion, tradition, and forms. In Philippians is the Christ who is lived out of His members. In Ephesians and Colossians is the Christ who is the life, the content, and the Head of the Body, the church. In 1 and 2 Corinthians is the Christ who is everything in the practical church life. In 1 and 2 Thessalonians is the Christ who is our holiness for His coming back. In 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus is the Christ who is God’s economy, enabling us to know how to conduct ourselves in the house of God. In the Epistles of Peter is the Christ who enables us to take God’s governmental dealings administered through sufferings. In the Epistles of John is the Christ who is the life and fellowship of the children of God in God’s family. In Revelation is the Christ who is walking among the churches in this age, ruling over the world in the kingdom in the coming age, and expressing God in full glory in the new heaven and new earth for eternity. In this book is the present Christ, who is now in the heavens as our Minister (8:2) and our High Priest (4:14-15; 7:26), ministering to us the heavenly life, grace, authority, and power and sustaining us to live a heavenly life on earth. He is the Christ now, the Christ today, and the Christ on the throne in the heavens, who is our daily salvation and moment-by-moment supply. (Recovery Version, Heb. 1:3, note 4)