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## FORM AND REDACTION CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS OF THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

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## FORM AND REDACTION CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL

### ACCOUNTS OF THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

An account of the miracle of Christ's feeding the five thousand appears in each of the four New Testament Gospels, Mark 6:32-44, Matt. 14:13-21, Luke 9:10b-17, and John 6:1-15. As is the case with the rest of the evangelic material, the narratives of this miracle have been subjected to the careful scrutiny of Bible students. In their study of these pericopes many scholars have employed what is technically referred to in the field of contemporary New Testament scholarship and modern theological literature as the "historical critical method."

It will be the purpose of this paper to offer a short overview of modern form and redaction analysis of the narratives of the feeding of the five thousand as to assess critically the validity of various scholarly positions and conclusions.

#### The "Criticism" Comprising the Historical Critical Method

Before proceeding to the form and redaction critical analysis itself, it will be useful to offer a few words of explanation concerning each of the "criticisms" or investigative disciplines which comprise the modern historical critical method of Bible study.

As these are defined, we should note on the one hand, that every student of the Old and New Testament is interested in many of the questions with which these "criticisms" concern themselves. Every conservative scholar of the Scriptures too engages in a kind of literary, form, and historical analysis of passages and larger sections of the Bible. On the other hand, we ought to recognize that in most contemporary theological literature these disciplines designate investigative procedures employed by scholars who operate with presuppositions and assumptions in their study of the Biblical text which conservative scholars regard as arbitrary, not sanctioned by the Scriptures and therefore unwarranted. The former critics practice what may from the conservative point of view be called "radical" historical critical methodology. Conservatives hold that such theologians as a result do violence to Biblical teaching in their interpretation of the Scriptures.

#### Textual Criticism

It is taken for granted that all scholarly and critical investigation of the Scriptures begins with a mastery of the languages in which they were originally written: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Armed with these linguistic skills, a Bible student proceeds to engage in textual criticism. Many manuscripts of the Old and New Testament Scriptures have come down to us from antiquity and contain a host of variant readings. By following certain accepted rules the attempt is made to establish the text which conforms most closely to the autographs, the original texts of the various Bible books.

#### Literary Criticism

Literary criticism deals with such questions as the authorship, date, place and occasion of writing, recipients, style, purpose, unity of a given work. It seeks to determine also whether there are sources which may lie behind a Bible book.

Radical literary critics advance numerous extreme theories. Noting changes in vocabulary or style, different points of view, repetitions in the text and pointing to supposed logical gaps and logical digressions, they proceed to deny the authorship books which the Scriptures plainly assign to specific writers, e.g., the Pauline authorship of Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles and the Petrine authorship of 2 Peter.

#### Historical Criticism

Historical criticism investigates the historical data within a Bible book against the background of secular history; studies agreements and disagreements between a Scriptural document and the works of secular writers, where such are available; and refers to archeological findings and the practices of other ancient religions, when these are presumed to illuminate historical material in the Scriptural text.

Radical historical criticism operates with a general assumption of modern scientific study of history that nothing supernatural or miraculous ever did, does, or could happen. Those who hold to this view reject as mythological all accounts of supernatural and miraculous events, all divine intervention in human affairs, such as reported in Scripture.

Many practitioners of this discipline subscribe also to a basic postulate of the "History of Religions School", namely the theory that the religions of the Old and of the New Testaments passed through stages of evolution and growth like all ancient religions. In the course of their development, the Biblical religions allegedly were strongly influenced by interaction with the religious beliefs and practices of peoples living around them.

### Form Criticism

Form criticism is concerned with the various literary forms found in the Scriptures. It is true that all students of the Bible seek to identify and classify the literary type of a given text (poetry, legal material, parable, apocalyptic, historical narrative) and to apply appropriate rules of interpretation to the kind of literature at hand. However, as the designation "form criticism" is generally employed in the field of Biblical studies, it signifies a radical, highly speculative investigative procedure.

Radical form critics theorize that most of what is in the Bible represents a final written form of moral and religious stories and sayings which had circulated orally in Old Testament Israelite or New Testament Christian communities. It is granted that some reports of historical occurrences and some sayings of religious leaders have been preserved in the oral and recorded tradition. But the Biblical accounts supposedly contain also much material which is purely the product of the pious, inventive imagination of the religious community.

Form critics determine the literary forms of a text and by applying specific form critical principles, strip away the additions or modifications which the community or the compilers of the various Bible books presumably introduced into the tradition. After recovering what is deemed to be the original form of each tradition, the critics decide whether it in fact relates something that actually happened or was really said, thus passing judgment on its historicity. The determination of what is historical in the evangelic tradition is one of the chief aims of form criticism.

A subsidiary purpose of this critical analysis is to construct the "transmission history" of each of the many units of tradition which the Scriptures are presumed to contain. The attempt is made to trace the way in which stories and sayings were supposedly changed from the time of their first telling until they were written down in the documents which constitute the Scriptures.

### Redaction Criticism

Redaction criticism is closely related to form criticism. Presupposing and founded upon the results of the latter, this investigative technique focuses attention on the author of each book of the Bible in order to determine what part he played in its production. His contribution is seen as the collection, arrangement, and editing of units of tradition, as he incorporated them into a written record. It is concluded that in the "redaction" of existing traditions he also fabricated and added material of his own.

Redaction critics try to discover the theological motivation of an author, that is, the theological point of view which he seeks to express in and through his composition. This is presumed to be reflected in the way in which he has augmented, modified, and connected the items from the tradition and featured identifiable theological emphases and motifs in his work.

### Content Criticism

Content criticism is a wholly radical procedure. It allows the critic to sit in judgment on the Scriptures and to reject these portions of Biblical teaching as unauthentic or non-normative which are not regarded as reasonable or fitting to accept and inculcate in the present day and age.

### Form Criticism and the Gospels

We may now take a closer look at the basic concerns, assumptions, procedures and results of form criticism, as employed in the examination of the New Testament Gospels, particularly the Synoptics. In general, modern form criticism accepts the main current theories of literary and historical criticisms. Building on their findings, moves on, as we have noted, to determine the oral tradition which circulated in the church before the Gospels were written down and to discover the influences which moulded them. For details of the form critical procedure various works of Rudolf Bultmann,<sup>2</sup> a prominent founding father of the form critical school of New Testament study, may be consulted.

Along with other scholars, Bultmann attributed considerable inventive editorial activity to the writers of the first three Gospels. It was his conjecture that, with the exception of the Passion Narrative (which

he supposed was a connected story already in the earliest tradition), the original tradition in its pre-literary, formative, oral period circulated chiefly in the form of short, detached, irreducible units, each complete in itself. When after some time the evangelists set about to write the Gospels, they were not so much authors as collectors, editors, and compilers of narratives about Jesus and of sayings attributed to him.

These units of tradition, said Bultmann, are readily discernible in the Gospels and should be distinguished from the framework the evangelists supplied to connect them. All references to time and place in the Gospels, all transitional remarks, Bultmann held, ought to be regarded as the evangelists' creation, and unauthentic.

The next task was to concentrate attention on the traditional material in the Gospels itself, not all of which appeared to relate actual history. The challenge was to determine what was factual information regarding Jesus' life and teaching and what was fabrication. Bultmann stated that an approach to the solution of this difficulty could be made by way of acceptance of several assumptions. It ought to be understood, he urged, that the units of the Gospel tradition were communicated by word of mouth and then recorded in various fixed "styles," or identifiable "forms." Bultmann saw in the evangelic material such forms as "I" sayings of Jesus, proverbs, parables, historical narratives, miracle stories, legends, and so on. (From these "forms," it may be noted, "form" criticism gets its name.)

The different categories of form in which the Gospel tradition expressed itself, said Bultmann, were originated by the church in accord with its developing needs in the areas of preaching, worship, instruction, and of controversy with those outside the congregational fellowships. He assumed that each form had its own typical situation in the life of the Christian communities, its *Sitz im Leben*, out of which it grew and which determined its continued usage in the circles of the faithful.

### Three Laws

It should also be supposed, Bultmann held, that the units of Gospel tradition underwent some alteration in the course of time and of their use in the church. Revisions of the material in the original oral and literary forms took place, he theorized, according to certain laws by which development of any body of tradition was shaped and controlled.

1: When units of tradition, whatever their form, are initially communicated, they are short, simple portrayals of a scene in which normally only two speaking characters appear or the related event transpires in a brief space of time. The narrators do not provide long, unified accounts.

2: In the process of their transmission -- whether orally or in writing -- the details of these accounts are subject to fanciful elaboration and are frequently made more explicit and definite. As an example of this Bultmann pointed to the difference between Mark 9:17 and Luke 9:38. The first reports that a father brought his demoniac son to Jesus; the second states in addition that he was an only son. In a similar way, he said, the palsied hand healed according to Mark 3:1 is designated as the right hand in Luke 6:6; the severed ear of the high priest's servant mentioned in Mark 14:47 is referred to as the right ear in Luke 22:50; the two disciples sent to prepare for the passover celebration, unnamed in Mark 14:13, are given the names Peter and John in Luke 22:8; and so on.

Bultmann stated that a Gospel narrator frequently presented in direct discourse what his source gave indirectly. In this, he said, the tendency to specify more exactly could also be observed. Cited as an example in Mark 8:32, containing a mere reference to the fact that Peter upbraided Christ, whereas in the expanded account of Matthew 16:22, Peter is reported as saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord!"; also Mark 14:1 and Matthew 26:1-2; Mark 14:23 and Matthew 26:27; Mark 15:37 and Luke 23:46; and other passages.

3: Operative along with the tendency toward elaboration and greater explicitness was "the inclination," as Bultmann saw it, "to impose a schematic idea of the course of Jesus' activity." He called attention to the fact, for example, that Jesus' opponents were most frequently depicted as scribes and Pharisees, whose disputes with Jesus were motivated by malicious intent. Bultmann wrote: "One may often observe or infer that the earliest tradition had to do with unspecified questioners, whom the later narrators transformed into ill-disposed scribes or Pharisees." An example supplied is this:

It is quite characteristic that Mark has retained in its old form the story of the question concerning the greatest commandment, in accordance with which the inquirer is entirely honest, and in the end is praised by Jesus as not far from the Kingdom of God (xii. 28-34). In Matthew this word of praise has fallen away, and the questioner appears from the outset as crafty and hypercritical (xxii. 34-40; cf. Luke x. 25).

Bultmann added:

Of course, many a polemical word of Jesus addressed to the scribes and Pharisees may be entirely historical (Mark xii. 38-40; and most of Matt. xxi. 1-31), but the schematic representation

according to which the Pharisees and scribes are from the outset the sworn enemies of Jesus is certainly unhistorical.

#### Four Procedures

On the basis of the foregoing assumptions pertaining to the transmission of Gospel tradition in units of distinct form and their modification in the process of communication by word of mouth and from written record to written record, Bultmann was able to advance further procedures of his form critical methodology. If the first step was to distinguish the Gospel tradition from its editorial framework, the second was to classify each unit of the traditional material according to form and endeavor to establish the life situation, the Sitz im Leben, which prompted the Christian community to make use of the given form in passing along a particular unit of tradition.

The third procedure, operating with any eye to the laws governing the formulation and development of tradition undertook to determine and strip away alterations and revisions of each form in order to recover its early and pure expression. The history of each tradition's growth was revealed in this process.

The fourth procedure, the ultimate goal of form critical study, was to pass judgment on the historicity of each "stripped" traditional unit. That meant to decide on the basis of modern, critical, historical canons whether the information such a unit presented regarding Jesus' teaching and life was factual or fabricated.

#### Four Literary Types

Bultmann discerned essentially four literary forms (genres, "Gattungen") in the evangelic material. These are: miracle stories, apothegms,<sup>3</sup> words of Jesus, and legends and myths.<sup>4</sup> The characteristics of the first type are of particular interest for the present study, since it is this category into which the account of Jesus' feeding the five thousand falls.

The Marburg scholar describes the pattern of the miracle account by using the record of a healing as an illustration. Usually the narrative is given in three parts. In the first, the condition of the patient is described, frequently with an emphasis upon the gravity of the illness or its long duration. In the second, the account of the healing itself is provided. The peculiar manipulations of the healer are often mentioned, as in Mark 7:33; 8:23. In the third part, unmistakable evidence of the healing is given: witnesses often exclaim in wonder and the person healed gives some clear demonstration of the fact that he has indeed been helped. Bultmann, a modern critical historian, feels that the miracles did not actually occur, pointing out that the stories relating them bear a close resemblance to the Hellenistic miracle-narratives after which they may have been patterned.

#### Form Critical Analysis of the Four Feeding Narratives

The cardinal assumptions and procedures of Bultmannian form critical methodology provided above should suffice to afford an understanding of the application of form criticism to the parallel feeding narratives in the Gospels. The analysis starts by noting the differences in the evangelists' accounts as well as other features in the texts which are likely to be the subject of particular form critical concern.<sup>5</sup>

When the basic study of the texts is completed, the analysis of the feeding narratives continues with the application of the steps of form critical investigation -- as enunciated, for example, by Bultmann -- to the evangelic material.<sup>6</sup> The goal is to determine the earliest and fundamental ecclesiastical tradition contained in the feeding stories and in the process to be able to trace this tradition's growth in the Christian community.

#### Place and Time

First, the references to place and time which serve to connect the feeding account with the larger context of each Gospel are singled out and rejected as unauthentic, editorial additions of the evangelists. Accordingly, Mark 6:32-33 are eliminated as editorial work, since these passages together with verses 30 and 31 provide a link between the sending out of the disciples reported in 6:7-13 and the story of the feeding of the five thousand.<sup>7</sup> Matt. 14:13, Luke 9:10b, and John 6:1 are considered editorial insertions for similar reasons, as is also John 6:4.<sup>8</sup>

## Miracle Story

Attention is next given to the form of the expurgated text of the parallel feeding narratives. All four are seen to have the marks of a "miracle story." Each account is given in three parts: in the first, the seriousness of the people's situation is suggested; the impossibility of the disciples' satisfying their need is made clear. In the second, the account of the miraculous multiplication of the meager supplies and the distribution of food to the reclining assembly is provided.<sup>9</sup> In the third, a corroborative evidence is offered that a mighty (nature) miracle did indeed occur: the great multitude (5,000 men) is satisfied, and so much food was marvelously made available that twelve baskets of remaining fragments could be gathered. John 6:14-15 also reports the impression the miraculous feeding made on the crowd.<sup>10</sup>

Classed as a miracle story, the tradition of the feeding narratives is not regarded as the account of an actual, historical happening in the life of Jesus, but as an invention of the church, produced to satisfy its cultic needs, to exalt Jesus as Messiah and to edify the faithful.<sup>11</sup>

## Tradition Development

Finally, the evangelic material is examined to discover the earliest form of the tradition. For this purpose differences in the tradition, as noted in the account of the four evangelists, are studied and the development of the tradition is investigated. Various conclusions are drawn. The picture of the crowds which stream out to Jesus and which are described as great (as in the first or second verse of each of the four parallel pericopes, and in other passages) is held to be schematized.<sup>12</sup> The appearance of the disciples, also referred to as the apostles and the twelve, who accompany Jesus is seen as similarly schematic and editorial,<sup>13</sup> although the feeding stories require the presence of some kind of gathering of people and some disciples. A semi-artificiality in the miracle's setting is found in the feature called "scenic duality", that is, the action is made to center principally about Jesus and his disciples, considered as a single group.<sup>14</sup>

## Variations

The variations in the parallel miracle stories of the four evangelists are seen to be the result in large part of novelistic tendencies at work in the Christian community and influencing the Gospel writers themselves. A desire to enhance the story is adjudged to account for the increase in the miraculous element. Evidence is found in Matt. 14:14 and Luke 9:11,<sup>15</sup> which add healings to the text of Mark; in Matt. 14:21, where it is indicated that the figure designating the number of diners is to be taken as excluding women and children;<sup>16</sup> in John 6:11, which states that the diners were given as much as they desired; in John 6:14-15, which report the reaction of the people to the miracle, their identification of Jesus with the predicted prophet and their intention to make Him king.

It is held that a novelistic interest shows itself also in the individualization in the Johannine pericope. Here is singled out a lad from the multitude and two disciples are distinguished from the twelve and identified by name.<sup>17</sup> The same pious fancy is presumed to be responsible for the greater exactness in specification found in the following passages: Luke 9:11, where not only the fact of Christ's teaching (reported in Mark) but also the content of his message (the Kingdom of God) is mentioned;<sup>18</sup> at John 6:9, which designates the bread-cakes used in the miraculous feedings as made of barley; John 6:11, where the nature of the blessing Jesus spoke is explicitly stated to be a giving of thanks; John 6:12, where Jesus indicates that He wants no food wasted and directs the disciples to gather the left-over fragments of food; Mark 6:36 (and Luke 9:12), which refers to farms and hamlets roundabout whither the people might go to buy food for themselves.<sup>19</sup>

The fact that Matthew and Luke, more frequently than Mark, join phrases and sentences of their narratives with conjunctions other than "and" (καί) and with conjunctive participles is supposed to suggest the passage of time and to indicate the desire to add explicitness of detail to the accounts -- probably in the interest of providing a historically continuous and connected presentation.<sup>20</sup>

There are other features of the feeding narratives which are considered the product of the devout imagination of the Christian community and the evangelists. The use of direct speech (in the conversation[s] between Jesus and the disciples) in the four stories is held to be a mark of secondary formulation.<sup>21</sup> Attention is called to the tendency to produce new sayings of the speaker (Jesus), as in John 6:5b and 12; Matt. 14:18. Origination of action through the initiative of Jesus, is observed in the Johannine pericope, verses 5-6.<sup>22</sup> Reference to motive and feeling in Jesus which lead Him to act as He does are observed in Mark 6:34 and Matt. 14:14, where Jesus is said to be filled with compassion for the people (in Luke 9:11 He "welcomes" them) and then to proceed with teaching and healing them.<sup>23</sup>

### Primitive Tradition

What is the substance of the primitive tradition found to be, after the parallel feeding narratives have been analyzed form critically and after editorial additions have been set aside? It is simply this, that the historical Jesus, at one time in the course of his ministry and probably when He was accompanied by a few of his disciples, met with a group of his countrymen and was Himself host to them at an ordinary, but bountiful, meal.

The origin of the later account of a miraculous provision of food might have been the fact that Jesus knew of a friend from whom He procured a sizable quantity of food and thus was able to serve it speedily and so bountifully that there were many leftovers. Or perhaps the situation might have been this: Jesus kept the people with whom He was visiting interested for so long a time that they forgot about meals, delighted that they could keep conversing with Him. Later others heard of this and circulated the story that Jesus had fed the group in a miraculous manner. During the course of his remarks, Jesus probably expressed his concern about the Jewish people of his day, to the effect that they appeared to be as sheep not having a shepherd.

### A Criticism of the Form Critical Procedure

A number of objections must be raised to the modern form critical analysis of the four New Testament evangelists' stories of Christ's feeding the five thousand, as this analysis has now been briefly described. The same strictures apply to form critical procedure as employed in Gospel investigation generally today. They all center in the observation that the basic assumptions of form criticism are arbitrarily established and unwarranted.

### Editorial Fabrications

Bultmann asserts that all references in the Gospels to time and place which serve to connect up the single sections of narrative into a large context are the creative editorial work of the evangelists, and are therefore not authentic. This view may be challenged on the ground that, if an evangelist derived information on the life of Christ from oral tradition or a written source, it is most likely that these sources already contained references to the temporal and local setting which were taken over into the Gospel narratives.

Redlich's contention is entirely plausible, when he suggests that any tradition which influenced the evangelists would have contained

a number of blocks of narratives connected together either by a common topical interest or by an orderly succession in time or in the form of an itinerary. Some of these incidents may have previously existed separately but that does not disprove our contention that the early Church was interested in matters of time and place and was not devoid of the desire to know something of what Jesus did, where He happened to be, and when He performed certain miracles or uttered His sayings.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, if the authors of Matthew and John were the apostles by these names, then these men were eyewitnesses of the events they describe and were not dependent on community tradition for their information on Christ's activities. At any rate, it does not follow that the details of time and place given in the Gospels are of no historical or biographical value or that they do not convey accurate information concerning the chronology and setting of events as they actually transpired.

There is therefore no good reason to reject as editorial inventions the connecting and orienting statements at the beginning of the four feeding narratives which (taken in conjunction) report that for several reasons Christ and his disciples withdrew from the Galilean public after the twelve had returned from their preaching tour; that they crossed the Sea of Galilee, the Tiberian, (probably leaving from Capernaum and) landing at an unpopulated (but verdant) area in the vicinity of Bethsaida; that they were able to spend a short time together alone in a nearby mountain, before crowds, who had been impressed by Jesus' miracles and followed Him and the apostles by land, found out where He was; that Jesus saw the people approaching Him. These features set the stage for the activity which followed as described by the evangelists. There is also no cause to doubt that it was, indeed, near the time of the Passover, when these events took place.

### Miracle Story Form

Bultmann and the form critics conclude that the form of the feeding narratives is that of the miracle story, and this is correct. But the assumption that Jesus' miraculous deeds, reported by the evangelists, never did or could actually occur is founded on an anti-supernaturalistic bias, which relegates any evidence

for the deity of Jesus Christ to the realm of the mythological and out-of-hand rejects all divine intervention and operation in human affairs. This anti-supernaturalism, as Robert Gundry says, "prejudices historical enquiry and is theologically and scientifically out-of-date, for it rests on the rationalistic concept of a closed universe and a rigid concept of natural law."<sup>25</sup>

Form criticism arbitrarily and unreasonably presupposes the unreliability of the New Testament miracle-records; its approach to them is marked by an extreme subjectivism in the establishment of standards for the recognition of what is supposedly unauthentic in the evangelists' accounts. Theologically conservative scholarship takes the position, which is justifiable by traditional, Lutheran and Christian hermeneutics, that such miracles as the feeding of the five thousand did in fact occur as the Gospel writers relate them.<sup>26</sup>

According to form critical theory, the factors which created and preserved the miracle stories are to be found in the practical, cultic interests of the Christian community, the cult being regarded as the original Sitz im Leben of all the tradition concerning Jesus. To this view the reply may be made that the life situation from which the forms developed ought rather be found in Jesus Himself. Martin Franzmann writes:

Form critics attribute to the "community" a creative power which is really incredible; while the Gospels themselves and the Book of Acts with one voice proclaim that Jesus the Christ created the church, the form critics seem to conclude that the church somehow created the Christ. The net result of their study is the conclusion that the Gospels, which incorporate the tradition of the Christian community, tell us a great deal about the faith of the early Christian community, but very little about Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>27</sup>

Such a supposition is indeed highly arbitrary.<sup>28</sup>

#### Laws Governing the Formulation of Tradition

As noted above, Bultmannian form critical procedure also assumes that the original form of a tradition may be recovered and its history traced by discovering the laws according to which the further development of material takes place and the growth of tradition is controlled. These laws are: scenic duality, alteration according to novelistic interest, and schematic representation. By what right or warranty, however, are certain principles, which are presumed to govern the formulation of popular narrative and folk-lore assumed to have been operative in the production of Gospel literature? Franzmann states:

In practice the emphasis of form criticism is all on the Christian community as the creator and bearer of the Gospel tradition; the fact of the apostolate, the fact that Jesus Himself prepared men to be witnesses to Him with divinely given authority and equipped them for their task by His gift of the illuminating and empowering Spirit, this fact is largely, if not entirely, ignored. The teaching tradition of the church is treated as if it were completely parallel to the folk-lore and the myth making of all primitive communities, and classifications derived from non-Palestinian folk-lore are applied to the Gospel materials without regard for the uncertainty of these classifications and without questioning their applicability to the Gospel materials.<sup>29</sup>

It should be stated too that many scholars disagree with Bultmann that the communication of the evangelic tradition was controlled by laws such as he formulated. The supposition cannot stand, they hold, that the original tradition reporting the sayings and acts of Jesus and the events of his career was communicated within the primitive church in exclusively short narrative units bereft of all elaborating detail. Redlich remarks:

It is incredible that stories of Jesus were always presented in a dry impersonal form . . . . Sermons would fail to grip and illustrations fail to achieve their end, if vividness of description and the joyfulness of depicting the personality of Jesus were forbidden. Eastern peoples were not so phlegmatic that they could not be thrilled with a detailed description of a miracle or with the dramatic form of parables or the human appeal of the sick who received sympathy and consideration from the Healer. The first missionaries preached not only that Jesus lived but that He was a living Jesus.<sup>30</sup>

From the very beginning of the Christian church not only short accounts of events but also longer stories of activities, replete with enriching, colorful particulars, surely were proclaimed by preachers and passed by word of mouth among the people.

Scholars are not agreed on the validity of Bultmann's second law of oral transmission which asserts that as narratives are passed along, they are subject to fanciful elaboration of detail and to lengthening. Vincent Taylor, for instance, tells of having designed a series of experiments to determine the tendencies of oral transmission and "to show what happens . . . when a story is set going in a community, and is recorded at different stages in the course of its transmission." He reports:

The results are of great interest. The experiments show that the tendency of oral transmission is definitely in the direction of abbreviation. Additions are certainly made in all good faith

through misunderstandings and efforts to picture the course of events, but almost always the stories become shorter and more conventional. The best analogy is that of pebbles on the sea-shore which are made smaller and round by the ceaseless beat of the waves.<sup>31</sup>

Taylor's view is that details are characteristic of early, eyewitness documents.

One other scholar's opinion may be cited. E. P. Sanders thoroughly tested such critical criteria as increasing length, increasing detail, addition of direct discourse, which professionals like Bultmann have used to determine the relative earliness or lateness of Synoptic material. He reached the conclusion that

There are no hard and fast laws of the development of the Synoptic tradition. On all counts the tradition developed in opposite directions. It became both longer and shorter, both more and less detailed. . . . Even the tendency to use direct discourse for indirect . . . was not uniform in the Synoptics themselves. For this reason, dogmatic statements that a certain characteristic proves a certain passage to be earlier than another are never justified.<sup>32</sup>

Bultmann's claim that, as the tradition was passed along in the Christian communities, a schematic idea of the course of Jesus' activity (such as the assumed schematic representation of the Scribes and Pharisees as the perpetual and bitter enemies of Jesus) was fancifully imposed upon that tradition in pure conjecture. In propounding this theory Bultmann fails to reckon with the presence and the continuing testimony in the church of Jesus' apostles and of other eyewitnesses of his ministry. They could, and doubtlessly did, check the tradition and surely would have corrected any inclination to alter the facts in the stories. Without any warrant, Bultmann assumes furthermore an absence of basic integrity on the part of the early Christians who circulated the tradition concerning Jesus which they had received. In the case of the Synoptic Gospels, the third law which is said to govern narrative transmission is not applicable.

#### Textual Integrity

As far as the present writer is concerned, neither the basic assumptions nor the corresponding procedures of modern form criticism, based upon these assumptions, commend themselves for adoption in the interpretation of the New Testament Gospels. The principles themselves are not valid, and their application leads to barren and erroneous exegetical results. In the case of the parallel feeding narratives (as well as other Gospel accounts) a far better investigative "method" is to give this evangelic material the "honest reading" it deserves; to assume that everything reported as history is to be taken as factual, and that the verity of the Gospel records has been insured by the divine inspiration which the Scriptures claim for the writers of the Gospels.

It is worthwhile to consider the parallel feeding accounts separately and to note the particular points of information which are emphasized in each narrative. After all, each of the Gospels was composed as an independent literary entity, designed for study in its own right. But it is unworthy and profitless to pit differing details of the stories against each other in order to discover contradictions or to suppose that the variations are to be explained by the free-ranging inventiveness of ecclesiastical communities or evangelists.

#### Redaction Criticism

Redaction criticism, another discipline within the historical critical method, has come to the fore within the past twenty years. It grew out of and remains closely related to form criticism. Via says that redaction criticism "presupposes and continues the procedures of the earlier discipline [form criticism] while extending and intensifying certain of them."<sup>33</sup> Perrin states that form criticism and redaction criticism "are in fact the first and second stages of a unified discipline, but their divergence in emphasis is sufficient to justify their being treated separately."<sup>34</sup>

According to the same author, redaction criticism is particularly concerned with

studying the theological motivation of an author as this is revealed in the collection, arrangement, editing, and modification of traditional material, and in the composition of new material or the creation of new forms within the traditions of early Christianity. Although the discipline is called redaction criticism, it could equally be called "composition criticism" because it is concerned with the composition of new material and the arrangements of redacted or freshly created material into new units and patterns, as well as with the redaction of existing material.<sup>35</sup>

Via asserts that its goals are

to understand why the items from the tradition [about Jesus] were modified and connected as they were, to identify the theological motifs that were at work in composing a finished Gospel, and to elucidate the theological point of view which is expressed in and through the composition.<sup>36</sup>

Bultmann is regarded as "the true father of redaction criticism."<sup>37</sup> The full flowering of this discipline, however, came in Germany immediately after the Second World War. Three scholars, laboring independently of one another but in the same direction, produced materials which marked the beginning of redaction criticism. They were Guenther Bornkamm, Hans Conzelmann, and Willi Marxsen, who worked on the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and Mark respectively. Marxsen gave the new movement its German name, Redaktionsgeschichte.

#### Bornkamm

Bornkamm's views were presented at a meeting of theologians held in Germany January 1954 in a paper entitled, "Matthew As Interpreter of the Words of the Lord."<sup>38</sup> Perrin offers the following summary of Bornkamm's article:

Bornkamm shows how these [Matthew's] discourses are shot through and through with a particular Matthean understanding of the church and its relationship to the imminent parousia. Then attention is given to the Matthean understanding of the Jewish Law and its role in Christian faith. From these Bornkamm turns to the Matthean Christology, which he approaches, quite properly, by means of that understanding of the relationship between Jesus Himself and the Law which plays such an important role in the Matthean theology; in particular Bornkamm concerns himself with the various titles that Matthew uses in his presentation of his Christology. Finally, attention is given to the relationship between Christology and ecclesiology. The circle is complete and we return to the role of the church, which is so prominent in the Matthean theology.<sup>39</sup>

A number of Bornkamm's pupils--Gerhard Barth, Heinz Held, Heinz Toedt, and Ferdinand Hahn--have made contributions to the discipline of redaction criticism.

#### Conzelmann

Hans Conzelmann's The Theology of St. Luke,<sup>40</sup> first published in German in 1954, is perhaps the most important of the works produced by the Redaktionsgeschichte Schule. In it the author endeavored to demonstrate that, whereas Luke has generally been regarded by scholars as the historian of early Christianity, his Gospel can be shown to have been theologically motivated. Perrin comments:

To give but one example, the resurrection appearances in the Lucan writings take place in Jerusalem in contrast to the impression given elsewhere in the New Testament that they take place in Galilee. Conzelmann shows that this geographical reference is not historical reminiscence, a conclusion which raises questions as to the actual locale of these appearances. Luke is in no way motivated by a desire to exercise historical accuracy, but entirely by his theological concept of the role of Jerusalem in the history of salvation.<sup>41</sup>

According to Conzelmann, Lucan theology endeavored to answer the problem of the delay of Christ's parousia. Whereas the early church thought that the time between Christ's ascension and his parousia would be of short duration, Luke compiled and composed his Gospel in order to show that the interim would be an indefinite period.<sup>42</sup>

#### Marxsen

Willi Marxsen, the third of the founders of redaction criticism, presented his views in the book Mark the Evangelist, first published in German in 1956.<sup>43</sup> Consisting of four redaction critical studies of Mark's Gospel, the book begins with a consideration of the relation of redaction criticism to form criticism. The following convenient summary of Marxsen's discussion, as offered by Perrin, brings out various points of contrast:

First he [Marxsen] stresses the difference between the understanding of the evangelists in the one discipline and the other. Form criticism regarded the evangelists primarily as collectors of tradition, whereas redaction criticism regards them as authors in their own right. Secondly, form criticism was mostly concerned with breaking down the tradition into small units and particularly with the way in which these small units came into being in the first place. Redaction criticism, however, concerns itself with the larger units down to and including the particular form of Gospel and asks questions about the purpose of the formation of those larger units of tradition. Thirdly, form criticism with its concern for the individual units of tradition and its understanding of the evangelists as collectors of tradition could never do justice to that bold new step taken by the evangelist Mark, who gathers together individual units and larger collections of tradition and out of them fashions something wholly new--a "Gospel." Both Matthew and Luke inherit this form, "Gospel," from Mark and make further use of it themselves; in no small measure it is the purpose of redaction criticism to do justice to both the Marcan theology lying behind the creation of the form "Gospel" and to these aspects of the Lucan and Matthean theology which become evident as we

consider the way in which they use the form as well as the tradition which they inherit from Mark. Fourthly, in keeping with his understanding of the totality of the transmission of tradition from its creation in the early church to its reformulation by the synoptic evangelists, Marxsen claims that one should be prepared to consider three separate "settings-in-life" for synoptic tradition . . . a setting in the life of Jesus for a certain amount of the synoptic material, then . . . a setting in the life of the early church for the tradition created and transmitted there [which is the interest of the form critics], and then finally<sup>44</sup> . . . the setting in the work and purpose of the evangelist [the concern of redaction criticism].

Marxsen believes that the Christian community of Jerusalem fled to Galilee at the beginning of the Jewish War against Rome in the year 66 A.D. and was there waiting for the parousia, which the church regarded as imminent. Through the use of redaction critical procedure he is convinced that Marcan theology reflects this historical situation.<sup>45</sup>

#### Redaction Critical Analysis of the Four Feeding Narratives

What are the findings of the redaction critical investigation when applied to the parallel feeding narratives found in the Gospels? What theological motifs are presumed to be expressed in the respective accounts of the feeding miracle? How does the theological purpose which is seen in an author's reporting of the miracle relate to the theological point of view which redaction criticism supposes has governed that evangelist in the composition of his Gospel? To the extent that information is available in the works of redaction critics consulted in the preparation of this paper, answers to these questions will now be provided.

#### Mark

Marxsen does not critically consider the Marcan narrative of the feeding of the five thousand in his Mark the Evangelist nor in his work on New Testament introduction.<sup>46</sup> Therefore what he says of the second evangelist's Gospel as a whole will have to be regarded as applying in a general way also to the feeding story. He states:

If it is true that the early Church did not seek to say by means of the Synoptic material who Jesus was, but who he is (Bornkamm) we can say that the same is true of Mark's intention. . . .

The author of Mk. tries . . . to preserve the character of the work as proclamation--it is meant to remain kerygma. He achieves this aim by a very skillful linking of the varied material, so that the Gospel is not a series of sermons but one sermon, which in view of the evangelist's intention we should not divide again into sections. . . .

The main message of Mk. can therefore be summarized briefly as follows: the evangelist proclaims the One who once appeared as the One who is to come, and who--in secret epiphany--is present now as the proclamation is made.<sup>47</sup>

#### Matthew

Heinz Held's study titled "Matthew As Interpreter of the Miracle Stories"<sup>48</sup> is at the present time the most thorough-going redaction-critical investigation of the miracle narratives in the first evangelist's Gospel. Held asserts concerning these narratives in general that for Matthew they

are the bearers of a message, of teaching or admonition. Their handing on and interpretation take place for the sake of the material statement they contain. They are intended to show the Church by means of the picture of the earthly Jesus who her Lord is and what provision she may expect from him. The interpretation of the miracle stories by Matthew is thus borne by the conviction: "What Jesus once did on earth he does still." This conviction . . . is only understandable on the basis of the Church's "basic confession" that her risen Lord is none other than the man Jesus of Nazareth, who lived in Palestine and was crucified under Pontius Pilate. Or, to express it with the words of Matthew's Gospel: that this Jesus of Nazareth is now he to whom all authority in heaven and on earth is given and who is present in his Church to the end of the world (Matt. 28:18,20).<sup>49</sup>

The same scholar holds that by comparing Matthew's version of miracle stories with the parallel accounts in Mark's Gospel and noting the Matthean alterations, it is possible to work out Matthew's particular interpretation of the miracle stories. It centers in one of three themes: Christology, faith, and discipleship.<sup>50</sup>

The story of the feeding of the five thousand is one of the few miracle stories in the Synoptics in which Christ's disciples play any part. Here Jesus employs the twelve especially in the distribution of the miraculously multiplied bread and fish. Held theorizes that what occurs according to the story is "an

epiphany of Jesus before his disciples--that it takes place before the multitude is nowhere so much as hinted--but it takes place through an act in which the disciples share."<sup>51</sup> The disciples' presence and activity according to Matthew's narrative afford Held the basic clue that this account has discipleship as its special theme. The abbreviation of Matthew's story, as compared with Mark's, is noted and understood by Held as a means which enables Matthew to reach the essentials of the account more quickly.<sup>52</sup>

The greater conciseness is presumed to give the account in the first Gospel "a greater . . . 'solemnity' in comparison with the original and colourful version of the second evangelist." Held calls attention to the Matthean omission of the disciples' "bold counter-question" in Mark 6:37b and claims that this is indicative of the fact that Matthew's interpretation of the role of the disciples differs from that of the second evangelist. Mark's inclusion of the question is viewed as his intention to show that the disciples had a complete lack of understanding of Jesus' person and mission and of His charge to them *ὅτε αὐτοῖς ἕως φαγεῖν* (6:37a; "a meaningless and impossible command"). In Matthew's story, according to Held,

There is no trace of a lack of understanding of the commission of Jesus (Matt. 14:16 *ὅτε αὐτοῖς ἕως φαγεῖν*) in the reply of the disciples. Such a misunderstanding as that in Mark is excluded by the fact that Matthew precedes it with the small sentence *οὐ κρείων ἐκονεῖν ἀπελθεῖν*. This at once makes clear that Jesus is not thinking of the food which one has to buy in the townships. It is obvious that he means nourishment which the disciples have with them. Hence they immediately announce the amount of food which is available (Matt. 14:17: *ὡςδε*). Thus the disciples understand what Jesus means, though they do not obediently carry out his commission but point out--obviously as an expression of their limited faith--how meagre are their provisions: "We have here but five loaves and two fishes."

Thus whereas Mark portrays the disciples as lacking in understanding, in the dialogue according to Matthew they understand but are defective in the matter of faith. It is in the wake of this interpretation that the unbecoming counter-question of the disciple falls.

The occurrence of the words *φέρετε' μα ὡςδε αὐτούς* (Matt. 14:18) in the first Gospel only is interpreted by Held to signify that Matthew wishes "to present the disciples in bringing the food as only concerned with the feeding itself. What happens to the crowd thus slips still more into the background." In Mark 6:41 it is recorded that Jesus *ἐδίδου τοῖς μαθηταῖς ἵνα παρτιθώσιν αὐτοῖς* (the multitude); compare Luke 9:16. Matt. 14:19 has *ἔδωκεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς τοὺς ἄρτους, οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ τοῖς ὄχλοις*. Held writes:

The difference is not great, but it is significant. Whereas the other two evangelists speak only of a giving by Jesus, though the disciples "distribute" (*παρτιθεναί*), in Matthew the giving, from *ἔδωκεν* on, applies to the activity of the disciples as well. There thus arises, however, a clear allusion to the command of Jesus to his disciples about giving (*ὅτε αὐτοῖς ἕως φαγεῖν*). To express the matter differently: Matthew brings to expression in linguistic form, too, the theme of the role of the disciples in his portrayal of the miraculous feeding.

In Held's estimate, the three Synoptists' choice of wording in Mark 6:41, Matt. 14:19, and Luke 9:16 shows that they had the celebration of the Lord's Supper in mind in writing these verses. Matthew is supposed to make this clearest of all by his use of *κλάσας* (the verb the evangelists employ in their description of Christ's institution of the sacrament) instead of *κατεκλάσεν* as in Mark and Luke.<sup>53</sup>

### Luke

Conzelmann in The Theology of St. Luke states that the third evangelist "seeks to include the Christological aspect of miracle within the framework of his general conception. Jesus' deeds are for Luke the evidence of the time of salvation, which has 'arrived' with Christ."<sup>54</sup> In Luke's account of the feeding miracle Conzelmann supposes the reference to Bethsaida (9:10b) to be a Lucan fabrication (probably a re-placement for Caesarea Philippi), since in the evangelist's geographical scheme "there is no place for such a journey [outside Jewish territory] as Mark describes in the first state of Jesus' ministry, nor in the next stage either."<sup>55</sup> Luke 9:11 relates that after Jesus welcomed the crowds which had come out to Him *ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς πρὸς τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ*. This may be regarded from Conzelmann's viewpoint as "a typically Lucan, non-eschatological form of the proclamation of the Kingdom, as substitute for the original form *ἤρξατο*."<sup>56</sup>

Marxsen distinguishes Luke's viewpoint in writing stories from the objective of Matthew and Mark. He says in summary:

Mark declares by means of stories from the past the immediate significance of the exalted Lord for the present, Matthew writes as a historian, as his Old Testament quotations in particular show, but makes the past appear relevant for the present both directly by showing its character as "fulfillment" and also indirectly by virtue of the fact that it provides an example. For Luke, however, the period of Jesus really belongs to the past, and is sharply distinguished from the period of the Church. The eschatological element present in the proclamatory character of the pre-Lucan tradition is eliminated. Luke's "historicizing" is therefore at the same time a process of "de-eschatologizing."<sup>57</sup>

John

Perrin observes that redaction critical work on the Gospel of John is still in its infancy.<sup>58</sup> Some findings of the study that has been done, however, may be mentioned. R. H. Lightfoot<sup>59</sup> in his commentary on John expresses the view that the fourth Gospel came into being to meet the need particularly of Gentile Christians in the Roman world, for whom the Synoptists' interpretation of the person of Jesus chiefly in terms of the Jewish Messiah was becoming inadequate. The English scholar suggests that the fourth Gospel was written neither to supplement nor to supersede the Synoptics, but to interpret them for John's Gentile contemporaries.<sup>60</sup> In Lightfoot's opinion the dominating idea of John's Gospel "is that of the Son as the full and complete revelation of the Father". The evangelist's purpose is

to produce in his readers an impression and conviction about the Person of the Lord which, he is persuaded, is the true understanding and interpretation of it; for his readers' sake he writes what may be described as the verdict of history, or perhaps we should rather say the verdict of the Church, on the Lord's Person and work.<sup>61</sup>

Marxsen theorizes that the fourth evangelist made use of a "book of signs" and other source material (largely passion traditions) in the composition of his Gospel, but that the text as we have it also exhibits evidence of "Church redaction."<sup>62</sup> The "book of signs" is presumed to have contained the miracles, to which John refers, and to have expressed the view that the miracles were meant to call forth faith. According to Marxsen, however, the evangelist modified this position and attempted to indicate that the miracles were not meant to call forth faith in Jesus and proclaim his authority (compare John's editorial comment in 2:23-25 and the situation with Nicodemus, reflected in 3:2-3). They were rather signs which were meant to point to him so that faith in Jesus might be evoked by a hearing of his Word and proclamation.<sup>63</sup>

When writing his Gospel, John's purpose, in the opinion of Marxsen, was to attempt

to correct "tradition" by adopting a critical attitude to the way in which being a Christian is linked with the institution, and by emphasizing instead that succession lies in true discipleship, . . . True discipleship is manifested not in the following of rules and regulations, but in the practice of love (xiii. 34). This loving, however, is linked in a very special way with Jesus, and here again we can see the way in which the evangelist modifies the traditional eschatology. Such love is possible for the disciple only because Jesus enables him to exercise it, because the one sent by God has given him the "example" (xiii. 15). When a man practises love, the Father and the Son come to him (xiv. 23): in other words, the *parousia* takes place now. This explains why the evangelist thinks of judgement as taking place now. He who believes has life, but he who does not believe is already judged. With great force and concentration the author brings past and future to bear upon the present reality of salvation.<sup>64</sup>

"Church redaction" is seen by Marxsen to account for John 21 and the alterations in the preceding twenty chapters of the Gospel. The German redaction critic describes this editorial work as follows:

We can say . . . that by means of "correctional" interpolations the "Church redaction" attempted to make the original work fit the traditional conception as regards both the sacraments and eschatology. As a result the work lost something of its distinctive character. Originally it represented a protest against the eschatological "emptying" of the present, and was an attempt at a "reformation." This makes it clear that it was not the author's intention--as has sometimes been assumed--to supplement the Synoptics. It is doubtful whether--even improbably that--he was familiar with them, but he was familiar with certain Church sources . . . He uses these, however, not just as he finds them, but treats them critically, and his aim--like Luke: cf. Lk. i. 1-4--is not to write a work which will stand alongside earlier works, but which will take their place. It is in carrying out this aim that he comes into conflict with Church tradition. The redaction has therefore to bring about a compromise. This makes it plain that one cannot simply by-pass tradition in the Church. It has to be taken into account as a creative force which can not only not be ignored, but also can be corrected only to a certain degree. The original work of the evangelist has to be made to accept this compromise.<sup>65</sup>

Marxsen concludes a lengthy discussion of his viewpoints on the composition of the fourth Gospel with these summarizing statements:

We can sum up the position as follows: the "original evangelist" created a Gospel by using a book of signs and other material (Passion traditions) in which he re-interprets his sources, presents the miracles as signs, relegates the sacraments to the background and strongly emphasizes the present bearing of eschatology. Hearing the word of Jesus, the revealer, confronts men now with the question of belief or unbelief. The believer fulfils the new commandment by loving, in which he experiences the "coming" of the Father and the Son to him (xiv. 23) and in the same way also becomes aware that the word of the revealer is the word of God (vii. 17). In this work, therefore, the presence of salvation is set out in a way to which there was no parallel at the time--but without the risk of falling into Gnosticism. This viewpoint, however, contradicted the traditional conception accepted by the Church, and so among the circle of disciples of the evangelist an attempt at a compromise was made by means of a "Church redaction," which though it tried to remain faithful to the approach of the original evangelist, could not leave his standpoint unaltered.<sup>66</sup>

Marxsen feels that the exegesis of the Gospel of John must take note of the manner of the Gospel's growth and hence must proceed in three stages: exposition of the sources which were available to the evangelist; exposition of the evangelist's own work; exposition of the Gospel as it has come down to us, after having been subjected to "Church redaction." He says:

In other words, in the work of exegesis we have constantly to bear in mind the particular "setting in life." . . . The successive stages of exegesis bring to light an extremely interesting aspect of the development of early Christian proclamation, where we can see it coming to terms with various problems of the time and trying to deal with them.

### Messiahship

Martyn sees the issue of Jesus' messiahship to be of paramount importance in John's Gospel. He states that for the benefit of certain non-Christian readers who had conceptions and perhaps an expectation of the Messiah, John endeavors to announce that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah. This is presumed to be John's intention in 1:35-51. Elsewhere the Johannine emphasis is on Jesus' Messiahship. Martyn asserts that for John, the miraculous deeds of Jesus witness to his identity as Messiah, as John's purpose for writing the entire fourth Gospel, stated at 20:31-31, indicates.<sup>67</sup> In the fourth Gospel's feeding narrative, the same motif is regarded as coming to the fore at 6:14. Here the people conclude after Jesus' performance of the miraculous sign that "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world."<sup>68</sup>

Commenting specifically on the Johannine account of the feeding of the five thousand, Martyn writes:

Verses 1-4: In his introduction the evangelist strikes two notes: he informs his reader that a key issue is the interpretation of Jesus' signs and that the sign about to be narrated is to be interpreted against the background of the Passover. All that ensues is to be seen in light of that feast which celebrated Israel's redemption from Egypt under the leadership of Moses.

Verses 5-15: The traditional story of the feeding of the multitude is then presented as a sign. It is for John a sign in two important ways. First, it corresponds to the manna given through Moses. Jesus is therefore the Mosaic Prophet; John allows him to be explicitly identified as such (vs. 14). Secondly, John shows that he understands the feeding as a sign which points to God's gracious election (a Passover motif). We have already noted Jesus' question to Philip: "Whence are we to buy bread . . . ?" What is the origin of life? At the conclusion of the story, the same note is struck but in negative terms: The crowd, having identified Jesus as the Mosaic Prophet, takes the additional step of viewing him as the King-Messiah. But they do this in a special way. They take it into their own hands to make Jesus King and thus show that they intend to preside over the question of the origin of life. John explicitly rejects this move. God elects men through Jesus, i.e., gives life through him.<sup>69</sup>

### Criticism of Redaction Critical Procedures

All students of the New Testament Gospels recognize that each of the Synoptics and John have differing emphases and characteristics and that it is helpful for the interpretation of the evangelic material to seek out the distinguishing features of each evangelist's presentation of the life of Christ. Some observations made by redaction critics, are illuminating and useful for an understanding of the Gospel texts as is evident from the foregoing presentation. Yet objection to many of the assumptions and conclusions of modern redaction criticism must be expressed.

First of all, since this discipline presupposes and continues<sup>70</sup> the procedures of form criticism, it is subject to all the strictures directed against the latter.

Secondly, the redaction critics' opinions as to basic viewpoints which each evangelist is said to express in his Gospel and as to the historical situation in the Church which each author's work is presumed to reflect, appear in many cases to be highly speculative and incredible. For example, a principal emphasis of Mark's Gospel is supposed by Marxsen to be the imminence of the parousia. Rohde, who takes issue with numerous results of the redaction critical analysis of the four Gospels, challenges the validity of this conclusion. He says:

We put the . . . question to Marxsen, how Mark could be supposed to have eliminated the interval between resurrection and parousia, when after all more than thirty years had elapsed from the resurrection until the writing of the gospel without the Lord having appeared? Is the evangelist supposed<sup>71</sup> still not to have been conscious of an experience of time, in the sense of a delay of the parousia?

Rohde adds:

We certainly consider it possible that in the situation presupposed by Marxsen the expectation of the parousia could have become intensified; that is, of course, assuming that this situation is defined correctly. But in that case we would have to raise the question why Mark is supposed to have

composed a gospel in writing when he expected the parousia to be so imminent. Can a work like the gospel of Mark be composed at all in a period of such confusion?<sup>72</sup>

In a criticism of Conzelmann's basic thesis concerning Luke--that it was in consequence of the failure of the parousia to appear that this evangelist developed his theory of a three-stage procession of history of salvation--Rohde questions Conzelmann's methodology and feels compelled to ask the latter "how he obtained the criteria for discovering the original eschatological expectation of Jesus and of the early Christian community."<sup>73</sup> Rohde calls attention to Cullmann, who, he says, challenges the dictum that the delay of the parousia is reflected in the Synoptists and specifically rejects Conzelmann's thesis that Luke's Gospel is an outcome of the crisis of the delayed parousia.<sup>74</sup> As a concluding statement of evaluation, Rohde writes:

We cannot occasionally resist the impression that Conzelmann draws too far-reaching conclusion from some few isolated observations in order to be able to carry through his conception, or that he bases his theses on too few references in the text, or indeed on none. Thus Baumbach has shown that contrary to Conzelmann's view (*Theology of St. Luke*, p. 170) the time of Jesus between Luke 4.13 and 22.3 was by no means the "center of time" exempt from sin, but that it contains statistically the majority of statements about Satan (8.12; 10.18; 11.14ff.; 13.10ff.) and that Luke in 10.1-20 actually represents the mission as a victorious struggle against Satan and as a "prefigurement" of the time of the Church which began on Whit Sunday. Even the statements about Satan in Acts serve to demonstrate the victory over Satan of the Spirit at work in the missionaries and the community.<sup>75</sup>

Furthermore, Marxsen's theory concerning the growth of the fourth Gospel<sup>76</sup> is, in the present writer's opinion, pure conjecture and fantasy.

A third criticism of redaction criticism, closely related to the foregoing objection, is the excessive subtlety of the interpretation which appears frequently in the writings of this discipline's practitioners. In appraising Marxsen's studies, Rohde states that this subtlety is "a danger which in our opinion Marxsen has not avoided" and adds: "For it is surely open to question whether the authors of the gospels when writing their works really thought matters out in the detail that Marxsen believes he can perceive."<sup>77</sup>

An example of this reading too much into the text is afforded in Held's analysis of the first Gospel's narrative of the feeding of the five thousand,<sup>78</sup> particularly in his comments concerning the disciples' participation in that feeding. Most of Held's presentation is imaginative and lacks textual warrant.

#### A Concluding Word

The critical analyses of the Gospel narratives of the feeding of the five thousand presented in the foregoing pages illustrated the application of form and redaction criticism to the text of the New Testament Gospels. Form and redaction critical treatment of the evangelists' records has been accepted as required investigative methodology in the study of the Gospels by the liberal Protestant and Catholic divinity schools and seminaries in this country, as well as by the religion departments of many colleges and universities. Employed along with the other "criticisms" which comprise the historical critical method of Scripture study, radical rationalistic form and redaction criticism are responsible for much of the destructive interpretation of the New Testament in our day and undergird modern theology's denial of many of the salient and saving truths of Holy Writ. There is no room for the use of these extreme investigative methodologies in a church body which regards the whole Bible as the Word and truth of God and which seeks to proclaim and believe nothing but its teachings.

What is needed is a steadfast adherence to the time-honored, Scripturally sanctioned principles of Biblical interpretation which were affirmed in the Lutheran Reformation and have throughout our synod's past history been faithfully followed by our professors, pastors, teachers, and lay people in their study and presentation of the Word of God. The traditional, distinctively Lutheran technique of Bible interpretation, directed by these principles, takes cognizance above all of the divine inspiration and truth of Gospel and other Scriptural records, and assumes the historicity of natural and supernatural events which are reported as history on the sacred page. There can be no accommodation of such a system of interpretation to the radical and distinguishing tenets of form and redaction criticism, and none should be tried. It is not possible successfully to wed "Lutheran presuppositions" to genuine form and redaction critical methodology, as some in our circles have urged.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Literary criticism has given considerable attention to the so-called Synoptic Problem, which is posed by the fact that the Synoptic Gospels display both a basic and substantial similarity, on the one hand, and also many differences in detail, on the other. The questions arise: how are the three Gospels to be related historically? How are the marked similarities and differences to be explained?

Two solutions have achieved wide acceptance among New Testament students. The first is the contribution of two men by the names of Bernard Weiss and H. J. Holtzmann shortly after the turn of this century (1901). It is the so-called Two-Source Hypothesis (or, Two-Document Theory) and suggests that Mark is the oldest Gospel and Matthew and Luke used his work as a source in constructing their Gospels; that in addition to Mark, Matthew and Luke drew on another source, labeled Q (from the German word "Quelle", source), now lost, which was a collection of the sayings of Jesus; and that the apostle Matthew may have been the author of this document Q.

The other and later solution is the Four-Source Hypothesis, originated by B. H. Streeter in 1924, and developed as an advance upon the Two-Source, so as to account for facts not explained by the latter. This Four-Source Hypothesis provides two additional sources for Matthew, one labeled M, for material peculiar to Matthew, and the second described simply as material preserved by oral tradition, probably at Antioch. The theory similarly provides additional sources for Luke: document labeled L, for material peculiar to Luke, and an oral tradition which furnished the materials for the first two chapters of the Gospel.

It should be noted that both these theories rest heavily upon conjecture, despite their wide acceptance and approval by notable critics. There are scholars, for example, who hold with the ancient tradition which names Matthew as the first of the Gospels chronologically and who on good grounds question that a document like Q ever existed. The traditional view in our Lutheran Church and in the Christian Church generally has been that the details of the origin and historical interrelationship of the Synoptic Gospels simply cannot be definitely determined.

<sup>2</sup>Bultmann's essay entitled "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels" is a particularly helpful, short introduction to his form critical methodology. It appears in an English translation by Frederick C. Grant in Form Criticism: Two Essays on New Testament Research by Rudolf Bultmann and Karl Kundsinn, a volume in the Harper Torchbooks series (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 7-76. This essay, which was published in Germany in 1925 (Second edition, 1930), is a "popular" exposition of the method elaborated at far greater length in Bultmann's 1921 The History of the Synoptic Tradition, translated from the German by John Marsh (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).

<sup>3</sup>Apothegms, according to Bultmann, are terse, instructive sayings of Jesus "which have been handed down in association with a little scene, in which according to the tradition they were originally spoken." (Form Criticism, p. 39)

<sup>4</sup>A legend may be defined as an unauthenticated story from earlier times, preserved by tradition and popularly thought to be historical; a myth, as a traditional story, usually focusing on the deeds of gods or heroes and purporting to be historical. Thus, a myth may be regarded as a special type of legend.

<sup>5</sup>Kurt Aland, Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum (Second edition; Stuttgart: Wuertembergische Bibelanstalt, c. 1964), para. 146, pp. 205-209, may be used to good advantage for this purpose.

<sup>6</sup>Critical opinion is divided as to whether--or at least to what extent--the form critical method is applicable to the Gospel of John. Joachim Rohde writes, for example, in Rediscovering the Teaching of the Evangelists, translated from the German by Dorothea M. Barton (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), p. 8: "It is only in the case of the Gospel of John that the form-critical method is not applicable to the same extent as to the other New Testament writings. No method has yet been found, in view of its peculiar nature, which could be applied to the Gospel of John in the same way as form criticism." Rohde states, p. 255, that Siegfried Schulz (in Die Stunde der Botschaft-Einfuehrung in die Theologie der vier Evangelien, 1967) supposes that the author of the fourth Gospel probably knew none of the synoptic Gospels, though he was acquainted with the tradition that they used. A similar view is expressed by J. Louis Martyn, History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. xx. R. H. Lightfoot, on the other hand, is representative of those scholars who contend for the probability that John not only knew of his predecessors' works and of the regard paid to them in the Church, but that he also sought to supplement and interpret them; see St. John's Gospel, edited by C. F. Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 31-33. Critics who are of this opinion apply form critical methodology to the fourth Gospel, too. The writer of the present paper will proceed on the assumption that the Gospel of John (and the Johannine feeding narrative, in particular) may be subjected to form critical analysis.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Bultmann, History, p. 340.

<sup>8</sup>The mention of the lateness in the day in Mark 6:35, Matt. 14:15, and Luke 9:12 could be regarded as part of the primitive tradition and not as editorial addition, since the advanced hour is given as the reason for the people's need of food, thus setting the stage for the performance of the feeding miracle.

Cf. Bultmann, History, p. 243. -- The reference to (much) (green) grass in Mark 6:39, Matt. 14:18, and John 6:10 is, like "desert place," regarded as secondary.

<sup>9</sup>Bultmann writes, ibid., p. 221: "It is characteristic of the miracle itself that the actual miraculous event is almost never described, such as the actual multiplication of the bread by the miracle worker, but only the accompanying circumstances."

<sup>10</sup>Bultmann discusses the style of miracle stories in ibid., pp. 217-226.

<sup>11</sup>According to Bultmann, the "cultic motive" or "faith interest" in the creation of early Christian miracle stories and legends, the record of which is preserved in the Gospels, is to be understood as follows. The primitive Christian community's first belief concerning Jesus' Messiahship was that He became the divinely appointed Messiah at his resurrection and that He will come again to judge the world and save his people. Gradually, however, his earthly life came to be viewed as the life and work of the Messiah. (The Church's initial reservation on this point is presumed to be reflected in the "Messianic Secret" set forth in Mark's Gospel.) To bolster this conviction, pious Christian fancy began to compose legendary (mythical) episodes and miracle stories and insert these into the narrative of Jesus' life. The new accounts were probably introduced gradually at the community's worship gatherings, when the figure of Jesus, his life and teaching, was set forth before the eyes of the faithful. Thus, the cult is to be regarded as the Sitz im Leben which originated and perpetuated the miracle stories and legends. Cf. Bultmann, "Study," in Grant, pp. 64-70.

Bultmann theorizes that the feeding stories originated in the Palestinian Church. Their attribution to Jesus may have been suggested by miracle stories of the Old Testament (e.g., 2 Kings 4:42-44) and/or of Jewish tradition, or by the Christian celebration of the Eucharist. See Bultmann, History, pp. 228-241.

<sup>12</sup>Bultmann, History, pp. 342-343, 355, and elsewhere.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. Furthermore: "Then this emphasis became dogmatic: as the constant companions of Jesus the Twelve are the authoritative witnesses to the gospel (Acts 1:21f., 10:39f.)," p. 344.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 307-308.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. ibid., p. 228.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 309-310; 241.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>19</sup>It may be noted here that Bultmann (ibid., p. 217) regards Mark 8:1-9, the story of the feeding of the four thousand, a variant of 6:34-44. He considers a part of the chapter 8 account more original, since it has "no editorial additions at its opening" and because it has "no reflection of the κύκλῳ ἀφ' οὗ καὶ κώμης in v. 3 . . . ." -- Reference may be made here to Mark 6:32-33 (Matt. 14:13), Luke 9:10b, and John 6:1, which are regarded as initial editorial additions to the original feeding tradition. An increasing explicitness in detail is encountered when proceeding from Mark to Luke and John. Whereas Mark (supposed to be a source for the third and fourth evangelists) speaks of the destination of Christ and the apostles as a desert place, Luke names the destination as (the region of) Bethsaida. While Mark and Matthew report a trip simply "by boat," John identifies the body of water on which the trip is made as the Sea of Galilee, the Tiberian.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. Bultmann, ibid., pp. 350-351, 359, 362.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. Bultmann, ibid., pp. 312-313. In the same way John 6:10a is seen to be an advance on Mark 6:39, Matt. 14:19, and Luke 9:14b. With reference to ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ' αὐτοὺς in Mark 6:34, Bultmann states (p. 313) that this phrase is more original in form than σπλαγχνίζομαι ἐπὶ τὸν ὄχλον in Mark 8:2.

<sup>22</sup>Cf. Bultmann, ibid., p. 217 and p. 66.

<sup>23</sup>Bultmann, ibid., p. 217, remarks: "As in 8:1f., Jesus' σπλαγχνίσθη would have referred originally to the hunger of the multitude, and his teaching would have been a secondary motif, by which Mark was able to introduce the tradition saying about the sheep without a shepherd."

<sup>24</sup>E. Basil Redlich, Form Criticism, Its Value and Limitations (London: Duckworth, c. 1939), pp. 40-41.

<sup>25</sup>Robert Gundry, The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), p. 192.

<sup>26</sup>From the point of view of conservative Lutheran scholarship, an adjudging as non-historical what the Gospels present as actual historical happening and what the canons of Biblically sanctioned traditional, Lutheran hermeneutics, handed down from the period of the Reformation, require the exegete to accept as

historical fact, can occur only in conjunction with a disregard of the Scriptural doctrine of the inspiration and inerrancy of the Word of God and of the time-honored Lutheran and Christian principles for the interpretation of that Word. The form critical procedure which operates in this manner is to be summarily rejected.

<sup>27</sup>Martin Franzmann, The Word of the Lord Grows: A First Historical Introduction to the New Testament (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), p. 217.

<sup>28</sup>To suppose that the great majority of the reports of Jesus' activities were myths, created only a few years after his death by the fertile imagination of early Christian preachers, teachers, or a body of story-tellers, and were at once credulously accepted by members of the Christian congregations and to presume that such hoaxes could have been perpetrated on the people of the early church despite the presence of Jesus' apostles and other eyewitnesses of his ministry (who could and certainly would have checked any and all unhistorical tendencies), is utterly preposterous. This would be to operate with the absurd notion that "the early primitive church consisted of men and women who were under the influence of phantasy!" as Redlich puts it (p. 61). Far more sensible is the view that what the Gospels report concerning the activities of Christ actually occurred, that the narratives are historically true.

<sup>29</sup>Franzmann, p. 217. With a few modifications, the main principles and procedures of Bultmann's form criticism are still followed by scholars who employ the historical critical method today.

<sup>30</sup>Redlich, p. 77.

<sup>31</sup>Vincent Taylor, The Formation of the Gospel Tradition (2nd edition; London: Macmillan and Company, c. 1935), p. 124.

<sup>32</sup>E. P. Sanders, The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 272.

<sup>33</sup>Dan Via, in the editor's foreword of Norman Perrin's What Is Redaction Criticism? (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. vi.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 1. Cf. Rohde, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. vi-vii.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>38</sup>Bornkamm's essay, "End-Expectation and the Church in Matthew," gives fuller expression to viewpoints presented in the paper. This essay is one of the redaction critical studies on Matthew's Gospel which comprise the volume Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew by Guenther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz Held, translated from the German by Percy Scott (London: SCM Press, 1963).

<sup>39</sup>Perrin, pp. 27-28.

<sup>40</sup>Hans Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke, translated from the German by Geoffrey Buswell (London: Daber and Faber, 1960).

<sup>41</sup>Perrin, p. 29. (Cf. Conzelmann, pp. 93-94.)

<sup>42</sup>Conzelmann and the redaction critics who follow him hold that the writer of Luke implemented this purpose by having the salvation history presented in his Gospel emerge in three stages. These are referred to as the period of Israel (cf. "the law and the prophets," Luke 16:16), the period of Jesus' ministry as the "center of time" (cf. Luke 4:16-21; Acts 10:38), and the period of the Church (the epoch which began at Pentecost; "on earth the period of the ecclesia pressa, during which the virtue of patience is required, and it is possible, by virtue of looking back to the period of Jesus, also to look forward to the Parousia," as Conzelmann says). Conzelmann adds: "The Parousia itself does not represent a stage within the course of saving history, but the end of it. It corresponds to the other extreme, the Creation." The Theology of St. Luke, pp. 16-17; cf. Willi Marxsen's summary amplification in Introduction to the New Testament, translated from the third German edition by G. Busell (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), pp. 156-159.

<sup>43</sup>Willi Marxsen, Mark the Evangelist, translated from the German by James Boyce, Donald Juel, William Poehlmann with Roy A. Harrisville (New York: Abingdon Press, 1969).

<sup>44</sup>Perrin, pp. 33-35.

<sup>45</sup>For a concise explanation of the "Galilee-orientation" of Mark's Gospel and for a comparison of the significance of Galilee in the Gospels of the second and third evangelists, see Marxsen, Mark, pp. 92-102.

<sup>46</sup>Op cit.

<sup>47</sup>Marxsen, Introduction, pp. 143-144. J. M. Robinson's The Problem of History in Mark (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1957), while "not explicitly an example of the redaction-critical method" (according to Perrin, p. 83), is regarded as moving in the direction of this discipline. Robinson offers some comments which may be regarded as being in the nature of redaction critical commentary on parts of the Marcan narrative of the feeding of the five thousand. He states concerning ~~οχλος~~ (a term which appears in the Marcan feeding story) that "The Marcan term for 'crowd' is a secular term (~~οχλος~~), while he avoids the term ~~λαος~~, which is rendered sacred in the LXX as the designation of the chosen people" (p. 72). Robinson then observes: "The fascinated crowds who surround Jesus are clearly not looked upon with favor by Mark" (p. 73).

Robinson discusses the Marcan presentation of table fellowship, which he feels is particularly useful in interpreting Mark's understanding of his own history. He expresses the view that "the two feedings of the multitude (6.34-44; 8.1-9, 14-21) are eucharistic" and comments, p. 83: "Mark's table fellowship is for him a sacred, eschatological society. The eucharist is the fellowship of the interim, looking back upon Jesus' death (14.22-24; 10.39f.45), and forward to the parousia (14.25). It is the communion of the eschatological 'covenant' (11.24). Jesus feeds his Church miraculously and superabundantly (6.34ff.; 8.1ff), and the 'Son of Man' feeds his disciples as the Lord of the eschatological Sabbath (2.23-28). Just as feasting is in the presence of the eschatological bridegroom, fasting is in terms of his absence (2.19f). Therefore it is evident that this table fellowship is not a secular or peripheral part of Mark's experience, but rather a sphere where the eschatological reality is the formative factor."

Robinson sees the ethical virtue of compassion as predominating at the two miraculous feedings reported in Mark (p. 84), and finds a deep significance in the broken fragments of food left over, to which both Marcan feeding accounts make reference. That significance is explained in this way (pp. 84-85): "The Marcan table fellowship is also involved in the correct definition of its constituency. Its policy of inclusiveness is attested on all sides: it admits 'tax-gatherers and sinners' (2.13ff.); the eucharist is for the 'many' (14.24; 10.45); the Syrophenician woman is after all 'fed' (7.25-30). The emphasis upon 'the children's crumbs' (7.28) has as its parallel the emphasis in both miraculous feedings on the quantity of broken pieces left over (7.43; 8.8). This aspect of the two feedings is brought forward as what is to be 'understood' (8.14-21). The miracle of the multiplied food points to the miracle of the Church, that the eschatological reality is sufficiently inexhaustible to make possible a society open to all humanity."

<sup>48</sup>This study may be found in Bornkamm, Tradition, pp. 165-299.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 299. Cf. Marxsen's comment in Introduction, 150: "Matthew turns miracle stories as they have come down to him into illustrative didactic stories, with the result that from the conduct and faith of the original disciples we are shown by way of example what is required of the later Church in conduct and faith. We can see this, for example, in the theme of 'little faith' which Matthew introduces into passages where his source speaks of unbelief or hardness of heart (cf. viii. 26 and Mk. iv. 40; xvi. 8 and Mk. viii. 17). Matthew is not concerned with the question of becoming a Christian (unbelief--belief) but with the building up of the Christian life (belief--little belief). We must of course bear in mind that this 'ecclesiastical adaptation' of the traditional material cannot always be clearly seen in each alteration that is made, but rather emerges as a general impression from the tendency that finds expression in all the alterations."

<sup>50</sup>Bornkamm, Tradition, pp. 165-169.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 182. Held discusses Matt. 14:15-21 on pp. 181-185. The quotations and summary which follow are taken from these pages.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 167.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 187.

<sup>54</sup>Conzelmann, p. 192.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 55. Cf. pp. 54-56. Conzelmann asks the question, however (p. 55): "Does he [Luke] know that Bethsaida was outside Herod's jurisdiction?"

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 40. It should be remembered that, according to Conzelmann (p. 97), "Luke's eschatology, compared with the original conception of the imminence of the Kingdom, is a secondary construction based on certain considerations which with the passage of time cannot be avoided. It is obvious what gives rise to these reflections--the delay of the Parousia. The original idea presupposes that what is hoped for is near, which means that the hope cannot be reconciled with a delay, as otherwise the connection with the present would be lost."

<sup>57</sup>Marxsen, Introduction, pp. 157-158.

<sup>58</sup>Perrin, p. 85. (For a possible, partial explanation, see Footnote 6 above.)

<sup>59</sup>R. H. Lightfoot is "actually the first redaction critic," in Perrin's estimate; "in the ways in which he goes beyond Dibelius and Bultmann he anticipates the methodology that was to come into full flower in the work of Guenther Bornkamm, Hans Conzelmann, and Willi Marxsen." Perrin, p. 22; see pp. 21-24.

- <sup>60</sup>Lightfoot, pp. 32-33. The same pages are the source for the other observations.
- <sup>61</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>62</sup>See Marxsen, Introduction, pp. 252-258.
- <sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 253.
- <sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 254.
- <sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 257.
- <sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 258.
- <sup>67</sup>Martyn, pp. 80-81.
- <sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 83.
- <sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 114.
- <sup>70</sup>See pp. 18-25 above.
- <sup>71</sup>Rohde, p. 139. Rohde, on pp. 136-140, presents a seven-point criticism of Marxsen's studies in Mark's Gospel.
- <sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 139.
- <sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 177. A nine-point evaluation of Conzelmann's views as presented in The Theology of St. Luke is offered by Rohde on pp. 175-178.
- <sup>74</sup>Rohde, p. 147.
- <sup>75</sup>Ibid., pp. 177-178.
- <sup>76</sup>See pp. 34-37.
- <sup>77</sup>Rohde, p. 137.
- <sup>78</sup>See pp. 31-33 above.

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## APPENDIX

### Texts of the Four Gospel Accounts

#### Matthew 14: 13-21

<sup>13</sup>Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a lonely place apart. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup>As he went ashore he saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick. <sup>15</sup>When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a lonely place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." <sup>16</sup>Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." <sup>17</sup>They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." <sup>18</sup>And he said, "Bring them here to me." <sup>19</sup>Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass; and taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. <sup>20</sup>And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. <sup>21</sup>And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

#### Mark 6: 32-44

<sup>32</sup>And they went away in the boat to a lonely place by themselves. <sup>33</sup>Now many saw them going, and knew them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns, and got there ahead of them. <sup>34</sup>As he landed he saw a great throng, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. <sup>35</sup>And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a lonely place, and the hour is now late; send them away, to go into the country and villages round about and buy themselves something to eat." <sup>37</sup>But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?" <sup>38</sup>And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." And when they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." <sup>39</sup>Then he commanded them all to sit down by companies upon the green grass. <sup>40</sup>So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. <sup>41</sup>And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. <sup>42</sup>And they all ate and were satisfied. <sup>43</sup>And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. <sup>44</sup>And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

#### Luke 9: 10-17

<sup>10</sup>On their return the apostles told him what they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a city called Bethsaida. <sup>11</sup>When the crowds learned it, they followed him; and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and cured those who had need of healing. <sup>12</sup>Now the day began to wear away; and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away, to go into the villages and country round about, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a lonely place." <sup>13</sup>But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish--unless we are to go and buy food for all these people." <sup>14</sup>For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "Make them sit down in companies, about fifty each." <sup>15</sup>And they did so, and made them all sit down. <sup>16</sup>And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. <sup>17</sup>And all ate and were satisfied. And they took up what was left over, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

#### John 6: 1-15

<sup>1</sup>And this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. <sup>2</sup>And a multitude followed him, because they saw the signs which he did on those who were diseased. <sup>3</sup>Jesus went up into the hills, and there sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup>Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. <sup>5</sup>Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a multitude was coming to him, Jesus said to Philip, "How are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" <sup>6</sup>This he said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. <sup>7</sup>Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." <sup>8</sup>One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, <sup>9</sup>"There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what are they among so many?" <sup>10</sup>Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place; so the men sat down, in number about five thousand. <sup>11</sup>Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup>And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, that nothing may be lost." <sup>13</sup>So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten. <sup>14</sup>When the people saw the sign which he had done, they said, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world!" <sup>15</sup>Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the hills by himself.