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ABSTRACT

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS AND THE EARLY CHURCH

R.P.MARSHALL

This thesis is concerned with the theological significance of the Transfiguration of Jesus. It is an attempt to put into a true perspective an event in the earthly life of Jesus which is too often ignored and misunderstood. It seeks to establish the importance of the Transfiguration in the ministry of Jesus, within the Early Church, and in the general framework of New Testament expectation.

As well as the three, synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration, the account recorded in 2 Peter is also analysed. Here, we argue, lies a reference to the Transfiguration which is authentically Petrine (though used in this Epistle by a pseudonymous author) and which may well have influenced the Evangelists when they recorded the same event. The context of the Transfiguration in 2 Peter 1.16-18 is that of an apology for the delay of the Parousia, which the Early Church, it would seem, had expected immediately after the ascension.

We argue that the 2 Peter account could, therefore, be the primitive, Petrine reminiscence of the Apostle Peter, recorded by an unknown author to make his work appear more authentic. The context of the Transfiguration within 2 Peter and, therefore, in the Early Church, would seem to be that of a prefiguration of all that will take place when Christ appears again in glory. Each of the synoptic writers were undoubtedly aware of this understanding of the Transfiguration tradition as they, in turn, moulded the narrative into their Gospel narratives. In all three synoptic accounts, the parallelism between Baptism and Transfiguration, the placing of the account near to events at Caesarea Philippi, and the importance of Mk.9.1 (and parallels), points to a simple and yet crucial development within the Gospels of the understanding of the Early Church concerning the Transfiguration of Jesus. The Transfiguration was a prefiguration of the Parousia of Jesus.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS AND THE EARLY CHURCH

by

Robert P. Marshall

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONSVERSIONS

RSV.	Revised Standard Edition
JB.	Jerusalem Bible
NEB.	New English Bible

BIBLICALOLD TESTAMENT

Gen.	Genesis
Ex.	Exodus
Dt.	Deuteronomy
I. Chron.	I. Chronicles
Ps.	Psalms
Is.	Isaiah
Jer.	Jeremiah
Ez.	Ezekiel
Dan.	Daniel
Hos.	Hosea
Mich.	Micah
Zeph.	Zephaniah
Hag.	Haggai
Mal.	Malachi

NEW TESTAMENT

Mat.	Matthew
Mk.	Mark
Lk.	Luke
Jn.	John
Rom.	Romans
1. Cor.	1. Corinthians
2. Cor.	2. Corinthians
Gal.	Galatians
Eph.	Ephesians
Phil.	Philippians
Col.	Colossians
1. Thess.	1. Thessalonians
2. Thess.	2. Thessalonians
1. Tim.	1. Timothy
2. Tim.	2. Timothy
Tit.	Titus
Rev.	Revelations

NON-BIBLICAL LITERATURE

II Bar.	Syrian Apocalypse of Baruch
Eth.En.	Ethiopic Book of Enoch
2.Esd.	2. Esdras
Syr.Bar.	Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch
Sl.En.	Slavonic Book of Enoch
I.En.	Greek Book of Enoch
Sir.	Book of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
Apoc.Pet.	Apocalypse of Peter
Test.Lev.	Testament of Levi
Test.Jud.	Testament of Judah
Ps. of Sol.	Psalms of Solomon
Peskit r.	Pesikta Rabbati
1 QM.	War Scroll (Qumran)
1 QH	Hymns (Qumran)
CD.	Damascus Document (Qumran)

CHURCH FATHERS

Origen	Hom.	Homilies
Eusebius.	H.E.	Historia Ecclesiastica
Josephus.	Ant.	Antiquities
Irenaeus.	Adv.Haer.	Adversus haereses
Philo.	Spec.Leg.	De Specialibus Legibus.

REFERENCE WORKS AND JOURNALS

AJT.	American Journal of Theology
BASOR.	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research.
Bib.	Biblica.
BJRL.	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library
BTB.	Biblical Theological Bulletin.
CBQ.	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
EvQ.	Evangelical Quarterly
Expos.	Expositor
Ext.	Expository Times
HTR.	Harvard Theological Review
Int.	Interpretation
JBL.	Journal of Biblical Literature
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
NT	Novum Testamentum
NTS	New Testament Studies
RB	Revue Biblique
RE	Review and Expositor
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
St.Ev.	Studia Evangelica
TB	Tyndal Bulletin
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
Theol.	Theology
Thz.	Theologische Zeitschrift der theologischen Fakultät der Universität Basel.
TT.	Theology Today

USQR	Union Seminary Quarterly Review
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins.
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft.
ZTK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

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INTRODUCTION

The Transfiguration of Jesus is one of the most profound theological mysteries of the New Testament. It is recorded in all three Synoptic Gospels (Mark 9:2-8; Matthew 17:1-8; Luke 9:28-36) and referred to in only one Epistle (2 Peter 1:16-18). In the New Testament the Transfiguration does not fit into any of the accepted categories, such as 'miracle' or 'parable' and it is unparalleled as an event in the terrestrial life of Jesus in the Gospels. In nearly all aspects of religious and theological discussion the Transfiguration of Jesus remains relatively obscure. In New Testament studies, the event is relatively ignored when a comparison is made between the treatment of other significant events (Eg. Baptism, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension) in the life of Jesus and the Transfiguration. Similarly, in Systematic Theology, especially the debate concerning the humanity and divinity of Jesus, there is a distinct famine of references to an event which would seem to embody much of what it means to conceive of the person of Jesus as 'God' and 'Man'. Also, in the liturgy of the Church (with the notable exception of the Eastern Orthodox tradition) the Transfiguration remains an outsider, finding no place in either the Nicene or the Apostles' Creed and only in the 1928 revision of the Book of Common Prayer was it accepted as worthy of a Collect, Epistle and Gospel in an Anglican Prayer Book.

This paucity of references both in theological and biblical studies, as well as the relative unimportance of the Transfiguration in the life of the worshipping Church in the West, suggests that either the Transfiguration is an event of small significance in the life of Jesus or that the episode remains so much of a mystery to those who have attempted to unravel it that scholarly debate and progress have been thwarted by the very nature of the event. Of these two suggestions, the second would seem to be the most likely to explain the relative famine of references to the

Transfiguration. It is abundantly clear, to any serious reader of either of the synoptic accounts, that the Transfiguration plays a very important role in the life of Jesus and in his growing awareness of his identity as the Son of God and Messiah in glory. The problem, it would seem, lies with those who have attempted to unravel the mystery of the Transfiguration only to discover that it remains an enigma.

The aim of this thesis is quite simple. In the light of discussion which has already taken place this century, we will examine afresh the evidence available to us and essay to come to an acceptable conclusion as to the theological significance of the Transfiguration in the ministry of Jesus and in the New Testament era as a whole. This involves not only a reappraisal of the biblical narratives themselves but also a consideration of the limited scholarly opinion which has already expressed itself and the various lines of interpretation open for us to pursue.

In our opening chapter our intention is to briefly put the debate into its proper context. We will outline not only the obvious differences in detail that exist in the biblical accounts of the Transfiguration but also summarise briefly the four main explanations that have been offered as attempts to unravel the theological puzzle of the Transfiguration. This will lead us on to examine the various sources and influences that played a part in the formation and emergence of the Gospel of Mark. Here, our particular concern will be the role played by the Early Church in the formation of the Gospels as we now have them and to establish the influence of the Epistles upon the Gospels rather than vice-versa.

Chapter III will then deal with the reference to the Transfiguration in 2 Peter. 1: 16-18. The question as to the role played by the apostle Peter in the formation of this account will be asked because of Peter's obvious role in the emergence of the Gospel of Mark. A short summary of the present climate of opinion concerning the authorship and content of

2 Peter as a whole will also be provided. We will then progress to see if the use of the Transfiguration of Jesus in 2 Peter, and its context within the Epistle as a whole, assists us in our attempt to discover the theological understanding of the Evangelists in their use of the Transfiguration narrative.

Chapter IV will take the form of a short exegesis of the account as it is recorded in the Gospel of Mark. The aim of this chapter will be to establish the theological purpose of Mark in his use of the Transfiguration. Particularly important is the context of narrative in Mark. A.M. Ramsey suggests that the Transfiguration, along with Peter's confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi, forms "a watershed in the ministry of Jesus"¹ and this point must be explored further. Similarly, the role of the disciples², the mountain, the voice, the cloud, the glory and presence of Moses and Elijah will need to be explained. Once a satisfactory theological explanation of the narrative itself and the various motifs employed by the Evangelists has been obtained, our final chapter must develop the arguments and suggest ways in which the theological understanding of the Transfiguration narrative can be further explained.

Such an exploration of the material and ideas surrounding and concerning the Transfiguration of Jesus may lead us to a renewed understanding as to the significance of the event in the life of Jesus and in the Church today. We shall be dealing with areas of New Testament study (Eg. Gospel of Mark, 2 Peter, the Parousia in the New Testament) which could demand a thesis in their own right and therefore, the reader is asked to bear in mind the subject which is our chief concern; how do we explain the Transfiguration of Jesus? We begin by summarising the state of Transfiguration criticism at the present time and, before that, reminding ourselves of the chief characteristics of each of the Gospel accounts.

1. A.M. Ramsey. The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ. (1947) p.101.

2. A Farrer. A Study in Mark. (1951) "the calling of the three Apostolic witnesses to the full exercise of their function". p.111

CHAPTER I. THE TRANSFIGURATION: THE DEBATE IN CONTEXT

Any serious consideration of the Transfiguration narrative demands an understanding of the present debate surrounding both its role and its significance in biblical criticism. In the Gospels themselves, all three synoptic accounts follow a similar pattern of narrative though there are important differences in minor detail which we will consider throughout this study. Jesus takes his three closest disciples (Peter, James and John) to a high and lonely mountain where he is transfigured before them, and glows with the presence of the glory of God. It is Peter who acts as spokesman for the disciples and he becomes afraid at the sight of the two heavenly figures who are reported to be Moses and Elijah. Then a voice is heard to come from a cloud which calls those present to listen to what Jesus is saying to them. This outline is common to all three synoptic accounts. In each of the three accounts there are variants in detail which suggests that each of the Evangelists is pursuing his own theological interests and, also, the theological emphasis in each account varies according to the author's interests. There is no direct reference to the Transfiguration in the Fourth Gospel.

We will assume Marcan priority for no reason other than that the Transfiguration seems to be an excellent example of a narrative where Matthew and Luke seem to have adapted what is basically Mark's account.¹ There is nothing in the three accounts that is peculiar to Mark. Both H. Riesenfeld² and A. Kenny³ agree that the central theme of the Marcan

1. There is no point in pursuing here a prolonged discussion concerning the Synoptic Problem. It is quite clear, on my understanding, that Mark is almost certainly the first Evangelist to have written down his account.

Cf. W. R. Farmer. The Synoptic Problem (New York, 1964).

H. G. Wood. "The Priority of Mark". ExT. 65 (1953-54) p. 17-19.

2. H. Riesenfeld. Jésus Transfiguré (1947) p. 281.

3. A. Kenny. "The Transfiguration and the Agony in the Garden". CEQ 19 (1957) p. 444-452.

account of the Transfiguration is the importance and significance of discipleship; the glory is revealed for the sake of the disciples that they might see Jesus in his true relationship with the God who speaks to him. Kenny believes that this is especially clear when a comparison is made between the Transfiguration of Jesus and the Garden of Gethsemane episodes. The same three disciples, Peter, James and John are present in the garden. Also, the phrase $\text{Οὐ γὰρ ἤδει τί λαλήσῃ. ἦσαν γὰρ ἔκφοβοι}$ appears in both Mark 9:6 and Mark 14:40 which, in Kenny's view, underlines the central theme of discipleship in both events; "they are two of the most significant episodes of our Lord's revelation of himself to his disciples".¹ Thus it would seem likely that Mark has used the Transfiguration narrative within his Gospel framework to establish the importance of discipleship to those who were with Jesus and followed him. It was essential that the divine glory was revealed to those who had begun to understand the significance of Jesus' coming into the world.

Bishop Michael Ramsey believes that the Matthean account is obviously based upon that provided by Mark, but he suggests that there is a heightening of the comparison between Moses and Jesus in Matthew.² The strongest 'evidence' to support such an explanation lies in the reversal of the order 'Elijah with Moses' which is to be found in Mark.³ In Matthew we are told that it was Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἠλίας who appeared with Jesus. In a later chapter we will discover the close parallels that exist between the Transfiguration and some of the various Exodus narratives where similar events including clouds, voices and mountains are described. One such reference is Ex.40:35

1. A Kenny. art.cit p.449, though Mk.9:6/14:40 adopt different Greek.

2. From a personal conversation on the Transfiguration with Bishop Ramsey in Durham, (1981).

3. Cf. D.Hill. The Gospel According to St.Matthew. (1972).

which Feuillet suggests is strongly reminiscent of Matthew 17:5; this is also taken to be a hint that Matthew sees a closer significance between Jesus and Moses than does either Mark or Luke.¹ It is, however, very likely that the themes of new exodus and of Jesus as the new Moses played at least some role in Matthew's understanding of this narrative. In most ways, however, the function of the narrative within the Gospel of Matthew is very similar to that of Mark.

The Lucan account of the Transfiguration story has attracted most attention.² It is the most independent of the three accounts and in some parts has been partially altered to fit in with Luke's scheme of thought and his Gospel as a whole. Thus, the ἡμέρας ἑξ of Mark and Matthew becomes ὥσπερ ἡμέρας ὀκτώ for no particular or obvious reason. Godet suggests that the most simple explanation for this change would be that Luke, in using ὀκτώ was guessing the chronology, whilst Matthew and Mark had a more authentic and accurate source. Godet also suggests that Holtzman may be correct in pointing out that Luke "affects to be a better chronologist than the others".³ A major and much more important detail which is added by Luke is that Jesus (and presumably his disciples) went up the mountain προσεύξασθαι. The activity of prayer is much more directly associated with Jesus in Luke and, as at other important moments in his ministry, it is not uncharacteristic of Luke to suggest that Jesus was praying when he was transfigured before his disciples.⁴

Apart from the chronological discrepancy and the reference to prayer there are two other features of Luke's account which are highly individual.

1. Cf. A. Feuillet. "Les perspectives propres à chaque Evangeliste dans les récits de la Transfiguration". *Bib* 39 (1958) p.281-301.

2. A.M. Ramsey, op.cit. I.H. Marshall. The Gospel According to Luke (1978) lay great emphasis on Luke's account.
F. Godet. Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel (1890) p.423.

3. O. Holtzman. Das Neue Testament (1926) p.861.

4. Cf. Luke 3:21 which links the Baptism and the Transfiguration directly.

Luke does not refer to a 'transfigured' Jesus. Rather, along with Moses and Elijah we are told that οἱ δὲ φθέβοντες ἐν δόξῃ and it is only in the third Gospel that an explicit reference is made to the doxa which we must presume was a direct result of Jesus' transfigured state. In Matthew and Mark we are simply told that Jesus was transfigured and no mention is made of his doxa; in Luke we are not told that Jesus was transfigured but we are told that his glory was revealed. Explanations for this are investigated at a later stage in this work. For the moment it must suffice for us to state that the verb μεταμορφώω was probably not adopted by Luke because of its Pagan overtones. In other religions and cults, especially in the Greek world, magicians were frequently known to 'transform' themselves from men to animals by use of magic.¹ However, C.E.B. Cranfield states that the verb 'transfigured' was deeply rooted in Apocalyptic Judaism (Cf. Dan. 12:3., II Bar. 51:3., 51:5., 51:10., 51:12., Enoch 38:4., 104:2., IV Esra 7:97) rather than in the Pagan world.² Either way we must conclude that Luke, in attempting to underline the importance of the revelation of the glory of God made manifest in Jesus, has used the word doxa in a similar way to that used in other parts of the Gospel (Cf. Lk. 1:35., 2:9., 11., 30., 32). The final, significant difference in the Lucan account of the Transfiguration narrative is his revelation of the subject of the conversation which took place between Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Luke suggests that ἔλεγον τῷ ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ... . The reference to Jesus' exodus connects the Transfiguration with the events that take place later in the Gospel in Jerusalem and this suggests a change that will take place in Jesus' ministry, and in the tone and direction of the Gospel of Luke.

1. Eg. This is mentioned by A.E.J. Rawlinson. The Gospel According to St. Mark. (1936).

2. C.E.B. Cranfield. The Gospel According to St. Mark. (1959) p.290.

I.H.Marshall suggests that there are four possible interpretations of the word exodus:

- a) simply the death of Christ
- b) the resurrection and ascension of Jesus after his death
- c) the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ
- d) "the whole life of Jesus that was coming to an end".¹

The Lucan account of the Transfiguration is crucial to the Gospel of Luke as a whole and it is more distinctive than either of the two other synoptic accounts: "Luke is relating the event to the inner life of Jesus".² In all three Gospels the Transfiguration narrative plays a dual role in each case; first, the narrative acts as a visible demonstration of Jesus' pre-existent glory, but it is also used to enrich our understanding and colour the particular portrait that each Evangelist is painting of Jesus the Messiah.

Apart from the three synoptic accounts, the Transfiguration of Jesus is given little prominence either elsewhere in the New Testament or in the writings of the Early Church and the Fathers. As we have already stated, there is no direct reference to the story in the Fourth Gospel. The only other direct reference to the Transfiguration is to be found in 2 Peter 1: 16-20, where a much more concise summary of the event is given and we shall analyse this in greater detail at a later stage.

Paul uses the verb 'transfigured' when he writes μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν³ which might suggest that he was, at least, acquainted with the synoptic tradition. But this is only an isolated reference and Paul never mentions the event directly. Much the same is true of other early Christian documents, although there is an extensive reference to the Transfiguration in the Apocalypse of Peter which we will briefly

1. I.H.Marshall. The Gospel According to St. Luke. (1978).

2. Ramsey op.cit p.122.

3. 2 Cor. 3:18.

examine following our consideration of the 2 Peter account. It is quite clear, however, that there is scant reference to the Transfiguration story either in the New Testament outside of the Synoptic Gospels or in the traditions and documents of the Early Church as they have been passed down.

Even amongst biblical scholars the Transfiguration remains an enigma. In commentaries on the various Synoptic Gospels and in books relating to christology and the person of Jesus Christ, there is little attention given to the Transfiguration of Jesus. Possibly this is because of the nature of the event itself, in that commentators find it difficult to explain with any certainty the theological significance and christological function of the narrative. Nevertheless, four clear areas of interpretation have emerged as a result of the work of those scholars who have pursued the significance of the Transfiguration and these may be summarised as follows:

- (i) Those who believe that the Transfiguration was originally a resurrection account which has been misplaced by its location in a pre-resurrection context.¹
- (ii) Those who see the Old Testament as essential to our understanding of the event because of its reliance on Old Testament motifs and imagery and, in particular, the cult.²

1. Eg. R. Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, (1963) p.259f.
C.E. Carlston, "Transfiguration and Resurrection" JBL 80
(1961) p.233-240.

2. Eg. H. Riesenfeld, op.cit.

- (iii) Those who interpret the Transfiguration as a pre-figuration of the Parousia in which the glory of Jesus is futuristic yet present.¹
- (iv) Those who see the Transfiguration as a vision of the disciples and, possibly, as part of Jesus' self-disclosure as the Son of God.²

These four explanations summarise the present options available to us if we are to analyse the Transfiguration from the point of any accepted, contemporary theory. It is important that we look at each of these options and briefly outline their arguments more fully.

Those who hold that the Transfiguration is a mis-placed resurrection account which has been placed into the terrestrial life of Christ (i) include Rudolph Bultmann. In the 1960's this view commanded much support. Bultmann insisted that "the Transfiguration story, originally a resurrection account, dates his Messiahship from the resurrection onwards".³ Carlston also believed that both the denials of Peter that he knew Jesus (Mark 14:66f, Matthew 26:69-75, Luke 22:56-62) and the fear of the disciples after the crucifixion (Eg. Matthew 28:17, Luke 24:37) suggest that the disciples could hardly have witnessed the Transfiguration of Jesus and then responded in this way.⁴ In a sense, Carlston's argument is very plausible but the disciples' behaviour is hardly surprising, even if they had witnessed the Transfiguration, since the human memory is short and individuals placed in such danger as Peter was when he was accused of belonging to Jesus' immediate circle are prone to forget even extraordinary situations and events. Indeed, many of these criticisms have been included in a very

1. Eg. G.H. Boobyer. St. Mark and the Transfiguration Story (1942).

2. Eg. H.C. Kee "The Transfiguration in Mark: Epiphany or Apocalyptic Vision" in Understanding the Sacred Text. (J. Reumann ed. 1972).
C. Rowland. The Open Heaven (1982) p. 366f.

3. Bultmann. Theology of the New Testament (1955) p. 27.

4. Carlston. art. cit p. 233.

important article written by R.H.Stein ¹ whose work has succeeded in seriously undermining the credibility not only of Bultmann's arguments but of any possibility of the Transfiguration being a mis-placed resurrection account. Stein analyses in great detail the arguments expounded by Carlston and Bultmann and shows how nearly all of the theological motifs in all three synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration are incompatible with a resurrection understanding of the event. His most persuasive argument is his estimation of the role of glory in which he states that "the glory of the Transfigured Jesus is a strong argument against, rather than for, the view that the Transfiguration is a mis-placed resurrection account". ²

Some of those who have rejected the possibility that the Transfiguration is a mis-placed resurrection account have turned to the Old Testament as a possible background to our understanding of the event (ii). Central to this debate, and with particular reference to the importance of the Israelite cult, is the work of the Scandinavian scholar Harald Riesenfeld, whose extensive work Jésus Transfiguré has had an important influence upon Transfiguration studies since its publication in 1947. Riesenfeld uses the work of S.Mowinkel ³ and other Old Testament scholars to establish the existence of an Israelite cult. In a somewhat systematic treatment of the various synoptic accounts Riesenfeld then analyses eight central motifs ⁴ which he sees as essential to his own understanding of the narrative. His conclusion is very clear; the Transfiguration acts as the Enthronement of Jesus as Messianic King in the same

1. R.H.Stein. "Is the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-8) a mis-placed Resurrection Account?" JBL 95 (1969) p.305-317.

2. Stein art.cit. p.92.

3. S.Mowinkel Psalmstudien (1922).

4. The eight motifs are Mountain, Cloud, Voice, Glory, Tabernacle, Passion, Rest and Moses and Elijah.

way that the Israelites celebrated the Enthronement of God as King in the Old Testament. He believes that this background would have been at the forefront of the Evangelists' minds when they recorded the story. The cloud and the voice denote God's presence; the mountain is the throne whereupon the enthronement takes place; Peter's suggestion to build tabernacles is an attempt to enter into a perpetual rest to preserve Jesus as King. All of his argument depends upon a presumption of Riesenfeld that the Israelite cult actually existed in the way that he suggests it did. J.A.Ziesler is one of the many recent scholars who have dismissed Riesenfeld's approach because "it is not at all certain that there was such an enthronement festival".¹ Any serious critique of Riesenfeld's work will reveal a thesis which is based upon supposition and unfounded arguments to a very great extent, and this seriously undermines any positive approach to his theory. It is my own belief, after a brief analysis of Riesenfeld's work,² that the key to our understanding of the Transfiguration narrative does not lie here.

Much of Riesenfeld's work deals with the implications of an earlier attempt to explain the significance of the Transfiguration narrative which is summarised as point (iii). The main exponent of the notion that the Transfiguration is a prefiguration of a Parousia scene is G.H.Boobyer³ whose book has had an important influence on the approach of scholars to the Transfiguration since 1942. Throughout his work, Riesenfeld constantly returns to Boobyer's arguments and essays to disprove them.⁴ It is, however,

1. J.A.Ziesler. "The Transfiguration and Markan Soteriology" ExT 81 (1969) p.263-268.

2. R.P.Marshall. The Transfiguration of Jesus. Submitted to the University of Sheffield as an undergraduate thesis in 1981.

3. G.H.Boobyer. op.cit.

4. Eg. Riesenfeld op.cit p.298-9.

Boobyer's approach to the narrative that has commanded most respect amongst commentators and to which we shall be devoting a great deal of attention throughout our consideration of the Transfiguration. Although, as we shall discover, Boobyer's final conclusion is far from perfect or indeed satisfactory, it is in his approach to the theological significance of the narrative that his chief merit lies. A broad outline of Boobyer's work may be summarised as follows.

In Chapter I Boobyer attempts to explain the original nature of the Transfiguration pericope. Each of the three explanations which he offers contain certain christological and historical pre-suppositions. His first suggestion is that the Transfiguration is a symbolic piece of writing which attempts to illustrate the messianic status of Jesus.¹ Without expanding further, Boobyer believes "it is unnecessary to suppose that any historical incident happened at all" if we accept that the Evangelist simply wanted to portray Jesus as Messiah. Obviously, such an explanation suggests that the historicity of the story is either unimportant or secondary to the Evangelist's attempt to convey a theological message. Such a view has, however, been explained quite forcefully in a convincing article by E.Lohmeyer,² who argued that the story originated from a Jewish group and perfectly illustrates the Jewish expectation of the Messiah.

In order to suggest a plausible alternative, Boobyer argues that the story may indeed have been an historical event but of a visionary nature. Such a view has more recently received attention and is the fourth suggestion (iv) stated on a previous page. We will consider Rowland's³

1. Boobyer. op.cit. p.4

2. E.Lohmeyer. Die Verklärung nach Jesu ZNW 21 (1922) p.185-215

3. C.Rowland. op.cit.

more recent attempt to explain exactly what is meant by the word 'visionary' at a later stage in the sense that his arguments are very much in the context of a debate as to what we mean when we use the words apocalyptic and eschatological. Rowland's basic point is that the two are not necessarily the same and may indeed be completely different. This would necessarily involve a close analysis of the presumption that, at the Transfiguration, it is the glory of God which is made manifest either in a vision or in some other way. To view the Transfiguration in this way necessarily involves dispensing with the mis-placed resurrection account theory.

Boobyer's third suggestion is very much connected with his previous alternative in that he suggests that the Transfiguration could well be a "Visionary Forecast of the Resurrection of Jesus"¹. In simple terms, Boobyer suggests that rather than it being a prefiguration of the Parousia, the Transfiguration may well be a vision of the resurrected Jesus once his suffering is completed but before his ascension and final vindication. He is, however, not content with such a theory and issues two warnings:²

- a) that when we are dealing with the thought of the Gospels, we must not speak of Christ's resurrection and exaltation as though they were two stages of one event.
- b) that we must not attribute to the Evangelists a conception of Christ's resurrection body as a ζ body.

Boobyer is convinced that there is no relationship at all between Transfiguration and resurrection.

In Chapter III Boobyer turns to the Interpretations of the Transfiguration in the Early Church. This involves a brief consideration of the Apocalypse of Peter, the Pistis Sophia and of 2 Peter 1:16-18. His basic conclusion here is that there is an obvious connection between the

1. Boobyer op.cit. p.20.

2. Boobyer op.cit. p.26.

Parousia and the Transfiguration which we must explore later. Boobyer then moves on to a re-examination of the Marcan account of the Transfiguration in Chapter IV; this will be important in our own consideration of the narrative. Boobyer's final conclusion is that there is a definite connection between the Transfiguration and the Parousia.

The context of the debate we are about to pursue is relatively straightforward. We have established that the biblical evidence consists of three accounts of the Transfiguration in the Synoptic Gospels and one direct reference to the event outside of the Gospels in 2 Peter 1:16-18. The variations in the detail of each of the synoptic accounts can easily be explained as a result of the Evangelists' redactional activity which is common in many other pericopes in the Gospels.¹ The Transfiguration narratives in the Synoptic Gospels are based upon a source which was obviously common to all three Evangelists, and upon which they all agreed, as well as theological motifs and various details which are individualistic traits of each of the Gospel writers. This explains the narrative framework which is common to all three accounts as well as the differences which we have summarised above. The account recorded in 2 Peter 1:16-18, much ignored by biblical scholarship, is obviously the shortest and, therefore, most simple account of the Transfiguration in the New Testament. We will argue shortly, that it is the context of this narrative in 2 Peter, as well as the narrative itself, which is of great importance.

Based upon these four New Testament accounts of the Transfiguration of Jesus, we have also established that there are four clear lines of interpretation which have been pursued by scholars during this century. During our re-examination of the Transfiguration narratives, these four attempts

1. Cf. Garden of Gethsemane. Mark 14:32-42; Matthew 26:36-46, Luke 22:40-46.

to explain the theological and christological significance of the event in the life of Jesus will be frequently referred to. We begin, however, by turning our attention to the account which, in our opinion, was the first of the Synoptic Gospels to be actually written down. An examination of the narrative in the Gospel of Mark must be preceded by a consideration of the various influences and sources which affected the Evangelist Mark in the writing down of his Gospel since this may reveal to us something more of the understanding of the Evangelist in his recording of the event. Our aim is to answer an obvious question: what was the aim and intention of the Evangelist in his use of the Transfiguration within his Gospel as a whole? We begin by looking at the sources used by Mark and the influences upon him in the Early Church.

CHAPTER II. THE ORIGIN OF THE MARCAN ACCOUNT

The purpose of Mark in the writing down of his εὐαγγέλιον
Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ¹ is of great importance to our overall understanding of the way in which Mark has fashioned his material, and the sources handed on to him, in order to present us with the portrait of Jesus as we now have it. Whilst the writing of several of the Epistles, included in the New Testament Canon, was obviously as a result of a particular need, heresy or problem (Eg. Galatians, Colossians) it is not as clear why Mark wrote down his account of Jesus, the Son of God, in the way that he did. In that we are concerned about the theological significance of the Transfiguration in Mark, we can devote little attention to the purpose of the Evangelist in the writing down of his whole Gospel. Nevertheless, a summary of some of the views put forward is essential, and of importance, to our understanding of the Transfiguration within the Gospel of Mark as a whole.

S.Schulz has argued that Mark wrote his Gospel in order to instruct the early Christian community in the basic features of Jesus' ministry and the christological importance of his coming into the world.² Some scholars believe that the earliest Christians were subject to false teachings about the work of Christ and his divine nature, so that, as Perrin suggests, Mark wrote his Gospel "to teach Christians of his day a true christology in place of the false christology that he felt they were in danger of accepting".³ Perrin is not alone in his opinion.

1. Mark 1:1.

2. S.Schulz. "Die Bedeutung des Markus für die Theologischesgeschichte des Urchristentums".
Stud.Evang. 2 (1964) p.134-145.

3. N.Perrin. "The Creative Use of the Son of Man Traditions in Mark".
Union Seminary Quarterly Review 23 (1968) p.357-365.

T.J. Weeden strongly believes that there was general confusion amongst the early Christians, not only concerning the ministry of Christ and his divine nature but, most particularly, concerning Jesus' expectant return at his Parousia.¹ There are various references in Mark² which suggest that the community expected Jesus to return immediately, in glory, and that his delay in coming may have been the cause of the confusion within the community of early Christians.

It is to establish the relevance of the εὐαγγελίου proclaimed by Jesus, as something which is ongoing and relevant to the community, as baptised believers in Christ, that Mark proceeds to write his Gospel. The purpose of Mark would seem, above all, to be the dispelling of any anxiety that Christ had not returned immediately and the reminder to those who proclaimed Jesus as Lord, that the incarnation (Mark. 1:1 ἸΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, ΥἱΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ) meant other things apart from a future glorious appearance at the Parousia. Mark achieves this in the way in which his Gospel is constructed. In order to emphasise other aspects of the significance of the person of Jesus, Mark not only makes reference to the Second Coming (Eg. Mark 13:11) but presents Jesus as a figure with a present relevance to the community awaiting his return. Jesus is therefore presented as a suffering figure (Eg. 8:31 and much of the Passion narrative) and as not only the proclaimer of the εὐαγγελίου but as the Son of God who is directly equated with it (Eg. Mark 1:15, 13: 9-10); Jesus is the Gospel which he essays to proclaim. The emphasis upon Jesus as one who was to suffer is seen most clearly when any serious examination of the contents of the Gospel is made. Kähler has suggested

1. T.J. Weeden. "The Heresy that Necessitated Mark's Gospel". ZNTW 59 (1968) p.145-158.

2. Eg. Mark 9:1; Mark 13:30.

that the Gospels are "passion narratives with extended introductions"¹ which is true of Mark in the sense that the suffering of Jesus is the predominant theme of the Gospel from 8:27f. In an analysis of each verse of the Gospel of Mark, J. Bowman suggests that at least three-eighths of the Gospel are concerned with the passion narratives.² This emphasis upon the events in Jerusalem suggests that Mark is concerned in his Gospel with the necessity of establishing Jesus not only as one who was to return in glory, but also, of establishing Jesus as the suffering Son of Man.³

The Epistles provide us with a great deal of the theological understanding of the Early Church though they tell us surprisingly little about the person of Jesus. They are almost totally lacking in biographical detail⁴ and do not seek to explain Jesus' position as the Messiah, Son of God, despite their insistence on placing Jesus within an Old Testament context.⁵ The purpose of Mark would seem to be to supplement the writings of the apostles by providing the Early Church with a reminder of Jesus' significance and, most particularly, of the significance of Jesus' terrestrial ministry. The post-resurrection era, in which the imminent return of Jesus at his Parousia was expected, was obviously losing sight of Jesus' teachings, commands and earthly significance, and Mark's Gospel is to be seen as the first attempt to correct the balance

1. M. Kähler. "The so-called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ". (1964) p.80.

2. J. Bowman. The Gospel of Mark (1965) p.312.

3. J. M. Robinson. "The Problem of History in Mark Reconsidered". USQR 20 (1956) p.131-147.

C. F. Evans. The Beginning of the Gospel. (1968).

Both scholars are keen to stress that Mark is not only concerned with the passion narrative but also with an explanation of who this man is who is to suffer. This, they suggest, is achieved through the long introduction. (1:1 - 8:27).

4. The nearest they come to providing us with biographical material is in Eg. Romans 1:3, Gal. 4:4, Romans 15:8.

5. Eg. Romans 15:1f.

Cf. N. A. Dahl. "Die Messianität Jesus bei Paulus in Studia Paulina eds. J. N. Sevenster and W. C. Van Unnik. (1953) p.94.

and once again establish the significance of Jesus' time on earth. It is in such a context that we are to examine the Transfiguration narrative in Mark. Bearing in mind the Sitz im Leben of the Gospel as we have described it, we must now examine the nature of the sources used by Mark and the influences that were obviously prevalent upon him when he wrote down the narrative which includes the Transfiguration of Jesus.

The problem of the sources used by the Evangelist Mark and the other influences upon him in his writing of his Gospel is a question rarely asked in studies of the Transfiguration.¹ It is important that we ask what were the main influences upon the sources used by the Evangelist and upon the Evangelist himself if we are to ascertain what function the narrative was known to have or was meant to have in the community in which the story was known and told. It is quite clear that those who suggest that the Transfiguration is a mis-placed resurrection account believe that the pericope was either passed down to Mark with this understanding attached to it or that Mark himself interpreted it in this way.² We have already outlined how R.H.Stein has adequately dismissed the possibility of interpreting the Transfiguration as a resurrection story and it is possible for us to discount that theory.³ If, however, such a theory was to be accepted, it would be important for us to establish at what stage in the handing down of the narrative such an interpretation was introduced. The evidence suggests that the Transfiguration is not out of place in the terrestrial life of Jesus, and that it is remarkably similar to other events in the Synoptic Gospels and most particularly the Baptism narrative (Cf. Mark 1: 9-11).⁴ If then we believe that the

1. Boobyer, however, does take the sources which influenced the Evangelists seriously.

2. C.E.Carlston. art.cit. p.233.

3. Cf. especially R.H.Stein. art.cit. p.83f.

4. Connections between the Baptism and Transfiguration will be analysed more in our final Chapter TRANSFIGURATION & PAROUSIA.

story was handed down to Mark as part of Jesus' earthly life, it is necessary to determine the nature and provenience of the source used by Mark and any other influences on this source before Mark received it.

Caird stated that Mark 9:2-8 "our primary source, presents by itself a sufficiently complex problem of exegesis".¹ Taylor agrees and admits that "the narrative presents a very difficult problem and few will claim that they can give an explanation which completely satisfies them".² Scholars agree that the Transfiguration is a revelation from God which reveals and confirms the heavenly Messiahship of Jesus, and they agree (in most cases) to a historical base from which the Gospel writers have formulated their narratives; the problem lies in the identity of the historical base utilised by Mark, and those after him, from which they wrote their varied narratives as they have since been passed on. An understanding of the original source could hold the key to a more dynamic and revealing understanding of the function of the Transfiguration narrative in Jesus' ministry.

It is generally accepted that the reminiscences and experiences of the apostle Peter played a vital role in the formulation of Mark's Gospel even though E. Best suggests that "today, many people completely ignore any possible connection between Peter and the Gospel".³ Furthermore, Martin believes that the Gospel of Mark contains much material which comes from an 'eyewitness' and which could not possibly have been handed down by a succession of nameless scribes and leaders.⁴ The possibility

1. G.B. Caird. "The Transfiguration". ExT. 67 (1955) p.291-294 (p.291).

2. V. Taylor. The Gospel According to St. Mark. (1966) p.386.

3. E. Best. "Peter in the Gospel According to Mark". CEQ. 40 (1978) p.547

4. R.P. Martin. Mark: Evangelist & Theologian. (1978) p.54.

that Peter was indeed such a witness cannot be ruled out; in pericopes which contain certain references to minor details and to certain gestures made by Jesus (Eg. Mark 7:34; 9:36) or in those passages where the reader is informed about what was said amongst the disciples (Eg. Mark 3:5; 9:36), it is very likely that the sources which lay behind the Evangelist's writings are heavily reliant on information supplied by the disciples. Peter's prominence in that information (Eg. 8:36f, 14:29) adds weight to the suggestion that he may have been personally responsible for much of what was said to Mark concerning Jesus. Into this category we must add καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ (Mark 9:5). Even leaving open the question of whether indeed it was Peter who was responsible, it would seem that, to some extent, the Evangelists relied upon some form of an apostolic understanding of Jesus' actions and his ministry.¹

It is our belief that an apostolic influence on the compilation and writing of the Synoptic Gospels is essential to our understanding of the Gospels and, therefore, to the Transfiguration narrative. Their Sitz im Leben is that of an Early Church struggling to preserve the various units and strands of tradition along with isolated sayings of Jesus which were passed on to them either orally or in written form. In his study of the Transfiguration narrative, G.H. Boobyer suggested that commentators have ignored what he calls 'Apostolic Christology' in their treatment and consideration of the Transfiguration stories.² The sources used by Mark, and the way in which he used these sources, were almost certainly influenced by the Early Church and their understanding of who Jesus was because this was the background against which the Evangelists attempted to record their accounts and, as we stated in our introduction to this

1. B.D. Chilton. "The Transfiguration: Dominical Assurance and Apostolic Vision". NTS (1980) 27 p.116. Peter's role will be further discussed in Chapter IV.

2. Boobyer. op.cit p.49.

Chapter, to present more of the details concerning the terrestrial life of Christ. Boobyer suggests that we need to ascertain how much the formation of the Gospels has been affected by the Early Church's conception of the process of Christ's manifestation to men and that it is through the Epistles or "Apostolic Christology" that we can gain some insight into the theological background of the sources used by Mark. This is in line with our earlier suggestion that Mark was influenced very much by the thought and experience of the Early Church.

Boobyer maintains that the Apostolic Era was preoccupied with the importance of the concept of revelation and with Jesus as the bearer of the divine revelation.¹ He believes that the Epistles are concerned with the implications of the revelation of Jesus Christ to the world and the revelation of the glory of God in which Christians are led through suffering and temptation in order that they might share in the revelation themselves. Paul thinks of himself as the bearer of divine revelation (Eg. Romans 15:18; 2.Cor.13:3) which is grounded in the knowledge that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead (Eg. 1.Cor. 9:1, 15:8), and it is in this knowledge that Paul has shown himself to be an apostle of Christ (Eg. Gal. 1:15f). It is especially in the Fourth Gospel that the revealed nature of Jesus is explained; Jesus is given prominence as the divine logos of God and John's use of the verb $\phi\alpha\upsilon\epsilon\rho\omega$ suggests that the revelation of Jesus was not to be made complete during his earthly ministry but that there is a definite, futuristic element to it in that it has a perpetual and futuristic significance: "It belongs pre-eminently to the existence of the Word before the Incarnation and to his return through suffering to the Father".² The Early Church anticipated the

1. Boobyer, op.cit.

2. C.K.Barrett, The Gospel According to John, (1955) p.161.

coming of Jesus Christ again as an important stage in the complete process of Christ's revelation to the world; the Parousia was an imminent event and a final stage in Jesus' mission as the divine logos and as the Son of God. There are many references in the period of the Early Church where the emphasis upon the revelation of God through Christ is essentially futuristic (Eg. 1 Cor. 1:7, 2 Thess. 1:7). Boobyer summarises his arguments on the question of how the Early Church dealt with the idea of a revealed Christ by stating that there were four clearly defined areas of revelation which are obviously prominent in the Epistles and therefore in the concept of revelation as it was held by the Early Church. These are:

- (i) Pre-existence
- (ii) Hiddenness/Concealment
- (iii) Revelation at the Resurrection
- (iv) Revelation at the Parousia.

Boobyer is convinced that each of these periods is clearly represented in the thought and writings of the Early Church.

It is important that we look at each of these categories in some detail as we ponder over the question as to what influences Mark experienced in the writing down of his Gospel. It is Boobyer's argument that this scheme of manifestation and revelation had a direct influence on Mark and therefore on his Gospel.¹ In other words, Boobyer is arguing that rather than taking the Epistles as proceeding the writing of the Gospels it is important that we consider the Gospels in the light of that understanding of Jesus and his ministry which is recorded in the Epistles. He believes that the Gospels have been directly influenced by the apostolic testimony as it was recorded in the Epistles, and that the sources and influences upon the Transfiguration story lie very much in an

1. Boobyer, op.cit. p.49.

apostolic understanding of the person of Christ and christology. It is therefore important that we look at each of Boobyer's categories of revelation not only to see if they fit into the christological pattern of the Epistles but also to examine what light they shed on our understanding of Jesus through the synoptic material and, in particular the Transfiguration of Jesus. This may well help us to answer Caird's important question: "What do we mean when we say that Jesus revealed God?"¹

The first stage is that of pre-existence. Essentially, we are here concerned with the notion that Jesus was present with his Father from the time of Creation onwards - a theme strongly present in the Johannine literature and in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Boobyer does not sufficiently investigate the theme of pre-existence in either Hebrews or in the Johannine corpus, presuming that the evidence speaks for itself.² In the Gospel of Mark, Boobyer sees no explicit reference to a pre-existent Christ but "surely this is implied".³ Boobyer suggests that in Mark 1:1-13 the use of the term *κύριος* (1:3) is particularly important, as is the fact that Jesus is attested as Son of God by a divine voice (1:11) at his Baptism, as well as the reference to Jesus being ministered to by the heavenly beings (1:13) and that all of these details suggest that Mark basically understood Jesus to have proceeded from God and to have been *ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν* as in Jn. 1:2. Also in Mark, Boobyer interprets the christological title Son of Man as possibly suggesting a pre-existence of Jesus in the divine plan since it is the Son of Man who has power *ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς* to forgive the sins of men (Mark 2:10); this suggests that Jesus, who is now 'upon the earth', has come from somewhere else. These features are, however, interpretations of what is actually not clearly stated in Mark's Gospel as it is in the Fourth Gospel. That Mark does not explicitly refer to Jesus as the pre-existent

1. Caird. art.cit. p.293.

2. Boobyer. op.cit. p.50.

3. Boobyer. op.cit. p.52.

Son does not necessarily mean that Mark did not accept this as an essential part of contemporary apostolic belief. Within the Gospel framework, as we have just noted, there are various passages which we can interpret as meaning that Mark was at least acquainted with the notion that Jesus had been pre-existent with God from the beginning and that his earthly ministry was only one part of a mission and purpose which had already been going on with God since Creation. The Baptism and the Transfiguration narratives are two examples of pericopes where such a relationship between God and Jesus cuts across the mundane and everyday tasks which Jesus finds himself engaged in.

Hooker believes that it is important to note that the title Son of Man appears in neither the Baptism narrative nor in the story of the Transfiguration.¹ She points out that the use of this title, as suggested by Boobyer, gives us no right to assume that Mark intended us to interpret a pre-existent Jesus because he was designated Son of Man. It must suffice to say that Jesus explains his Messiahship in terms of 'Son of Man' and connects the themes of suffering and future glory to this title by the use of it in the predictions of his fate at Jerusalem.² Although Boobyer's claim that the title Son of Man is of importance to our understanding of a pre-existent Jesus in Mark is open to serious debate, it is our opinion that Mark was attempting to describe the Messiah (8:29) who could only become the Son of God (1:11, 9:7) by suffering as the Son of Man. The title Son of Man sheds light on our understanding of Jesus' role within the divine plan and some implied pre-existence cannot be therefore ruled out.

Boobyer's second category deals with a time of hiddenness or concealment on earth. This stage in the revelation of Jesus as the Son

1. M.D.Hooker. The Son of Man in Mark (1967) p.125.

2. Predictions of the passion occur in Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:34.

of God is arguably the most obvious and recognisable in both the Gospels and the Epistles. Boobyer states that the Early Church believed that there was a period when the glory of God was temporarily concealed, when the glory voluntarily surrendered in becoming human flesh.¹ Passages where such an idea is expressed are frequently to be found in the Epistles (Eg. Phil. 2:5f; Gal. 4:4). Jesus disguised his true identity by coming ἐν ὁμοιωμάτι σαρκὸς (Rom. 8:3), though he was rich he was concealed as one who was poor (2 Cor. 8:9), so that even the demons could not recognise him. The mystery of God's revelation was only now being made known to those whom God chose to receive this revelation. (Col. 1:25f). Throughout the Epistles there is the underlying suggestion that the period of concealment is not yet over and that after the resurrection there will be a time when Christ will be more fully revealed to mankind when he comes again at the Parousia. (Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 4:5).

Hiddenness is an undeniably important aspect of the ministry of Jesus in Mark's Gospel. Jesus desires that his movements be concealed (Eg. Mark 1:35-38; 3:12, 20; 4:31f; 7:17, 24; 9:30); he frequently obscures the precise meaning of his teaching (Eg. Mark 4:10-12, 34; 7:17; 8:27-31; 9:28); Jesus does not always make his disciples fully aware of his intentions (Eg. 4:10, 13; 4:40f; 6:49-52; 7:17f). There are also important examples of instances where Jesus demands secrecy after healing someone (Eg. 1:43f; 5:43; 7:36f) or where Jesus commands his disciples, or even the demons, to say nothing of what they have seen or heard (Eg. 1:24f; 1:34; 3:11f; 8:30; 9:9). Amongst those who have attempted to find a reason behind Jesus' apparent need to maintain at least a certain level of secrecy during the period of his earthly ministry are W. Wrede² and A. Schweitzer³. Wrede

1. Boobyer. op.cit. p. 50.

2. W. Wrede. Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien (1901).

3. A. Schweitzer. The Mystery of the Kingdom of God. (1925).

suggests that Jesus was always conscious of his messianic role and function and made a conscious decision to conceal his true identity until the time was right both to his disciples and to the people in the crowds. He believes that Mark has redacted the traditions which he received in order that the calls to silence may be introduced which may not necessarily have been a part of the original tradition. Although several scholars ¹ have attempted to adapt Wrede's theory, his original argument finds little sympathy amongst New Testament critics today. Earlier this century W. Sanday stated that not only was Wrede wrong "but also distinctly wrong-headed". ² More recently, Martin has suggested that Wrede's complex theory is "hardly feasible as it stands". ³ It is much more likely that the Evangelist Mark received the traditions as they are now to be found in his Gospel and that the references to secrecy were an essential part of the tradition as it was passed on to him. ⁴ Boobyer's suggestion that the secrecy element in Mark represents "the apostolic conception of the second stage of Christ's manifestation" ⁵ deserves serious consideration. To the Early Church and no doubt to Mark also, the idea that Jesus' identity was in some way 'hidden' helped them to comprehend his dual identity as man and God. Jesus was a man with whom they could identify their own humanity but he was also much more. His hiddenness concealed his total union with God who had revealed him. Just as the Kingdom of Heaven was to be hidden from the eyes of some people (Eg. Mt. 13:44) so the Son of God was also to be hidden from the

1. Eg. U. Luz. "Das Geheimnismotiv und die markinische Christologie" ZNTW 56 (1965) p.3-90.

2. W. Sanday. The Life of Christ in Recent Research. (1907).

3. R. P. Martin. op.cit. p.97.

4. Eg. J. D. G. Dunn. "The Messianic Secret in Mark". TB 21 (1970) p.92-117.

5. Boobyer. op.cit. p.55.

eyes of many who failed to recognise his identity. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus remains hidden until his time has come and this would seem to have been perfectly acceptable to the Early Church and to their concept of Christ as the tradition was handed on to them.

Periods (iii) and (iv) in Boobyer's scheme of revelation are those of resurrection and Parousia. Boobyer suggests that the early Christians had a clear and precise definition of what they meant by the use of these terms and their theological significance. They were both events which, in the context of Jesus' earthly ministry, looked to the future. The resurrection was the "revelation of Christ's real glory",¹ whilst the Parousia was "a coming manifestation in yet complete splendour". The Early Church did not seem to regard the resurrection of Jesus as the complete unveiling of the concealed glory of Christ. At the resurrection Jesus had triumphed over death (Eg. Col.2:15; 1 Cor.2:6-8) in what had been a great moment of disclosure of the Messiahship of Jesus. The resurrection had also marked the beginning of a new age of salvation (Eg. 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Cor. 6:2) in which a day would come when the glory would be revealed to all those who had not seen the glory which was manifested when Jesus triumphed over death. Thus as Hooker correctly points out, the resurrection and the Parousia are both important stages in the process of revelation but they are not inter-changeable events of equal significance.²

In the Gospel of Mark there are hints that the Evangelist was well acquainted with the theological significance of both the resurrection and the Parousia. Boobyer goes so far as to suggest that the overall outlook of the second Gospel is futuristic in that it looks forward "to some great day of future revelation".³ Material within Mark that can be easily

1. Boobyer op.cit. p.55.

2. Hooker op.cit. p.124.

3. Boobyer op.cit. p.55.

classified as futuristic in its substance is placed by Boobyer into three categories:

a) Baptism in the Holy Spirit. (Mark 1:8)

This would have been regarded as a sign of future revelation in light of the Easter events in the Apostolic Era. The experience of Pentecost and the tradition of Jesus as one who could baptize in the Holy Spirit would have been significant.

b) Predictions of his Passion and own future. (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34)

These predictions look not only to Jesus' death but also to his resurrection and to his exaltation - "they look beyond the cross to his subsequent triumph".¹

c) Futuristic material of another kind. (Mark 9:9; 10:37; Chs. 13, 14:25-28, 62).

Here, the resurrection and Parousia are regarded as moments when the revelation process will move on a step further and the glory of God will be fully manifested.

Boobyer's argument and his simple presentation of the apostolic understanding of the revelation of Jesus Christ to the world are far from all-encompassing and they could certainly provide us with a starting point for an alternative subject. The nature of the understanding of those who lived in the era immediately after the death of Jesus remains something of a mystery and opinion and ideas are constantly changing. Nevertheless, despite its obvious simplicity, Boobyer's theory certainly merits our serious consideration. It is more than plausible that the Pauline Epistles and some of the non-Pauline, New Testament documents contain, either within themselves or in the persons responsible for their writing elements of a tradition which, at least, affected the writing down of the

1. Boobyer. op.cit. p.56.

Gospels as we now have them. Boobyer's argument would lead us to conclude that apostolic thought played a very important role in the emergence and writing down of the Gospels. If we are to conclude that the Gospel of Mark contains theological ideas and thoughts which are also present in the Epistles, it is obviously important that we place the Gospels in their rightful context within the Early Church. The Synoptic Gospels were not written simply before or after the majority of the Epistles contained within the New Testament but they were written in order to complement the understanding of the early Christians as it was expressed in their writings. Indeed, it is necessary for us to conclude that Mark not only utilised a scheme of revelation that was currently in vogue in the Early Church but that he desired to supplement this scheme of revelation with biographical detail and a more detailed description of Christ's ministry on earth. The Transfiguration pericope is one example of this. Boobyer suggests that we look at the Gospels through the eyes of those responsible for the writing of the Epistles. The order of the books, as they are placed in the New Testament, too often influences our thinking as to the order in which the works were written down. To analyse the writing down of the Gospels in the light of the situation which existed in the Early Church, as it is recorded in the Epistles, necessarily reveals something to us of the purpose of the Evangelist in the writing of his Gospel. If Boobyer is correct, it is necessary for us to analyse the Transfiguration narrative not only as it has been passed on to us in the Gospels, but also, in the light of the apostolic understanding of the revelation of Jesus as we have outlined above. The reference to the Transfiguration of Jesus in 2 Peter 1: 16-18 is, therefore, exceptionally important. The use of the Transfiguration in 2 Peter may reveal something to us of the understanding of the Transfiguration in the Early Church and this will then enable us to examine afresh the Transfiguration in Mark as we seek to establish the

theological significance of the Transfiguration both as an event in the life of Jesus, and the Early Church, where it was obviously known and used, in a context we have yet to explore.

CHAPTER III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF 2.PETER AND THE EARLY CHURCH

Outside of the three synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration of Jesus, the New Testament contains only one other direct reference to the event (2 Peter 1:16-18) and a single, additional use of the verb μεταμορφόω (2 Cor. 3:18). Although it is possible that Paul is alluding to the Transfiguration in 2 Corinthians, there is no direct reference to the incident and no reason for us to interpret Paul's use of the verb as being connected to Jesus' Transfiguration at all. It is unlikely that Paul intended us to see any relationship between 2 Cor. 3:18 and the Transfiguration in the Gospels. The same cannot be said, however, with regard to the 2 Peter account. Although the author does not actually describe Jesus' state by the use of the verb μεταμορφόω (as is also the case in the Gospel of Luke) 2 Peter 1:16-18 provides us with a direct reference to the Transfiguration which is unique in the New Testament outside of the Synoptic Gospels.

This account of the Transfiguration has been largely ignored by scholars of the Transfiguration over the centuries, possibly because of the problems which surround the Epistle itself, which we will briefly summarise below. Nevertheless, in that the 2 Peter account of the Transfiguration has its roots somewhere in the community of the Early Church, it is important that we seek to apply Boobyer's suggestion and to establish how the Transfiguration was understood in the Early Church and how this, in turn, influenced the understanding of the Evangelists in their presentations of the account. We must obviously briefly consider the document in which we find this unique, non-synoptic, account of the Transfiguration in order for us to glean something of the narrative's context both in 2 Peter and in the Early Church. Having established the context of the narrative in the 2 Peter account, we must then essay

to find out what light this throws on our understanding of the theological significance of the Transfiguration in the Gospels. If Boobyer is correct in his surmise that Apostolic Christology and the apostolic scheme of revelation (as is recorded in the Epistles) has directly influenced the writing of the Gospels, 2 Peter 1:16-18 could be of great importance to us in our quest to establish the theological significance of the Transfiguration in the synoptics. We turn our attention, first, to a summary of historical and exegetical problems.

(i) Problems surrounding 2 Peter.

This Epistle remains something of a mystery. It was accepted into the Canon only in the fourth century and with greater hesitation than any other New Testament document. At the time of the Reformation Luther was content to accept it as authentic. Erasmus rejected it, Calvin remained uncertain. Such a diversity of opinion concerning the author, date, intention and provenience of 2 Peter continues to be expressed in contemporary discussion. On a more general note, in recent years, opinion seems to have hardened against the authenticity of the Epistle, despite a recent commentary by Michael Green ¹ which succeeded in suggesting that its place in the Canon may well be justified.

No book in the Canon is quoted less frequently in the writings of the Fathers than 2 Peter, although Westcott points out ² that it is better represented than the best attested of those books which are rejected. Origen's reference to the letter in the third century suggests that there was some confusion even then: ³ 'Peter left one acknowledged Epistle and perhaps a second; for this is contested'. Origen quotes from 2 Peter on

1. M. Green. 2 Peter and Jude (1983 ed.).

2. B.F. Westcott. The Canon of the New Testament (1890) p. 565

3. Origen. Hom. in Josh. 7:1 'duabus epistolarum suarum personat tubis'.

six occasions and does not enter into any discussion concerning the problems of style and diction in comparison with 1 Peter. In the light of Origen's comments on the Epistle to the Hebrews, which he emphatically designates as non-Pauline, the lack of any concrete expression of doubt even as to the authorship of 2 Peter is rather surprising.¹ Eusebius² accepts that 2 Peter was a disputed work but also underlines the point that many in the early period accepted it as genuine. Nevertheless, Eusebius' final conclusion would seem to have been determined by the distinct lack of any quotations from 2 Peter in the work of the ancient presbyters, and he personally rejects the authenticity of the Epistle.³

In a study of the Transfiguration of Jesus, it would be wrong to devote too much of our attention to the problems surrounding the authenticity of 2 Peter and its right to a place in the New Testament. This is a subject in its own right and has received much attention in the various commentaries and articles listed in this Chapter. There is, however, a need for us to outline the main arguments concerning the background to the Epistle, if only to state clearly the kind of problems faced by those who have considered the Epistle in greater detail, before moving on to an investigation into the significance of the Transfiguration in the first Chapter (v.16-18).

There is a central problem of authorship which is linked to the differences in style and subject matter when a comparison is made between 1 Peter and 2 Peter. On reading the two Epistles it is hard to conceive that they have both been written by the same author. In 1 Peter the Greek is smooth and intellectually composed, with free-flowing participles

1. A well-known quote from Origen on Hebrews: "But as to who actually wrote the Epistle, only God knows the truth of the matter".

2. Eusebius. H.E. 6.25.11.

3. Eusebius. H.E. 3.3.1,4.

and a definite coherence of thought. In contrast, the Greek of 2 Peter is more highly coloured, effusive and pompous and the diction is often bookish and artificial as if the author is not totally in command of his words. Green ¹ gives examples of typical phrases which are not to be found in 1 Peter but which abound in 2 Peter. Green has argued that this may well be due to a change of scribe by the apostle Peter². Indeed, having stated the differences that exist between the two Epistles, Green attempts to ignore many of his own statements by then pursuing a line of argument asserting that the two Epistles could have been written by the same author despite these linguistic differences. His suggestion that Peter changed scribes, his attempts to draw parallels by the presence of Hebraisms in both Epistles, and his statement that "Peculiar, striking words are a feature in both letters"³ are not sufficient evidence on which we can confidently suggest that 1 Peter and 2 Peter are from the same apostle. Indeed, disagreement as to who was responsible for the writing of 2 Peter has been in evidence since the second century. This is suggested by Kelly ⁴ who states that officials in Rome would have been much more forthright in accepting the Epistle if the question of authorship had not been in doubt. Käsemann ⁵ is certain that the document was not written by the apostle Peter and he is not alone in holding this view, as we have already explained.

Two strands of argument confirm our view that 2 Peter was not written by the apostle Peter. The first is the date of 2 Peter.

1. M.Green. op.cit. p.16.

2. Green. op.cit. p.17.

3. Green. op. cit. p.17.

4. J.N.D.Kelly. A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude (1969) p.237.

5. E.Käsemann. Essays on New Testament Themes (1960) p.172.

Käsemann believes ¹ that 2 Peter is the latest book to be included in the New Testament Canon and that we must date it well into the second century. Kelly agrees that it was written later than the majority of New Testament books but suggests that it may well have been written between 100-110 AD. ² Even then, we would presume that the apostle Peter had been dead for about forty years. (c64 AD). This is almost confirmed by a reference in 2 Peter 3:4:

"Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the Fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of Creation".

The suggestion that the Fathers had 'fallen asleep' means that the first generation, who had expected the imminent return of Jesus very soon, had actually died by the time this document was written. Obviously, if we are to conclude that 2 Peter was written as late as the second century, this seriously rules out the possibility that the apostle Peter could have been responsible for its composition. An additional pointer to a date in the second century would seem to be the obvious relationship that exists between 2 Peter and the Epistle of Jude. Kelly states that ³ the author of 2 Peter relies heavily on material in Jude and that the earliest possible date for Jude is the late first century, well after Peter's death under Nero. There are only twenty-five verses in Jude but no less than fifteen of them appear at least in part in 2 Peter. Green has argued that the apostolic authorship must not be ruled out if we conclude that Jude was written first. ⁴ Kelly, however, who gives the stronger argument, believes that the issue as to the relationship between

1. E. Käsemann. op.cit. p.172.

2. J.D.N. Kelly. op.cit. p.237.

3. Kelly. op.cit. p.235.

4. Green. op.cit. p.22.

Jude and 2 Peter adds great weight to the argument that Peter could not have been personally responsible for the writing down of 2 Peter. Therefore, the first important factor which suggests that Peter was not responsible for the second Epistle of Peter is the date of the letter which we would place in the early part of the second century.

The second point of great importance, which strikes a note of caution to the careful reader of the Epistle, is the author's use of the 'Apostolic Testimony'. Unlike 1 Peter, the author of 2 Peter relies heavily on references to the apostle Peter and to events in the life of Jesus which have paradoxically been taken to be evidence that Peter was in fact responsible for the writing of the Epistle.¹ The particular passages to which we refer are as follows:

1:16f The reference to the Transfiguration of Jesus.

"Eyewitnesses of his majesty"

1:14 Prophecy of Peter's own death.

2:1 Denial of the Lord Jesus by Peter.

3:1 That this is the second letter....

It is to be our argument that these references, rather than pointing to genuine reminiscences of the apostle Peter, are the attempts of a pseudonymous author to convince those reading the letter that it was in fact authentic. P.N.Harrison² has dealt with the problem of pseudopigraphy in an interesting study and suggests that the author, writing in the guise of Peter, "was not conscious of misrepresenting the apostle in any way; he was not consciously deceiving anybody; it is not indeed necessary to suppose that he did deceive anybody". That the author of 2 Peter essayed not only to present an argument under the name of the apostle but actually utilised and moulded into his work elements of

1. Groen. op.cit. p.20.

2. P.N.Harrison. The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles.(1921) p.12.

tradition that would have been easily accepted as genuinely Petrine in the Early Church is highly likely. That the author also used experiences and eyewitness accounts that were directly associated with the apostle himself is more than likely, since this added to the credibility and authenticity of his work. The particular passages referred to above could, therefore, be examples of sources and passages which were included by the author of 2 Peter in an attempt to make his work look credible. They would certainly not seem to be evidence that, because they are narrated, they are intended to prove Petrine authorship. The date of the Epistle, combined with the use of the Apostolic Testimony adds further weight to the argument that 2 Peter was not written by Peter the apostle, but by a pseudonymous author writing under his name.

One further overt difference between 1 Peter and 2 Peter must also be mentioned. This concerns the theme of each of the Epistles.¹ It is not surprising that both Epistles are concerned with a different subject since both were written down in entirely different situations. 1 Peter is addressed to Christians facing overt persecution, whilst 2 Peter seems to apply to Christians facing false teaching and doctrines in light of the delay of the Parousia. "The key-note of 1 Peter is, accordingly, hope; of 2 Peter, true knowledge".² That the two are not more closely related on doctrinal issues has been a key argument amongst scholars such as Kelly³ who believes that 1 and 2 Peter are so different in emphasis, even when they are referring to the same subject. Although a much weaker argument, the lack of any great similarity between the two on key theological issues (as is the case in several of the

1. R.J. Bauckham. "The Delay of the Parousia". TB 31 (1980) p.27.

2. M. Groom. op.cit. p.19.

3. J.D.N. Kelly. op.cit. p.236.

Pauline Epistles on subjects such as the resurrection, the Last Supper and the body of Christ) is another reason for us to agree with those who see 2 Peter as entirely independent of 1 Peter. Despite this rather limited survey of the discussion that has taken place in recent years ¹ we will agree with Kelly who states that: "We must therefore conclude that 2 Peter belongs to a luxuriant crop of pseudo-Petrine literature which sprang up around the memory of the Prince of the Apostles".²

(ii) The Transfiguration in 2 Peter

We must now turn our attention to an examination of the Transfiguration story as it is recorded in 2 Peter. In doing this it is important that we seriously consider the points raised by Boobyer's argument set out in the previous Chapter, which suggests that a satisfactory explanation of the synoptic material may well be achieved through an analysis of the apostolic understanding of Jesus. Thus we shall explore the significance of the 2 Peter account before turning our attention to the synoptic accounts. The role of the Transfiguration itself within 2 Peter will be discussed shortly but one important point needs to be mentioned before we proceed further. To state, as we have in the opening section of this Chapter, that the author of 2 Peter was probably not the apostle Peter but someone writing under his name, does not preclude the possibility that some passages in the Epistle are authentically Petrine. In writing as the apostle, the author has almost certainly used within the course of his argument material which the Early Church would have accepted as genuinely Petrine. It is in linking these passages together, in his use of diction and in his theological argument, that clues

1. Cf. J. Chaine. Les Epîtres Catholiques (1939).
 M. R. James. 2 Peter and Jude (1912).
 E. H. Plumptre. The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude (1903).
 K. H. Schelkle. Die Petrusbriefe und der Judasbrief (1961).
 J. B. Mayor. The Second Epistle of St. Peter and the Epistle of St. Jude. (1907).

2. Kelly. op.cit. p.236.

regarding the mystery of the author emerge. It is obvious that in order to convince his readers that he was in fact the apostle Peter, the author of 2 Peter has used stories and strands of tradition that were widely accepted as being genuinely Petrine.

The content of 2 Peter may be summarised as follows:

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and greeting (1,2)

The advantages of being a Christian in the world (3,4)

The supplementation of the faith (5-7)

The contrasting positions of Christians (8,9)

Something to aim for (10,11)

The importance of truth - a personal reflection (12-15)

Truth attested by apostolic witness at Transfiguration (16-18)

The role of the prophetic witness (19-21).

CHAPTER TWO

A warning to watch out for false teachers (1-3)

Judgement and deliverance - three examples: Noah, Sodom & Gomorrah,
Lot (4-10a)

The false teachers are ignorant of the truth (10b, 11)

Arrogance, lust, greed (12-16)

The content of what the false teachers say is meaningless (17-22).

CHAPTER THREE

Re-emphasis as to why he has written the letter (1,2)

Typical comments of those dubious about Parousia (3,4)

The proof of history (5-7)

Timelessness of God (8)

God's nature through Christ (9,10)

Because of the Parousia there are ethical demands (11-14)

The support of Paul (15, 16)

Rallying call and conclusion (17,18).

At a simple level, following a casual reading of the Epistle, it is obvious that the writing of the letter was prompted "by inter alia, eschatological doubts among the people to whom it was addressed".¹

1. T. Fomberg. An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society. (1977) p.7.

It is also possible to see that if Peter was not the author there is no reason to doubt that whoever did write down this Epistle made good use of Petrine material which the community would almost certainly have accepted. It is, however, in the context of an apology for the obvious delay of the Parousia (a further sign that one generation of Christians had died who had expected the Parousia to happen before now!) that the author of 2 Peter refers to the Transfiguration of Jesus in his opening Chapter. Let us firstly examine the Greek text before discussing the importance of the reference to the Transfiguration in 2 Peter, and its contribution to the author's overall message.

2 PETER 1:16-18

οὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις
 μύθοις ἐξακολουθήσαντες ἐγνωρίσαμεν ὑμῖν τὴν
 τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δύναμιν καὶ
 παρουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἐπόπτει γενηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου
 17 μεγαλειότητος. λαβὼν γὰρ παρὰ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς
 τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν φωνῆς ἐνεχθείσης αὐτῷ τοιαύδε
 ὑπὸ τῆς μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης, Ὁ Υἱὸς μου ὁ
 ἀγαπητός μου οὗτός ἐστιν, εἰς ὃν ἐγὼ εὐδόκησα,—
 18 καὶ ταύτην τὴν φωνὴν ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν ἐξ οὐρα-
 νοῦ ἐνεχθεῖσαν σὺν αὐτῷ ὄντες ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ὄρει.
 17 O Yi. . . . εστιν B; R] Οὐτ. εστ. ο Yi. μου ο αγαπ.
 NA pl¹ lat⁵

As we have already illustrated, this account of the Transfiguration is unique in the New Testament outside of the Synoptic Gospels. The content of the episode, as it is described by the author of 2 Peter is significantly different when it is compared directly with the accounts in Mark, Matthew or Luke. Most obvious is the reduction in the amount of detail included by the author of the 2 Peter account in that the ὄρος ὑψηλὸν κατ' ἰδίαν (Mark 9:2; Mt. 17:1) or the simple ὄρος (Luke 9:28) becomes the ἅγιον ὄρει in 2 Peter; similarly, there is no confirmation that it was Peter, James and John present with Jesus on the mountain; also, there is no direct reference at all to Moses and Elijah. A general reading of the 2 Peter account reveals an episode

of greater simplicity and of reduced drama, rather than the detailed accounts of the Synoptic Gospels. Nevertheless, in the 2 Peter account there is a heightening of the role of the divine voice, a suggestion of equality in the distribution of $\delta\omicron\epsilon\alpha$ between God and Christ, and the suggestion that Peter, as one of those ($\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$) present, is narrating the story himself. These, of course, are surface observations which we must pursue in greater detail in our brief exegesis of the Transfiguration in 2 Peter. It is obvious, however, that in its shape and detail, the story in 2 Peter is decidedly different to the accounts of the Synoptic Gospels.

This brings us to a crucial and most important question in our study; what, if any, is the interrelationship or interdependence of the synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration with that which is preserved in 2 Peter? The answer to this question is vital to our understanding of the role and function of the Transfiguration both in 2 Peter and in the synoptics. It is a question to be borne in mind throughout this Chapter. There has been a tendency amongst scholars to dismiss the 2 Peter account in favour of the synoptic accounts and, almost universally, to regard the 2 Peter account as having been written down after the accounts recorded in the synoptics.¹

J.R.Lumby² believed that the differences in style and diction suggested that the 2 Peter account was 'exclusively Petrino' and unrelated to any of the synoptic accounts. This is in stark contrast to the much more recent view of T.Fornberg³ who states that the author of 2 Peter wrote about the Transfiguration in the way that he did because he knew

1. "The story of the Transfiguration is recorded in noticeably abbreviated form (in 2 Peter) and clearly according to a tradition which is secondary to that of the synoptics". E.Käsemann *op.cit.* p.186.

2. J.R.Lumby. The Epistles of St. Peter (1893) p.265.

3. T.Fornberg. *op.cit.* p.81.

that his readers were already acquainted with the synoptic material. This explains the brevity of the reference and would account for the missing details (Eg. Moses and Elijah, suggestion to build the tabernacles). Here also, the argument of Boobyer in our previous Chapter ¹ concerning the prominence and possible influence of the apostolic tradition upon the synoptic writers assumes significance. Boobyer states that 2 Peter 1:16-18 is "a piece of genuine tradition about Peter's preaching"² and W.Schmithals ³ with J.Blinzer ⁴ both agree that this section of 2 Peter was used by the apostle Peter totally independently of the synoptic stories. On this understanding of the reference to the Transfiguration in 2 Peter, we would have to conclude that the 2 Peter account was at least independent of the synoptic accounts, in that it was a story frequently recounted by the apostle himself and therefore used in this Epistle, and then consider the possibility that the 2 Peter account may well have been known to the writers of the Synoptic Gospels, who have enlarged and redacted what was originally Peter's own teaching. The importance of acknowledging whether this account is independent of the synoptics is obvious; if the author is here using a primitive, authentic account of the Transfiguration as it was passed down by Peter to the Early Church, then the manner in which it is used, the shape of the narrative, the context of the narrative and the details of the episode, may be able to give us a greater understanding as to how the Early Church understood the story of the Transfiguration. This might also suggest that the account in 2 Peter is more historically based on the vision of Peter on the mountain, than any of the synoptic accounts. J.Wand ⁵ has

1. Boobyer's argument is fully outlined in the previous Chapter.
 2. Boobyer. op.cit. p.44.
 3. W.Schmithals. "Der Markusschluss....." ZTK 69 (1972) p.3-97.
 4. J.Blinzer. Die neutestamentlichen Berichte (1968) p.72.
 5. J.W.C.Wand. Peter & Judo (1934) p.160.

suggested that the question of historical accuracy and prominence is difficult to decide. The likelihood that 2 Peter is a pseudonymous work and that the author is keen to convey the impression to his readers that he is, in fact, the apostle Peter only adds weight to the possibility that the reference we are about to consider may possibly be one of the earliest accounts of the Transfiguration as it was told amongst those in the Early Church, and that the author of 2 Peter has used it in a bid to prove his authenticity.

Kelly believes that 1:16-18 is where the author of 2 Peter "comes to grips with his main theme, claiming that the apostolic teaching is firmly founded on a historical revelation".¹ It is the nature of this revelation which remains a mystery. Wand states that the Transfiguration in 2 Peter is proof of the "power and presence of Christ"², and therefore suggests that "it is used exactly as 1 Peter and other New Testament writings use the resurrection". Wand adds that the author may well be following the tradition of the Apocalypse of Peter³ in which the Transfiguration occurs after the resurrection. Such an argument has already been dealt with in our earlier discussion concerning the possibility that the Transfiguration is a mis-placed resurrection account,⁴ and we have established beyond reasonable doubt that the Transfiguration belongs to the terrestrial life of Jesus and not to a post-resurrection era.

In the following summary exegesis of the relevant verses, we shall discover the importance of two Greek words, *δόξα* and *τίμη*. Bertram⁵ and Bultmann⁶ both argue that the two words belong exclusively to a

1. Kelly, op.cit. p.315.

2. Wand, op.cit. p.136.

3. Relationship between 2 Peter and Apocalypse of Peter will be discussed later in this Chapter.

4. This was mentioned in Chapter I.

5. G.Bertram, "Die Himmelfahrt Jesu von Kreuz und der Glaube an seine Auferstehung". Festgabe für Adolpho Deissman, (1927).

6. R.Bultmann, History of.... p.259-261.

resurrection context, whilst others ¹ have suggested that the two words are only comprehensible in an understanding of Jesus' Parousia. This debate will be mentioned again below. The view, however, that the Transfiguration of Jesus in 2 Peter is linked inextricably to the apostolic understanding of the Parousia of Jesus seems to be gaining support amongst more recent scholars. One of the first to suggest such a relationship between the Transfiguration and Parousia was James Moffat ², who stated that "For some reason the Transfiguration is appealed to as a foreshadowing of the Second Advent rather than the resurrection". Moffat considered the central theme of 2 Peter to be an apologia for the delay of the Parousia, and therefore the Transfiguration to be in some way related to this expectation as an event which was well-known through the apostles to the Early Church. Boobyer agrees and states, confidently, that 2 Peter's general concern is to "maintain hope in the Parousia"³, an event to which the Transfiguration was obviously related in the thinking of the Early Church. Bishop Ramsey has also suggested that the context and understanding of the Transfiguration story in 2 Peter inevitably reveals much of what was true in the Early Church's understanding of the Transfiguration.⁴ Such a view has been investigated more fully in the past few years by J.H.Neyrey ⁵, whose work has done much to confirm the view that the 2 Peter account of the Transfiguration is most at home in the context of an argument concerning the Parousia. Neyrey begins his article with an investigation into the genre of 'Farewell speeches' in the New Testament ⁶ and believes

1. See exegesis below of doxa and time for those who look to Parousia understanding.

2. J.Moffat. The General Epistles (1947) p.186.

3. Boobyer. op.cit. p.44.

4. Ramsey. op.cit. p.124.

5. J.H.Neyrey. "The Apologetic use of the Transfiguration in 2 Peter 1:16-18". CBQ 42 (1980) p.504-519.

6. Eg. Acts.20.

that, although not at all typical of other 'Farewell speeches', the Epistle of 2 Peter certainly has characteristics and feelings which are embodied in such documents. Work done by several scholars ¹ who have investigated the genre of 'Farewell speeches' has failed to mention 2 Peter as a possible candidate. However, H. Windisch ² and R. Knopf ³ have both compared 2 Peter with the 'Farewell speech' given in Josephus Ant. 4:8,2 (para. 177-193) and Neyrey believes that there is much to substantiate the view that it is possible to regard 2 Peter as, essentially, a Farewell discourse, but with some qualifications. Neyrey believes that the author may well be writing the Epistle from the point of view of an apostle (Peter) facing imminent death. It is also possible that the author himself was facing death. Neyrey suggests that 1:13-14 is especially relevant to such an understanding:

"I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to arouse you by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon":

he points to other parallels here in Acts 20:30; 1 Tim. 4:1f; 2 Tim. 3:1f which one could regard as, more obviously, 'Farewell speeches'. Neyrey believes that the 'Farewell speech' style may have been adopted by the author of 2 Peter so that "2 Peter may well be described as a Farewell speech, the main function of which is an apology for the community's eschatological traditions".⁴ The delay of the Parousia - something which gave rise to challenges from opponents and critics of the Christian community - resulted in a corresponding need to defend it.

This is the context in which Neyrey believes we are to regard the Transfiguration account in 2 Peter. The Transfiguration is not a fulfilment of the Parousia because the Parousia has not yet happened. Instead,

1. For list see Neyrey art.cit. p. 504-5.

2. Windisch, W. Die Katholischen Briefe (1951). p. 87-88.

3. R. Knopf. Die Briefe Petri und Judas (1912) p. 274.

4. Neyrey. art.cit. p. 506.

it seems to stand out in the earthly life of Jesus as a prefiguration of the Second Coming, which is used by the author of the Epistle to remind his readers of the present glory of Christ as well as the nature of Christ's future return. Scholars who agree on a relationship between Transfiguration and Parousia remain unsure as to what exactly the relationship is. Höller describes the Transfiguration as a Vorspiel¹ of the Parousia whilst J.B.Mayor saw it as an 'earnest' of the Second Coming.² Others see the Transfiguration scene as a preview or "specimen" of the glory of Jesus as it will be manifested when he returns in the future.³ The sum of all these suggestions comes in the analogy that the glory of Jesus at the Transfiguration is related to the glory that Jesus will possess at his Second Coming. In the light of these considerations let us now look at the text itself before summarising the importance of this reference to the context of the Epistle as a whole.

2. PETER. 1 : 16 - 18

Verse 16.

Οὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις μύθοις ἑξακολουθήσαντες ἐχυνώρισαμεν ὑμῖν τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἐπιόπταί γενηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος.

Spicq believes that this verse is "l'un des plus importants de tout le Nouveau Testament".⁴ There is an interesting switch from the first person singular to the first person plural throughout this section, which Wand suggests⁵ may refer to "the teachers who originally brought you

1. J. Höller. Die Vorklärung Jesu (1937) p.172.

2. J.B.Mayor. op.cit. p.195.

3. J.A.Bengel. Gnomon Novi Testamenti. (3rd ed.1855). p.642.

4. C.Spigq. Les Epîtres de St.Pierre. (1966). p.218.

5. Wand. op.cit. p.158.

Good News". Kelly suggests that the 'we' may refer directly to the 'apostles',¹ similar to those in other parts of the New Testament (John 1:14, 19, 35; Acts 1:21f, 10:39-41). Many of the apostles of the first generation of Christians had died and this plural form we is intended to underline the fact that what is here recorded is based firmly on an encounter with the historical Jesus. More likely, however, is the possibility that it is at this point that the author of the Epistle begins to draw on a source which was closely associated with the apostle Peter in the Early Church. It is conceivable that this small section (v. 16-18) formed a self-contained unit, which was undoubtedly Petrine, and which the author of 2 Peter used in an attempt to create an atmosphere of authenticity in his writings. The we could refer to Peter, James and John - the three identified in the synoptic tradition as being with the transfigured Christ.

Neyrey offers two explanations as to the σοφοί σμῆναις ἡμῶν². If we are to follow Bigg, Spicq, Schelkle and Stählin³ we would argue that these cleverly devised myths refer to the author's arguments against those false teachers who were fabricating mythical teachings. Mayor, Windisch, Kelly and Fornberg⁴, however, believe that this refers to the author's apologetic argument in favour of the Christian tradition which had itself been slandered as a myth⁵. The notion that the author of the

1. Kelly. op.cit. p.315.

2. Neyrey. art.cit. p.506

3. C.Bigg. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude. (1902) p.204.

Spicq. op.cit. p.218.

K.H.Schelkle. Die Petrusbriefe; Der Judasbrief (1961). p.89.

4. Mayor. op.cit. p.103.

H.Windisch. op.cit. p.91.

Kelly. op.cit. p.317.

Fornberg. op.cit. p.60.

5. Neyrey. art.cit. p.506.

Epistle is defending the Christian faith against attacks made by the Gnostics ¹ is no longer upheld: "the opponents are not the Gnostics".²

μύθοις has negative connotations, being used in certain of the Pastoral Epistles to describe doctrines which were held to be contrary to the Christian faith. In 2 Peter, however, it would seem that the author is actually defending a tradition which was under attack from his community - namely that the Parousia of Jesus had not yet taken place. From the content of the Epistle as a whole it would seem that the σεσοφισμένοις μύθοις were not myths fabricated by opponents of the Christian faith but that they were doubts within the Christian community as to whether the Parousia would ever take place. The author is writing against such doubts and advocates a staunch belief in the imminence of the Parousia.

The author then points out that it was the δύναμιν καὶ Παρουσίαν of Jesus Christ which ἐγνωρίσαμεν ὑμῖν . The words δύναμις and Παρουσία are two of the most theologically important words in the whole of the New Testament. It is because of both of these that ἐπὶ τῇ γεννηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος usually translated as 'power' or 'might' is also ascribed to that which the resurrected Christ possessed and gave to his apostles.³ Kelly ⁴ suggests that it is the power that Jesus will reveal when he returns in glory and which is seen temporarily after his resurrection and on the Transfiguration mountain. Παρουσία was widely accepted as referring to the Second Coming of Christ from an early stage. The noun usually denotes 'presence' or 'arrival'. A. Oepke writes that "The term is hellenistic. In essential content, however, it derives from the OT, Judaism and Primitive

1. Cf. 1 Tim. 1:4, 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4; Tit. 1:14.

2. Neyrey. op.cit. p.506.

3. Cf. Mt. 28:18.....hore exousia (Rom. 1:14).

4. Kelly. op.cit. p.313.

Christian thinking".¹ That the author is concerned with the delay of the Παρουσία seems very likely, especially in light of his argument in 2 Peter 3:4f where the theme is more fully developed. Of this passage (2 Peter 3:) Bauckham suggests that it is "the most explicit treatment of the delay of the Parousia in the New Testament".² Such a view would lead us to an almost certain conclusion that, in v.16, the author is concerned exclusively with the Second Coming of Jesus³ which has been delayed, in the eyes of the community to whom the Epistle is addressed. Both terms, power and coming, are best understood in the light of Jesus' expected return in glory.

The apostolic authority is not based on the fact that they followed σοφοισμένοις μύθοις but because ἐποπτεύοντες τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος. The 'divine majesty' refers directly to the Transfiguration event which "is seen as a trustworthy anticipation of his Second Coming in glory".⁴ Their faith and expectation in the return of Jesus is not rooted in an apostolic understanding of the events; rather, it is founded upon their privileged role as eyewitnesses of the divine majesty. The author then goes on to relate the event of which the apostles were eyewitnesses.

Verse 17

λαβὼν γὰρ παρὰ Θεοῦ πατρὸς τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν,
φωνῆς ἐνεχθείσης αὐτῷ τοιαύτης ὑπὸ τῆς
μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης, "Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ
ἀγαπητός, εἰς ὃν ἐγὼ εὐδόκησα".⁵

1. A. Oepke. TINT Vol. V. p. 866.

2. R. J. Bauckham. op. cit. p. 26.

3. Kelly. op. cit. p. 317.

4. Kelly. op. cit. p. 317. Cf. Luke 9:43.

5. We have adopted the word order given in X A pl lat J because this alternative, supported by the text of Westcott and Hort (1881), is closer to the Synoptics.

E.I. Robson believes that here is a reference to the Transfiguration of Jesus which is of great importance as "the sign manual of one who knows".¹ Kelly also suggests² that the author was calling to mind a scene which he obviously knew well because it is a direct reference to the events which took place on the mountain. There is a minority group of scholars who believe that this reference to the Transfiguration may not necessarily be an eyewitness account³, but the vast majority agree with Robson and Kelly in stating that these verses represent a record of the events from someone who was actually there. The reference to we suggests that Peter is referring to James and John who are identified in the synoptics (Eg. Mark 9:2). This reference is not, however, evidence that Peter must therefore have been responsible for the writing of this Epistle. That the author adopted a strand of tradition which would have been directly associated with Peter by the Early Church in his attempts to make his Epistle look authentic is more than likely.

Jesus is said to have received $\tau\iota\mu\acute{\eta}\nu$ and $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha\upsilon$ from God the Father. Those who maintain that the Transfiguration story was originally a part of the resurrection traditions concerning Jesus⁴ have argued that $\tau\iota\mu\acute{\eta}\nu$ καὶ $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha\upsilon$ can only be properly understood in the context of the resurrection. Schmithals added the point⁵ that the receiving of 'honour and glory' follows the appearance of a voice from heaven and is therefore totally prospective in meaning, ie. it seems to be harking forward to the resurrection. As we have seen already, R.H. Stein⁶ has

1. E.I. Robson. Studies in the Second Epistle of St. Peter (1915) p.49.

2. Kelly. op.cit. p.319.

3. Wand. op.cit. p.160.

4. Eg. Bultmann. History of..... op.cit.

5. Schmithals. op.cit. p.397.

6. See opening Chapter. p.11.

succeeded in establishing sufficient evidence to dismiss the notion that the Transfiguration is a mis-placed resurrection account or that it refers to the resurrection in any way. With reference to *τιμῆν καὶ δόξαν* Stein states that "It should be noted that these words are not technical terms for the resurrection".¹ Stein believes that Schmithals' theory is extremely weak because all of the participles are aorists and this, argues Stein, would suggest that they all refer to the same event in the future. Stein continues by illustrating the use of *τιμῆ* elsewhere in the New Testament and concludes that it is nowhere used in relation to the resurrection of Jesus - rather to a Jesus who has ascended to his Father.

Heb. 2:7

ἡλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους· δόξην καὶ τιμῆν ἑστεφάνωσας αὐτόν, (καὶ κατέστησας αὐτόν ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου).

Heb. 3:3

Πλείονος γὰρ δόξης οὗτος παρὰ Μωϋσῆν ἡγείωται, καθ' ὅσον πλείονα τιμῆν ἔχει τοῦ οἴκου ὁ κατασκευάζεται ὑπὸ τίνος.

Rev. 5:12

Ἄξιός ἐστιν τὸ ἄρνιον τὸ ἐσφαγμένον λαβεῖν τὴν δύναμιν καὶ πλοῦτον καὶ σοφίαν καὶ ἰσχὺν καὶ τιμῆν καὶ δόξαν καὶ εὐλογίαν.

Stein is convinced that *τιμῆ* is used here not in a resurrection context but simply to remind those who believed in Jesus that he had already ascended to his Father and that he was seen to return again. A similar interpretation is applied to the concept of *δόξα* and to the two words when they are used together as they are here in 2 Peter:² "To say that

1. Stein. art. cit. p.87.

2. Stein. art. cit. p.88.

the reference to honour and glory in 2 Peter 1 requires that we understand this passage as referring to a resurrection account is incorrect". Stein, rather, follows the idea of Boobyer who states that:¹ "There is no reference to time standing alone with reference to Christ's resurrection or exaltation; and doxa is still less favourable for Bultmann's point - it has stronger Parousia associations than uses in connection with the resurrection and exaltation". Much more could be said concerning the theological importance of these two words; it must be sufficient for our needs to conclude that they are not exclusively comprehensible in a resurrection context but just as (if not more) understandable in the light of Jesus' imminent return.

In the 2 Peter account it is interesting to note that the honour and glory are given to Jesus $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\ \pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$ and this is the first major difference between the synoptic and 2 Peter accounts of the Transfiguration. "The synoptists, we may note, make no mention of God and represent the voice as coming from a cloud".² Kelly's point here is that the words spoken by the voice in the synoptic accounts come directly from the cloud and there is no mention of God intervening directly. This may well be because of the Petrine tradition, recorded here in 2 Peter, which was so well known, particularly to Mark. Clearly the inference given in such a statement as: $\acute{\omicron}\tilde{\upsilon}\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\nu\ \acute{\omicron}\ \gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \mu\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\omicron}\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma,$
 $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \acute{\alpha}\lambda\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ ³ is that it is God who is speaking since the mou is emphatic. A more likely explanation for the Evangelists' omission of any direct reference to God, other than that of the familiarity of the Petrine tradition, probably lies in the redactional interests of each of the Evangelists. In all three Gospels there is the obvious parallelism between the Baptism of Jesus (Cf. Mark 1:9f) and the Transfiguration.

1. Boobyer. op.cit. p.44.

2. Kelly. op.cit. p.319.

3. Cf. Mark 9:7.

It is also clear that the Gospel writers intend us to see some similarity between the two events; the Baptism occurs at the start of Jesus' Galilean ministry whereas the Transfiguration takes place towards the end; there is the common theme of divine approval and vindication; there is the similarity between the voice and the cloud and the message that is proclaimed by God. That the synoptic writers consciously wrote both the Baptism and the Transfiguration narratives so that we would take into account the parallelism of the two accounts in Jesus' ministry is more than likely. If the Baptism tradition did not include a reference to the explicit voice from God the Father this might explain its omission in the Transfiguration narratives later in the Gospels. It seems unlikely that the Baptism tradition contained any reference to God directly, nor did it explain Jesus receiving honour and glory. If the synoptic writers were using a similar source to that recorded here in 2 Peter, the redactional work of the Evangelists can clearly be seen in the using of an account, perhaps similar to 2 Peter 1:17, and the moulding of material to suit the redactional interests and similarity between the Baptism and Transfiguration stories.

We have established that it was God himself who bestowed honour and glory upon Jesus. We have also suggested that these two words do not necessarily demand a resurrection explanation of the Transfiguration, and that Boobyer may well be correct in suggesting that the Transfiguration in 2 Peter relates to the whole purpose of the Epistle.....an apologia for the delay of the Parousia of Jesus. Spicq finds it interesting that the Greek verb μεταμορφώω¹ is not employed here, a point which would suggest that the doxa already belonged to the earthly Jesus, but that it will only be made perfect at the Parousia. Perhaps this might also explain why Luke fails to use this verb and uses doxa instead.² τίμην καὶ δόξαν would seem to be, therefore, the sign to those present that

1. Spicq. op.cit. p.221.

2. Luke 9:28f. See next Chapter. Exegesis on Mark 9:2.

Jesus possessed an honour and glory which is temporarily revealed at the Transfiguration but which will be revealed more fully at his Parousia.

A final note must be added here concerning the actual words spoken by the voice. They are closest to those spoken by the voice in Matthew ¹, but there is the omission of the divine imperative ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ which features in all three synoptic accounts. There are various explanations as to why, if that which is recorded in 2 Peter is a genuine Petrine reminiscence, it is not recorded identically in the synoptics, especially when quoting the words of the divine voice. Indeed, if we were to ignore the textual variations concerning this verse, the words spoken by the divine voice would be even more noticeably different to those recorded in the synoptics. The most likely explanation is that once more, the authors wished to heighten the parallelism between the Baptism and Transfiguration narratives. It is interesting to note that in all three synoptic accounts of the Baptism, the voice is said to have proclaimed words very similar to those recorded in the 2 Peter account of the Transfiguration. This would suggest that, if the source of 2 Peter was known at all to the Synoptists, they have slightly amended the words spoken by the Transfiguration voice in an attempt to heighten the christological importance of the Transfiguration; hence the ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ. It is important to note also that there is an emphasis on my beloved ², in the 2 Peter account, which adds weight to the overall impact of God and Christ as Father and Son.

Verse 18

καὶ ταύτην τὴν φωνὴν ἡμεῖς ἤκούσαμεν ἔξ οὐρανοῦ
ἐνεχθεῖσαν σὺν αὐτῷ ὄντες ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ὄρει.

1. Mt. 17:6. especially when textual variants are taken into account.

2. As is also the case in the Synoptic Gospels.

This verse is perhaps the most emphatic example of an eyewitness testimony. The emphasis upon the first person plural and the general impression given by the verse suggests that this is indeed the reminiscence of someone who was present on the mountain. Presumably, the we refers to Peter, James and John.¹ It is, however, important to state that simply because the synoptics give us the names of the three disciples in their respective accounts of the Transfiguration it does not necessarily follow that the Peter, James and John group were a part of the earlier Apostolic Testimony. In, for example, the Gospel of Mark, these three disciples are frequently reported to be alone with Jesus at significant points in his ministry.² In that we have already seen the redactional work of the Evangelists active in the reporting of the voice, it is not unlikely that the Gospel writers were simply guessing that the *ἡμεῖς* refers to Peter, James and John. We cannot state with any degree of certainty that the Gospel writers knew the identity of those who were with Peter on the Transfiguration mountain. It is also interesting to note the lack of any reported remarks made by Peter either, concerning the building of tabernacles, or even the fact that he had said something entirely inappropriate in the 2 Peter account. Rather than appear somewhat foolish as he does in the synoptic story, Peter is "a conscious and intelligent recipient of a sacred communication", whilst James and John remain anonymous³. In 2 Peter it is likely that the author is using a source that was closely identified with the apostle Peter. As is the case elsewhere in the New Testament⁴, Peter is to be regarded as the beneficiary

1. Kelly. op.cit. p.319.

2. The three disciples figure prominently in the Gospel at various points (Eg. Mark 5:37).

3. Neyrey. op.cit. p.509.

4. Eg. Mt. 16:17; Mk. 13:3; Luke 24:34.

of the revelation of God in Christ. Bearing in mind the role ascribed to Peter in the Synoptic Gospels it is not unlikely that the Gospel writers have redacted the source preserved for us here in 2 Peter, or a source very similar to this, and adapted the role of Peter to fit into the character we find elsewhere in the Gospels. (Eg. Walking on the water, Mt. 14:28f; Caesarea Philippi, Mark 8:27f; the denial of Jesus, Mark 14:39f). We shall be returning to the role of Peter in the next Chapter when we examine the Marcan account.

(iii) Conclusions as to the Function of the Transfiguration in 2 Peter.

"This whole passage (2 Peter 1:16-18) has a great interest in showing the impact made by the Transfiguration upon those present. Peter uses the incident here to emphasise his authoritative knowledge of the historical Jesus (and thereby to rebut the false teachers' talk of 'myths'), to stress the solidarity between the Old Testament and the apostolic message (against false teachers who were twisting both), and to draw from the Incarnate life of Jesus a positive pledge of the future coming in glory which the false teachers laughed at".¹ Michael Green concludes his brief analysis of the Transfiguration by suggesting that Peter uses the Transfiguration in this way; whilst we would agree about the way that it is used, we would also maintain that the author of the Epistle was certainly not the apostle himself.² Green's last point, that the delay of the Parousia was being scoffed at by sceptics of the Christian community, is probably the most important point he makes. In this context, Neyrey points to the prophetic force of the Transfiguration narrative³. The author reminds those who had scoffed at the idea that Jesus would return in glory of an episode in the earthly life of Christ, which demonstrated

1. Green. op.cit. p.86.

2. See earlier in Chapter.

3. Neyrey. art.cit. p.504-505.

Christ's possession of the glory and honour of God and which pointed forward to his return; he reminds those who made fun of the Parousia idea of what Jesus had promised.¹ The Transfiguration was in no way a fulfilment of the Parousia, which Jesus makes allusions to in his earthly ministry (Eg. Mark 13), but it would seem that in the understanding of the event in the Early Church, the Transfiguration was regarded as being closely associated with majesty, glory and honour which would be made perfect when Jesus returned in glory. The Transfiguration was a revelation given before the Parousia of what Jesus would be like at his return. We will be looking in much greater detail in our final Chapter at the relationship between the Parousia and the Transfiguration but our provisional conclusion here is to be that the two were certainly connected in the minds of those in the Early Church.

Let us now summarise our conclusions. It is perfectly clear that the 2 Peter account of the Transfiguration is a much more concise, precise and shorter reference than that which is to be found in the synoptics. It would also seem plausible to suggest that even though 2 Peter was not written by Peter, the author has used a source (or sources) of the apostle concerning the Transfiguration which was recognised by the Early Church as a genuine Petrine reminiscence. This source is used by the author in an attempt to make his work look genuine. It is therefore possible that the Transfiguration was an oft-quoted and popular story in the Early Church, used as defence against those who scoffed at claims that the Messiah was to return in the future and in glory. It was obviously connected, in the Apostolic Testimony, to Parousia expectation.

The relationship between the 2 Peter and the synoptic accounts is thus intriguing.² Either the 2 Peter account is closely related in

1. Eg. Mark 13:26.

2. This will be investigated more comprehensively in Chapter IV.

some way to the synoptic accounts or it is entirely independent. It could, however, be the case that the tradition recorded in 2 Peter represents a direct and clear reference to a source or the source used by the Evangelists and that, as we have shown in relation to the voice motif and Peter's own role, redactional work on the part of the Evangelists has created the three different accounts as we now find them in the synoptics. As we concluded in our brief exegesis of 2 Peter 1:16-18, the Evangelists had redactional as well as historical interests to pursue. This would explain the appearance of Moses and Elijah, the identification and naming of all three disciples, the descriptions of the garments and the witnesses, and many of the other details not found in 2 Peter but present in the synoptics. What we are, therefore, suggesting is that the source recorded by a pseudonymous author in 2 Peter may well be the apostolic eyewitness account of the Transfiguration which, either through Peter or in some other way, was the source which formed the basis of the synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration. Such an explanation gives the Transfiguration a sound, historical base in that Peter himself bore witness to it; it also explains and gives us a clear insight into what was Peter's own simple story, and how the Evangelists have then redacted their sources and moulded the Transfiguration into their Gospels. Conjecture is inevitable in such a series of statements, but the importance of the 2 Peter reference has, in our view, been seriously underestimated in recent years. The fact that 2 Peter must be given a later date does not exclude the possibility that it contains sources and references which are much earlier, authentically Petrine, and which have been preserved by the Early Church. That 2 Peter contains the earliest account of the Transfiguration of Jesus which was either identical or very similar to that used by the Evangelists in the writing of their Gospels, is not beyond the realms of possibility.

(iv) The Apocalypse of Peter

Apart from the Epistle of 2 Peter there is a further important reference to the Transfiguration in another early Christian document, the Apocalypse of Peter. Two fragments of the original document are available to us. One is generally regarded as a Greek fragment which is known as the Akhmim Fragment and the other is an Ethiopic version which is usually attributed to Clement of Rome. M.R.James¹ suggested that the Akhmim Fragment was really a part of the Gospel of Peter, although he also believes that it was taken from the Apocalypse of Peter which possibly existed as a separate document already at the time of the writing of the Gospel of Peter. The Akhmim Fragment contains a narrative of the Transfiguration of Jesus which bears some similarity to the synoptic accounts but it is the Ethiopic version of the Apocalypse which is of greatest importance to our own consideration of the Transfiguration narrative.

The Ethiopic reference is translated by E.Hennecke² as follows:

And my Lord Jesus Christ, our King, said to me, "Let us go into the holy mountain," And his disciples went with him praying. And behold there were two men, and we could not look on their faces, for a light came from them which shone more than the sun and their raiment was also glistening and cannot be described, and there is no thing sufficient to be compared to them in this world. And its gentleness...that no mouth is able to express the beauty of their form. For their aspect was astonishing and wonderful. And the other, great, I say, shines in his appearance more than hail (crystal). Flowers of roses is the likeness of the colour of his appearance and his body....his head. And upon his shouldors and on their foreheads was a crown of nard, a work woven from beautiful flowers; like the rainbow in water was his hair. This was the comeliness of his countenance, and he was adorned with all kinds of ornament. And when we suddenly saw them, we marvelled. And I approached God Jesus Christ

1. M.R.James. The Apocryphal New Testament. p.504-524. (1924).

2. E.Hennecke. New Testament Apocrypha. (1965). p.682.

and said to him, "My Lord who is this?" And he said to me, "These are Moses and Elias". And I said to him, "Where then are Abram, Isaac, Jacob and the other righteous Fathers?" And my Lord and God Jesus Christ said to me, "Have you seen the companies of the Fathers; As is their rest, so also is the honour and glory of those who will be persecuted for my righteousness' sake."

The context of this reference is obviously as important as the passage itself. The venue stated in the opening verse is the Mount of Olives (v.1) and this is the same venue as that recorded in Mark 13:3 for the discussion concerning the Parousia. The question is then asked in the Ethiopic version as to what are signs that the Parousia is to take place and this is also very similar to Mark 13:4 where the disciples ask Jesus a similar question. The balance of the rest of the text is Jesus' description of the return of the Son of Man (v.16) and exactly what should be expected when the Parousia takes place. (v.15-16). It is once more into the context of the Parousia that the Transfiguration is introduced. The above translation reveals that another document belonging to the Early Church firmly believed that the Transfiguration was to be understood not in the context of Jesus' resurrection ¹ but in the light of Jesus' imminent return at his Parousia.

Neyrey offers six statements of conclusion which we will list because of their importance:²

1. The context of the Transfiguration account is generally situated in an eschatological discourse about the Parousia of the Lord and the final judgement.
2. More specifically, Moses and Elijah's glory is a proof and sample of heavenly glory awaiting those saved at the Second Coming, and Jesus' transfigured glory clearly resembles the glory he will have when he returns as the Son of Man.

1. See Neyrey, art. cit. p.512 for a summary of those who argue this.

2. Neyrey, art. cit. p.513

3. The heavenly voice, which comes after the Transfiguration and at the end of Jesus' comments on the Parousia and future judgements, serves as a confirmation of Jesus' whole speech, including his prediction of his glorious return.
4. His ascension (v.17) is like that in Acts 1: 9-11, where it serves as an analogy of the return ("he will return in the way you saw him leave") and also sets the stage for its realisation.
5. The conclusion of the Ethiopic version, although M. R. James considers it to be secondary to the Apocalypse of Peter, nevertheless establishes the interpretation of the Transfiguration as a foreshadowing of the End Time:
6. The christological link between the Transfiguration and the Parousia is the glory of Jesus. Finally, the Transfiguration clearly functions as a present proof of future things; paradise for mankind and Parousia for the Lord.

Although we maintain that the reference to the Transfiguration in 2 Peter 1:16-18 is of more importance than the reference preserved in both fragments of the Apocalypse of Peter the significance of the latter should be very obvious. The reference to the Transfiguration in the Apocalypse of Peter is a further example of how, in the Early Church, the Transfiguration of Jesus was used in the context of a discussion concerning the Parousia of Jesus.

A much more detailed exegetical study of the Apocalypse of Peter and a more comprehensive consideration of 2 Peter 1:16-18 is beyond the task of this thesis which is aiming to establish the theological significance of the Transfiguration as it has been passed on to us through the Synoptic Gospels. Nevertheless, in our brief resumé of the problems surrounding the authorship, theology and authenticity of 2 Peter, we have concluded that the Transfiguration finds itself placed into a context of an apologia for the delay of the Parousia - a context in which it was obviously at home in the Early Church. We have also seen that, regardless

of who was responsible for the writing of the Epistle, the author has used Petrine reminiscences in order that his Epistle appears authentic, even though it was almost certainly not written by the apostle Peter. We conclude, therefore, that 2 Peter 1:16-18 possibly represents the authentic, primitive, Petrine account of the Transfiguration which has been used by the author of 2 Peter to make his work appear authentic. It is also likely that the Gospel writers were familiar with a similar, if not identical, source to that preserved in 2 Peter 1:16-18. In the light of this, and bearing in mind the context of the Transfiguration both in 2 Peter and in the Apocalypse of Peter, we must now proceed to a re-examination of the Marcan account. We must seek to establish what influence, if any, the context of the Transfiguration narrative had on the Evangelists' understanding of the event and then proceed to evaluate the significance of the story in the synoptics, and what emphasis has been reinforced or added by the Evangelists as a result of their redactional activity. Bearing in mind our conclusions in Chapter II, we turn now to an examination of the Marcan account of the Transfiguration.

CHAPTER IV. THE TRANSFIGURATION IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK

We must now turn our attention to the account of the Transfiguration which is generally regarded to be first of the synoptic accounts to have been written down, in an attempt to establish the purpose of the Evangelist in his use of the Transfiguration tradition. Bearing in mind our earlier suggestion that Peter played an important role in the formation of the Gospel of Mark, we must begin with a brief consideration of Peter's influence on the Evangelist Mark. If Peter's role is firmly established, we must then proceed with an exegesis of the Marcan account of the Transfiguration, as well as a more general consideration as to why Mark has placed the narrative in his Gospel in the way that he has. The purpose of this should now be obvious: it is our belief that Peter was also responsible for the Transfiguration tradition, as it is preserved in 2 Peter 1:16-18 by its pseudonymous author. If this is indeed the case, it is natural for us to presume that Peter told Mark a similar, if not identical story to that recorded in 2 Peter. The use Mark has made of that tradition, his redactional additions and clarifications, and the context of the narrative in his Gospel, will all reveal something to us of the theological understanding of Mark concerning the Transfiguration of Jesus. The theological understanding of the Early Church, was a direct connection between Transfiguration and Parousia; although we shall not attempt to force the point that Mark was inevitably influenced by such an understanding, it will become obvious that many of the theological motifs and additional details introduced by Mark, as well as the context of the narrative in his Gospel, can be given an eschatological significance and easily compared with the apostolic thought represented in the Epistles, as we highlighted in Chapter II. We begin our consideration of the Marcan account, however, with a reminder of the importance

of Peter in the formation of the Gospel of Mark.

We have already suggested ¹ that Peter may well have played a role in the formation of the Gospel of Mark. Indeed, at the beginning of the second century it would seem necessary to conclude that Peter's role was undeniable. A lost exposition of Jesus' sayings in Eusebius, written by Papias ² reads:

The Elder Mark also said this; Mark, who became Peter's interpreter wrote accurately, though not in order, all the things that he remembered about the things said and done by the Lord. For he had neither heard the Lord, nor been one who followed him, but afterwards, as I said, he followed Peter who used to compose his discourses with regard to the needs (of his hearers) but not as if he were formulating a systematic account of the sayings of the Lord. Mark, therefore, did nothing for which he could be blamed for writing some things down just as he remembered them; he was careful of one thing in particular = to miss out nothing of which he had heard and to make no statements that were untrue. 3

This reference suggests that the apostle Peter played a key role in the formation of Mark's Gospel. Indeed Peter's role is widely attested elsewhere amongst the Church Fathers. ⁴ Interpreter would seem to be the best translation for ἑρμηνευτῆς Πέτρον γενόμενος although it is unclear whether this denotes a linguistic act on the part of Mark or simply the recording of oral reminiscences in a written form. Whatever our final conclusions as to how the Gospel of Mark came to be written it is obvious that the Gospel passed through three, definitive stages ⁵ before it was written down by a man who had not witnessed the events for himself. This simple fact needs to be remembered when any serious

1. See page 21.

2. Eusebius HE 3.39.

3. Greek is given in Huck. p.vii. Synopsis (1951).
Alternative translation offered by Cranfield p.3. op.cit.

4. Eg. Origen. Commentary on Matthew. Clement of Alexandria Hypotyposis 6.

5. Three stages: 1. Jesus; 2. Peter; 3. Mark.

investigation of a pericope from the Gospels is undertaken - we are concerned with various stages of tradition. Peter's role as Mark's major source, as one who was actually present, remains the most likely explanation which lies behind the Gospel's formation.¹

That Peter played a dominant role in the formation of Mark is to be an accepted part of our argument. Peter could not, however, have been the only source used by the Evangelist Mark. Bultmann² believes that much of the narrative material which links the pericopes, for which an eyewitness is seemingly responsible, is undoubtedly legend created by the Early Church. Bultmann therefore argues that the Gospel of Mark is a mixture of Petrine reminiscences and of Early Church creations. Other scholars, however, disagree.³ They believe that the Gospel of Mark represents the efforts of the Early Church to present a clear and unblemished account of the life and ministry of Jesus which relies on historical fact rather than fictional fantasy. Cranfield presents various reasons as to why the Marcan account is to be regarded as reliable and basically historical:⁴

- a) much is directly from Peter.
- b) material has survived "processes and pressures" or oral tradition and is included - an argument against fiction of the Early Church
- c) prominence of martus words in the New Testament - suggests Early Church had a strong sense of responsibility
- d) oral tradition was carefully preserved; similar care very likely in case of written sources
- e) perplexing and even offensive material is included
- f) semiticisms argue against theory of Hellenistic influences.

1. See Irenaeus. adv. Haer. III i

2. Bultmann. Synoptic Trad. p.266.

3. Eg. C.H.Dodd. About the Gospels. (1950).

4. Cranfield. op.cit. p.17.

Cranfield fails to mention the role played by Mark himself, which would seem to be an important omission, even if the editorial hand of Mark is very limited in Mark's Gospel. A typical example, however, of Mark's own contribution to the Gospel is undoubtedly the chronology he affords to the life of Jesus which we can presume was Mark's own, even if he was given occasional guidance by Peter concerning a limited number of events.

The use made by the Evangelist of the Transfiguration tradition, and the manner in which he interprets it, must therefore be examined in the light of all that we have said above. As we have stated, many believe that Peter's role in the recording of this event must have been a major source of the Gospel writer in his writing down of the Transfiguration story. We can presume with some certainty that the apostle witnessed the Transfiguration himself, perhaps with James and John, and that it was he who was responsible for the passing on of the tradition to Mark. The question remains as to what exactly was given to Mark by Peter, and what redactional work has been undertaken by Mark in his formation of the Gospel. It must also be asked to what extent Mark has himself moulded the story to fit into the dramatic plan of his Gospel, taking into account the context of the Transfiguration story both in his Gospel and in the Early Church. The answer to these questions has rarely been sought. Our observations on the reference to the Transfiguration in 2 Peter 1:16-18 lead us to suggest that this story was a well-known tradition stemming from the apostle Peter and which, in the minds of the Early Christians, told them something about the Parousia of Christ. An unknown author of 2 Peter has used this tradition in an attempt to make his work appear authentic along with other elements in 2 Peter which we have already mentioned.¹ It is our belief that if Peter was responsible for the

1. See p. 38.

information received by the author of the Gospel of Mark, or at least some of that material, it is more than likely that a similar outline to that which is recorded in 2 Peter was told to Mark and that the source used by the Evangelist Mark in the writing of the Transfiguration narrative was very similar (if not identical) to that which is preserved, or written, in 2 Peter. The reference in 2 Peter 1:16-18 may well be a direct reference to the accepted Petrine story of the Transfiguration; the difference between the 2 Peter account and the Transfiguration in the synoptics, only illustrates the redactional activity of each of the Evangelists. We must presume, in the case of the Gospel accounts, that Peter told Mark a very similar story to that which is attributed to him in 2 Peter. This suggests that what is in fact required is a comparison of the synoptic accounts with that of 2 Peter so that it can be clearly seen what was passed on to the Evangelists by Peter and what the Evangelists have added themselves. In this Chapter, we must bear in mind our summary exegesis of the 2 Peter account as we look at the Marcan narrative. If we can glean what is in fact Petrine and what is the redactional work of the Evangelists we will also learn a great deal about the theological aims and evaluation of the Evangelists as they wrote down their own particular accounts of the Transfiguration. An exegesis of the Marcan account, bearing in mind the possible importance and significance of the 2 Peter account is thus called for, in an attempt to ascertain the theological significance of the Transfiguration in the Gospel of Mark.

(i) Basic Observations

If we look at the two accounts of the Transfiguration from 2 Peter 1. and Mark 9, the most striking difference is the additional detail given in Mark which is not recorded in 2 Peter. The Marcan account is therefore much longer.

2 PETERMARK

οὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις
 μύθοις ἐξακολουθήσαντες ἐγνωρίσαμεν ὑμῖν τὴν
 τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δύναμιν καὶ
 παρουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἐπόπται γενηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου
 17 μεγαλειότητος. λαβὼν γὰρ παρὰ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς
 τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν φωνῆς ἐνεχθείσης αὐτῷ τοιαύδε
 ὑπὸ τῆς μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης, Ὁ Υἱός μου ὁ
 ἀγαπητός μου οὗτός ἐστιν, εἰς ᾧ ἐγὼ εὐδόκησα,—
 18 καὶ ταύτην τὴν φωνὴν ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν ἐξ οὐρα-
 νοῦ ἐνεχθεῖσαν σὺν αὐτῷ ὄντες ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ὄρει.
 17 O Yi. εστιν B; R] Οὗτ. εστ. ο Yi. μου ὁ ἀγαπ.
 NA pi lat 5

Καὶ μετὰ ἡμέρας ἑξ παραλαμβάνει ὁ Ἰησοῦς²
 τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τὸν Ἰάκωβον καὶ Ἰωάννην, καὶ
 ἀναφέρει αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν κατ' ἰδίαν μό-
 νους. καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν, | καὶ³
 τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο στίλβοντα λευκὰ λίαν,
 οἷα γναφεὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐ δύναται οὕτως λευ-
 κᾶναι. καὶ ὤφθη αὐτοῖς Ἡλείας σὺν Μωϋσεί, ⁴
 καὶ ἦσαν συναλοῦντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ. καὶ ἀποκρι- ⁵
 θείς ὁ Πέτρος λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ, Ραββει, καλὸν
 ἐστὶν ἡμᾶς ὡδε εἶναι, καὶ ποιήσωμεν τρεῖς σκη-
 νάς, σοὶ μίαν καὶ Μωϋσεί μίαν καὶ Ἡλείᾳ μίαν.
 οὐ γὰρ ᾔδει τί ἀποκριθῇ· ἐκφοβοὶ γὰρ ἐγένοντο. ⁶
 καὶ ἐγένετο νεφέλη ἐπισκιάζουσα αὐτοῖς, καὶ ⁷
 ἐγένετο φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης, Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Υἱός
 μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ. καὶ ἐξάπινα περι- ⁸
 βλεψάμενοι οὐκέτι οὐδένα εἶδον ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν
 μόνον μεθ' ἑαυτῶν.

It is impossible for us to be able to establish any definite historical connection between these two accounts because we do not have the evidence to prove that Mark used a similar, if not identical, source to that recorded in the 2 Peter account. There is, however, in our opinion, sufficient evidence for us to proceed on the presumptions that the author of 2 Peter did utilise authentic Petrine material of which the Transfiguration reference is a frequently quoted example; that Peter was almost certainly responsible for much that is recorded in Mark; that the Transfiguration in Mark is quite conceivably a combination of the Petrine source used in 2 Peter with the redactional activity of the Evangelists. If the Marcan account of the Transfiguration does rely on a Petrine source and if the 2 Peter account of the Transfiguration is authentically Petrine the possibility that the two accounts have originated from the apostle Peter is more than likely. A theological understanding of the Transfiguration may well be easier to obtain by an analysis of its use in the context of the Early Church, as it is used in 2 Peter, where we can presume that there was a definite connection between the Parousia and the

Transfiguration of the glory of God on the mountain.

Before we proceed to a detailed analysis of the Marcan account there are some basic observations we can make regarding the Transfiguration narrative in the Second Gospel and any parallels between it and the account in 2 Peter:

- 9:2. This verse poses no real problem. The whole of the 2 Peter account is also in the plural and Mark's suggestion that it was Peter, James and John who were present is consistent with other places in the Gospel.¹

After Six Days is obviously an addition of Mark.

Transfigured before them is also an interpretation of what beholding the glory and honour actually meant; the verb transfigured does not appear in 2 Peter or in the Gospel of Luke.

In Mark, the high and lonely mountain replaces the holy mountain of 2 Peter.

- 9:3. There is no such description of the visible attributes of Jesus' glory in 2 Peter but this is obviously an attempt to describe what *ἐπὶ ὅππῃ γεννηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου μετ' αὐτοῦ* actually meant.

- 9:4. This is totally independent of 2 Peter and would seem to be redaction on the part of Mark.

- 9:5. Also, totally independent of 2 Peter. The question does arise that material concerning the apostle Peter should be expected to be present in both the 2 Peter and Marcan accounts if our above theory is correct. In the case of Peter's remark here, however, we must take into account Peter's role in the Gospel of Mark as a whole and a possible redactional intention of Mark to further the link between Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration. Another possible explanation for the omission of a direct quote of Peter in the 2 Peter narrative is that these words were added after Peter's death and were known by Mark but not by the author of 2 Peter.

- 9:6. See comment on 9:5.

1. Eg. Mark 5:37; 14:32.

9:7. Mark adds that the voice (reported in 2 Peter) comes from a cloud which is inferred, perhaps, in the 2 Peter account, but interpreted by Mark in the light of Old Testament theophany appearances and communications. The words spoken by the divine voice are identical to those recorded in the Matthean account but differ slightly from those in Mark and Luke. There is close correspondance between the 2 Peter account and the Marcan account in this verse.

9:8. This is Marcan redaction.

Even such a brief consideration of the two narratives suggests that if Mark had received an outline of the Transfiguration from Peter, similar or identical to that which is recorded in 2 Peter, he would have had little difficulty in adapting and expanding his source into the narrative as we now have it. The central framework of the Apostolic Testimony recorded in 2 Peter remains identical in Mark:

- A. Apostolic Witness
- B. Venue - a Mountain
- C. A Demonstration of Glory
- D. A Voice from God.
- E. Vindication of the Sonship of Christ.

Any analysis of the Marcan account needs to consider seriously the redactional activity of the Evangelist. Mark was relating certain events and sayings in the life of Christ which he has incorporated into a framework which is entirely of his own making.¹ It is our belief that both the 2 Peter and Marcan accounts of the Transfiguration originated from an apostolic source which, we must presume, was the apostle Peter who had been present with Jesus on the mountain. Whether this source was identical in both cases we will never be certain, but it seems plausible for us to suppose that the source used by both the Evangelist and the author of 2 Peter was at least similar. If we are correct in this theory, before we proceed to examine the Marcan account in more detail, we need to consider a question of great importance in the light of our examination

1. Apart from possible influence from Peter himself.

of the 2 Peter account of the Transfiguration. It is important that we seek to establish whether the understanding of Mark was the same as that of the author of 2 Peter in his treatment of the Transfiguration narrative in seeing the event as being somehow related to the imminent and expected Parousia of Jesus. This can be ascertained in two ways; first, by a consideration of the context of the Transfiguration in Mark (and whether, in particular, there is any Parousia expectation present in the context of the narrative), and then by an examination of the Marcan account, with particular reference to Mark's redactional material, in order to establish if Mark understood the Transfiguration in the same way as the author of 2 Peter obviously did - that the Transfiguration was a prefiguration of the Parousia.

(ii) The Context of the Transfiguration in the Gospel of Mark

As we have already suggested, it is beyond reasonable doubt that the chronology of the Gospel of Mark is mainly the Evangelist's own. It would seem unlikely that there was any other governing principle which guided the author in his writing apart from suggestions of Peter. A. Loisy¹ stated that "All this amalgam of miracles and instructions is only a collection of remembrances.....whose sequence is not governed by any rigorous historical or logical principle". Others have attempted to suggest that geography, and in particular the place of Galilee, has largely determined Mark's chronology.² Undoubtedly, there are certain key events (ie. Baptism, Temptation, Caesarea Philippi, Passion, Resurrection) in the life of Christ that had an accepted chronological place in the tradition passed down to the Evangelist, but many of the miracles and sayings of Jesus seem to have been put in order relevant to

1. A. Loisy. L'Evangile Selon Marc. (1912). p.9.

2. C.H. Dodd. ERT. 43 (1931-1933) P.396-400.

the Evangelist's interests. Thus it is important for us to consider not only the Transfiguration narrative, but its place in the Gospel as a whole. It would seem that Mark has a pastoral objective as well as an historical duty and the way in which he places the sayings of Jesus throughout his Gospel suggests that Mark governed his own material and its context in the narrative.

The context of the Transfiguration narrative in the Gospel of Mark raises interesting questions. Let us examine the approach of R.H. Stein ¹ as a starting point, who states that: "...in Mark the Transfiguration clearly serves the purpose of confirming Peter's confession and ratifying Jesus' prediction of his suffering and resurrection; and since the passion sayings are primarily Marcan redaction, the arrangement of the Transfiguration after Peter's confession and the passion prediction serves Mark's purpose well. There is no denying that in its present position it serves redactional aims of Mark well!" Stein is therefore convinced that there is a direct connection between the confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration and there is wide support for this view. ² T.A. Burkill suggests that after Peter's recognition of Jesus as the Messiah, the Evangelist "evidently feels that the situation calls for some convincing demonstration of the reality of Messiahship". ³ This has lead R.P. Martin to label the events at Caesarea as "the watershed of the Marcan narrative", ⁴ in that the revelation of Jesus as Messiah, followed by the demonstration of glory on the mountain and the divine vindication given to Jesus by the voice of God, all combine and bring

1. R.H. Stein. art. cit. p.85.

2. Bernadin and Burkill are two examples.

3. T.A. Burkill. op. cit. p.156.

4. R.P. Martin. op. cit. p.188.

to a climax all that Jesus has said and done in Galilee. From the confession of faith at Caesarea onwards, the Gospel becomes preoccupied with the necessity of Jesus' sufferings and his imminent passion in Jerusalem. The period of teaching, healing and proclaiming the Kingdom is superseded by an almost total emphasis on suffering, death and eventually, by Jesus' final vindication in glory.

In a more recent study, E. Best has offered some interesting comments on this particular section of the Gospel of Mark.¹ He believes that 8:27 - 9:1 is composed of three independent units² all of which have been edited by Mark. Originally, we can suppose that these verses were a collection of sayings which the Evangelist has placed into the context in which we now find them. The importance of these three units can be summarised as follows:-

a) 8:27 - 30

This establishes the venue for the event followed by a dramatic build-up to the confession of faith by Peter as a direct result of two questions posed to the disciples by Jesus. Bultmann classes this as "faith legend".³ Best disputes this, saying that the direct reference to Caesarea Philippi suggests that this was a part of the original tradition.⁴ The messianic secret is also preserved though it was not necessarily a part of the unit when it was passed on to Mark.⁵

b) 8:31 - 33

The fact that Mark juxtaposes the first of the three major prophecies of Jesus' Passion and resurrection just after Peter's confession is not surprising. For him ton euangelion centres around the inevitability of suffering before the attainment of glory and this fact needs to be constantly proclaimed to his

1. E. Best, Following Jesus, (1980) p.19.

2. 8:27-30, 31-33, 34-9:1.

3. Bultmann, The History....p.257.

4. Best, op.cit. p.19.

5. Cf. also Mark 3:12.

readers. Following on from this prophecy v.32b-33 can be taken together and regarded as stemming from either Peter himself or from the reputation that Peter had gained in the Early Church.

c) 8:34 - 9:1

The question has been asked whether this section was handed down to Mark as a whole or whether he has formulated it by the grouping together of various logia. 8:34 deals exclusively with a definition of discipleship; the use of the imagery of the Cross connects discipleship with suffering and the passion directly. Vs.8:38 and 9:1 move the theme along one stage from discipleship and suffering to final vindication in glory and 9:1 acts as an important bridge between Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration narrative.

Our understanding of these verses is extremely important if we believe that Mark redacted his material with a theological intention in mind.

The K²L connecting v.38 to the preceding verse suggests editorial activity but the link is very appropriate.¹ ΕΝ Τῇ ΚΑΙΡῷ ΤΟΥΤῃ (10:30) is what Mark refers to here in contrast to the ΔΙΩΝΑΙ Τῷ ΕΡΧΟΜΕΝῳ. It would seem that he is referring to the time before the Parousia. The introduction of the christological title ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου adds weight to the suggestion that the paths of discipleship and suffering are inextricably linked to something beyond the Cross, and perhaps the Parousia itself. The title Son of Man seems to be an integral part of Jesus' identity as Messiah. The suffering of himself and of his followers (8:34-38, 10:21, 35-44) is something Jesus must now teach before he arrives in Jerusalem. Martin has suggested that the title Son of Man combines notions of God's 'Son and Servant' with the ἐξουσία to forgive the sins of men and to revitalise the law. Moreover, the Son of Man "will be the assessor at the final judgement as he comes in power, and in the interim,

1. Cf. Mt. 10:33; Luke 12:9

he is exalted to occupy the throne of God".¹ Cranfield believes that Jesus uses the title rather than a simple reference to himself (Eg *με*) because "To speak of himself directly as coming in the glory of his Father would be to lay aside his messianic veiledness; to speak of the Son of Man without expressly identifying him with himself was more consonant with the messianic secret - it revealed and yet at the same time concealed".² It would seem that Mark's use of the title Son of Man is directly associated with some future manifestation of glory once the suffering has been endured. This is further reinforced by the phrase which follows, ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ Πατρὸς αὐτοῦ, a phrase which forms the first, direct reference to the Parousia in the Gospel of Mark. It is followed by a reference to the 'holy angels' who will be with Jesus at his Parousia.³

It is with the Parousia very much in mind that Mark then introduces 9:1 almost as a bridge between Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration. In this verse we have a continuation of the futuristic Parousia imagery which Cranfield describes as an "editorial connecting link".⁴ There has been much debate amongst biblical scholars as to whether we are to see Mark 9:1 as a part of the section which precedes it or as an integral part of the Transfiguration narrative. In most printed editions of the Bible today ⁵ Mark 9:1 is printed as a part of the section above and the Transfiguration is usually printed separately as Mark 9:2-8. We will have more to say concerning this verse in the final Chapter but some general comments should be made at this point. Undoubtedly, Mark 9:1 is

1. Martin, *op.cit.* p.191.

2. Cranfield, *op.cit.* p.285.

3. Cf. Mark 13:27; Mt.13:39, 41, 49; 25:31; 2 Thess.1:7.

4. Cranfield, *op.cit.* p.285.

5. Eg. RSV. JB. NEB.

one of the most difficult verses to comprehend in the whole of the Gospel of Mark. The question of its origin remains a mystery,¹ but it is almost certainly a mixture of apostolic tradition and redaction on the part of Mark. Καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς is used elsewhere as an editorial link in Mark² but there is no concrete evidence to suggest that it was originally linked to the preceeding verse (8:38) even though their content suggests that they have been neatly linked together by Mark. The words spoken by Jesus in 9:1 suggest that he expected the Parousia to take place very soon:

MARK 9:1

Ἀρὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅτι εἰσὶν τινὲς ὧφε τῶν
 ἐσσηκότων, οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου,
 ἕως ἄν ἴδωσιν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ
 ἐλθούσαν ἐν δυνάμει.

Our interpretation of this verse is obviously important to the extent that it enlightens us as to the understanding of the Evangelist concerning the Parousia and Jesus' role within it.

It is important that we do not divorce our discussion on Mark 9:1 from the Sitz im Leben of 2 Peter. We have already suggested that this Epistle was almost certainly written because critics of the Christian movement had begun to scoff at the failure of Jesus to come again. It is possible and very likely that these critics probably quoted verses such as Mark 9:1 as evidence that Jesus had failed to do what he had predicted. But what is even more interesting is the manner in which the Transfiguration

1. K. Brover, "Mk. 9:1 Seeing the Kingdom in Power", JSNPT (1980) p. 17-41.

2. Eg. Mark 7:9.

narrative fits so neatly into both of these documents; in Mark as a reminder of the glory which Jesus possessed, and in 2 Peter as evidence of Jesus' divine nature and authority. In Mark the Transfiguration is a visual demonstration of the Parousia glory, or of the Kingdom of God coming in power; in 2 Peter the reference to the event is a firm reason for the apostles' faith in the inevitable return of Jesus which some now doubted.

C.H. Dodd interpreted Mark 9:1 as an event which had, in part, already taken place. His interpretation was based upon a reading of ἐληλυθῶσαν which suggested an action which was already complete despite the fact that some had not yet realised it. "This meaning appears to be that some of those who heard Jesus speak before their deaths awake to the fact that the Kingdom of God had come".¹ Although Dodd's theory has been widely discussed many have suggested that he has lost the futuristic element which is inevitably required in any interpretation of this verse. Taylor,² for example, believes that although the coming of Jesus at the Incarnation had been the beginning of the 'divine rule' which is referred to here, it would seem also that "The 'divine rule' was to come 'in power', that is, in the manifest power of God and not by human effort and ingenuity". Neither Dodd nor Taylor, however, advocate a positive link between the Parousia and the present Kingdom.

It is Cranfield's belief that we must turn our attention to the Early Church and to their understanding of the Parousia in order to see a link between the Parousia and the words attributed to Jesus in Mark 9:1.³ He points to the noting of the number of days (9:2) as indicative of the Evangelist's intention of seeing the Transfiguration as "in some sense a

1. Dodd. Parables. p.53f.

2. Taylor. op.cit. p389.

3. Cranfield. op.cit. p.285.

fulfilment of the promise contained in ix.1". This is further emphasised by the presence of the verb "ἔωσεν" which can be paralleled with all that the disciples see on the Transfiguration mountain. This has led Barth to state that the verses 9:1 and 9:2-8 are inevitably linked and he suggests that, at the Transfiguration, the disciples witnessed Jesus in a state of exaltation "precisely that which in the Parousia as in its universal revelation will become recognisable and be recognised comprehensively and finally as His glory".¹ Although some scholars have claimed that there is no direct progression in the verses Mark 8:38 - 9:1 - 9:2-8,² it seems that Mark has indeed grouped these events and sayings together because of his awareness of the understanding of the Early Church concerning the Parousia of Jesus. A most important conclusion is that Mark 9:1 refers directly to the Parousia and that there is a possible connection between 8:38 and 9:1. "Mark, therefore, introduces us to the Transfiguration story by verses focusing our attention on the Parousia".³ Boobyer's simple statement is difficult to disagree with. It would seem that Mark has placed the Transfiguration narrative into a context which relates it directly to the Parousia of Jesus. On the evidence of the polemic of 2 Peter it would seem that Mark was reiterating, not only the expectation of the Early Church and the confidence they expressed in the future return of Christ, but also that the Transfiguration itself was accepted by the Evangelist as being related to the Parousia. This explains the context of the Transfiguration narrative both in 2 Peter and in the Gospel of Mark which is one of expectation and anticipation of the Parousia. It adds weight to our earlier suggestion that both Mark and the author of 2 Peter used a similar source which

1. K. Barth, Doctrines, M/2 p.200.

2. Eg. Klostermann, Die Markusevangelium, p.86.

3. Boobyer, op.cit., p.61.

was most likely an Apostolic Testimony of Peter himself. The context of the Transfiguration narrative in the Gospel of Mark is thus one of expectation and anticipation of the Parousia, a context shared and explained more fully by the author of 2 Peter.

A final comment must be added concerning the verses which directly proceed the Transfiguration narrative. Mark 9:9-13 adds further weight to the conclusions arrived at above. Mark relates a conversation which takes place between Jesus and his disciples on their way down the mountain. The content of this discourse includes a command from Jesus that his identity remains secret (v.9) and the rather confusing reference to the coming of Elijah and the suffering of the Son of Man. (vs. 10-13). F.C.Burkitt¹ suggests these verses read "like reminiscences of a real conversation", although we cannot be certain whether or not they were actually handed down to Mark as a complete unit of tradition. Similarly, the connection between the Transfiguration narrative (9:2-8) and 9:9-13 is unknown although some relationship between the two seems likely. Professor Dunn² believes that the verses following the Transfiguration - similar to those which precede it - are "a literary device which is unlikely to be accidental and probably intended to highlight the significance of the intervening passage".

Another possibility is that two different units of tradition have been joined together (9,10, and 11-13). If this were true, the first section is concerned with secrecy and resurrection whilst the latter is almost exclusively devoted to the coming of Elijah. Certainly, vs.9 and 10 give great emphasis to the effects of the resurrection of Jesus which has led Bultmann³ and Schniewind⁴ to suggest that the Transfiguration

1. F.C.Burkitt. Christian Beginnings. (1924) p.33f.

2. J.Dunn. Christology in the Making (1980) p.47.

3. Bultmann. History of.....op.cit. p. 259.

4. Schniewind. Das Evangelium nach Markus. (4th ed. Göttingen 1947).

must be inevitably linked to the resurrection.¹ As we have stated elsewhere, such a theory now holds little respect amongst commentators, and Bultmann's theory has been largely rejected. Certainly, the first subject introduced by the Evangelist after the Transfiguration would seem to be the absolute need for secrecy as to the true nature of his now revealed identity until the resurrection has taken place. There is also inferred, however, the notion that the Transfiguration will only be properly understood after the resurrection has taken place. To this extent there is a link between that which is revealed at the Transfiguration and the event of the resurrection, but the significance of the Transfiguration goes beyond the resurrection. Verses 11-13 concern themselves almost exclusively with the position of Jesus in the scheme of revelation and messianic expectation - how the coming of Elijah effects the christological significance of the Son of Man.

The presence of Elijah and Moses at the Transfiguration is not recorded in the source preserved in 2 Peter. Their role in the synoptic accounts will be analysed in greater detail later in this Chapter. The reference to Elijah after the Transfiguration is particularly interesting, however, because on the evidence of Mark 9:11 (Cf. Mt. 17:10) it would seem that the early Christian community expected the coming of Elijah before the dawning of the end of time. The disciples' complaint was that since Elijah had not yet come the eschatological forecast of Jesus could not be correct. The confusion over signs of the end may well be the reason that Mark has introduced Moses and Elijah into his Transfiguration narrative, even though, on the evidence of 2 Peter, they may not have been a part of the apostolic witness (ie. the story told by Peter to Mark). It is also possible that Mark interpreted the wo of 2 Peter

1. See other references throughout thesis, Eg. p. 9.

as including Moses and Elijah, as witnesses of Jesus' glory, although this is unlikely. The later Jewish era knew of two expected forerunners to the Messiah¹ who were also associated with the inevitable suffering and vindication of the Messiah. In Jewish eschatology,² Elijah's role in the messianic period is clearly attested, including a definite association between himself and the person of the Messiah. Elijah was basically regarded as the forerunner of the Jewish Messiah. Ziesler, however, has warned against an over-simplistic view of Elijah's role in this period, and believes that "there are many roles he could play" when one takes into account his prominence in later Jewish writings.³ Ziesler, however, also agrees with Boobyer that within the context of Mark 9:11-13 the figure of Elijah inevitably suggests the need for a futuristic interpretation. We must conclude that, in Jewish expectation, Elijah had an important role to play in future expectation as precursor of the Messiah at the Parousia.

In the Gospel of Mark, the Transfiguration narrative has been placed by the author of the Gospel in a context which is dominated by futuristic expectation and eschatological expectation. That the narrative has a christological and thematic function within the storyline itself is undeniable since, along with Caesarea Philippi, the Transfiguration marks the end of Jesus' Galilean ministry and the beginning of his journey to Jerusalem. Beyond this, however, the theological understanding of Mark concerning the Transfiguration of Jesus, which is revealed primarily by the context of the narrative in the Gospel, would suggest that Mark shared the understanding of the author of 2 Peter which we have already examined. Both Mark and 2 Peter emphasise the similarities that exist between the Parousia of Jesus and the Transfiguration of Jesus as a

1. Cf. Eth. Em. 90. 31., 2 Esd. 6:26.

2. Cf. esp. Mal 4:5f.

3. Ziesler. art cit. p.266.

result of the context into which the Transfiguration is placed in their respective works. With this in mind, we must now proceed to an examination of the Marcan account itself.

(iii) The Marcan Account - A More detailed Consideration

A proper theological understanding of the Transfiguration narrative in Mark must now be pursued bearing in mind some of the points we have already established. These can be summarised as follows:-

- (a) a theological understanding of the narrative in the Gospels is enhanced by an evaluation of references elsewhere in the New Testament and in particular in 2 Peter 1:16-18.
- (b) the context of the narrative in the Gospel of Mark can colour our theological understanding of the event by an appreciation of why the Evangelist has arranged the material in the way that he has.
- (c) the redactional work of each Evangelist in relation to the original source and to each other can benefit our interest in the reasons behind the slight variations in each of the synoptic accounts.

We shall be bearing in mind point (c) throughout our exegesis of the Marcan account because it is important for us to take into account the differences in detail and in the context of the story in Mark, as opposed to the accounts of Matthew and Luke. We must seek to discover exactly what the Evangelist meant to portray both in the Transfiguration narrative itself and in their use of it within the Gospels as a whole.

In the following attempt to outline some of the central issues at stake in any exegesis of the synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration, we will concentrate our attention on that recorded by Mark. Where there is a major divergence or discrepancy in either Matthew or Luke, this will be pointed out. We have already suggested reasons why the theories of Bernadin, Bultmann and Schneider, that the Transfiguration is a mis-placed resurrection account, must be discounted and we will deal with their

arguments only to a limited extent in our exegesis. Similarly, the work of Harald Riesenfeld, which we discussed briefly in our introduction, in which the Transfiguration is interpreted on the basis of Old Testament traditions and ritual, must be discounted.¹ An adequate, theological understanding of the Transfiguration of Jesus must, in our opinion, lie elsewhere. The revelation of Jesus Christ in the Synoptic Gospels had been influenced to a very great extent by the apostolic understanding of who Jesus was and it is important that we consider the importance of the Apostolic Testimony both in light of our earlier discussion² and as a result of our conclusions concerning the 2 Peter account in our previous Chapter. Already, it is abundantly clear that if our conclusion as to the role of the 2 Peter narrative in the formation of the synoptic accounts is correct, and if we are right to presume that the context of the narrative in the Synoptic Gospels reveals something to us concerning the Evangelist's understanding of his material, a theological explanation may well lie in some kind of a relationship between the Parousia and the Transfiguration. This relationship, though as yet ambiguous and unspecified, nevertheless seems an important avenue which we should explore further. It remains to be seen what effect a more detailed exegesis of the Marcan account will have on our earlier suggestions and this may well determine our final conclusion as to whether the relationship between the Transfiguration and Parousia is the correct interpretation. Where possible, it is important that we focus our attention on key motifs in the narrative rather than on the grammar and syntax, in order for us to establish the importance of the imagery employed by Mark. We must now proceed with a summary-exegesis of the Marcan account of the Transfiguration of Jesus.

1. This has already been explored in some earlier work.
R.P. Marshall. The Transfiguration of Jesus (1980).

2. See Chapter II.

9:2

καὶ μετὰ ἡμέρας ἕξ παραλαμβάνει ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν
 Πέτρον καὶ τὸν Ἰάκωβον καὶ Ἰωάννην, καὶ
 ἀναφέρει αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν κατ' ἰδίαν μόνους.
 καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν;

And After Six Days.

Such a phrase is rarely found in Mark who provides us with few precise chronological references.¹ It is unclear whether Mark wishes us to understand the reference to ἡμέρας ἕξ as chronological or whether he intends us to see some theological or christological significance. Neither is it clear what event Mark wishes us to envisage as occurring six days before the Transfiguration, though Caesarea Philippi would seem to be the most likely candidate. Throughout Jesus' Galilean ministry Mark displays no overt interest in exact and precise references to lapses in time and it is only in the passion narrative that references to time, and intervals of time that have elapsed, become important.² Let us first consider the word μετὰ and seek to establish after what event Mark desired us to see the Transfiguration taking place.

The most frequently quoted opinion is that Mark connected the Transfiguration with Peter's confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi. Lagrange, earlier this century, believed that Mark had "indiqué l'intervalle entre la confession de Pierre et la Transfiguration",³ and Taylor has since agreed with this popular suggestion⁴. Mona Hooker suggests that

1. "No other temporal statement in Mark outside of the Passion Narrative is so precise". V. Taylor. op.cit. p.388.

2. Eg. Mark 14:12, 15:25.

3. Lagrange. op.cit. p.288.

4. Taylor. op.cit. p.388.

such an exact reference is so rare in Mark it is obvious that we should regard it as a definite connection between Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration, and she sees no reason why we should question the fact that "they did, in fact, take place within the space of a week".¹ It is perhaps logical for us to presume that Mark intended this direct chronological reference to establish in our minds a connection between the confession of Peter and the vision of glory given to Peter (and others) on the mountain. The words attributed to Peter in the Marcan account are evidence in themselves of a Petrine motif common to both Caesarea and the Transfiguration in which Peter plays a dominant role in both events.

The question raised by Hooker's statement is whether the figure six is a simple, chronological reference or whether there is some theological significance in the number itself. Luke's insistence that it was, in fact, eight days ² (ὥστε ἡμέρας ὀκτώ) has provided commentators with something of a mystery. I.H.Marshall³ presents us with an adequate summary of the various possible reasons behind Luke's variation, the most likely of which would seem to be the influence of Ex. 24:16:

"The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai and the cloud covered it six days; and on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud".

Marshall, however, admits that we cannot be at all certain why Luke has changed Mark's suggestion of six days which is also recorded in Matthew (17:1). Perhaps the most obvious explanation is that Mark and Luke both used durations of time which were meant to designate "about a week" and that there is no obvious significance either in six or eight which the various commentators have explored.⁴

1. Hooker. op.cit. p.123.

2. Cf. Luke 9:28.

3. I.H.Marshall. op.cit. p.382.

4. F.R.McCurley. "After Six Days". JBL 93 (1971), has written an article suggesting some theological explanations but none of them are sufficiently persuasive.

The Greek word *ἡμέρα* did not only mean a period of twenty-four hours or a complete cycle of day and night. It also had clear, theological connotations. In the Old Testament the Day of the Lord figures prominently in many passages and seems to enjoy a variety of meanings. It could denote simply a day of joy (Amos 5:18; Zech. 14:7), but in the later prophetic era it was also symbolic of the day of judgement and salvation (Joel 1:15, 2:2). H.H. Rowley has pinpointed the chronological paradox of this phrase.¹ He has shown how many Old Testament passages suggest that the Day of the Lord is now at hand (Isa. 13:6; Ezek. 30:3; Zeph. 1:14), whilst in other passages there is the suggestion that the Day of the Lord was more closely associated with a future Golden Age (Mich. 4:4; Dan. 2:44). The only common attribute of each reference to the Lord's day is that it is always said to break into history in a spectacular fashion. In later Judaism, the idea of some future day of vindication and glory became an essential part of Jewish thought. The messianic age would be preceded by a time of chaos (Syr. Bar. 27) but the new age would be heralded by signs (Mark 13:23; Syr. Bar. 25:4) and the 'end' (Mark 13:7) when the sinfulness of men would be overtaken by God's judgement, wrath and righteousness. Such a day was an important part of Jewish expectation. In the Qumran texts, the day is referred to as having been already fixed (1QM 13:14). This expectation has obviously affected the thought of the Early Church. The Day is referred to as a day of wrath (Rev. 6:17), a day of judgement (2 Peter 2:9), the Day of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:2), the day of the Son of Man (Luke 17:24) and that day (2 Tim. 4:8). We shall examine the meaning and significance of these references a little more in the next Chapter, but it is sufficient for us to claim here that the Greek word *ἡμέρα* could be interpreted as having definite, futuristic connotations in that it was the expected

1. H.H. Rowley. The Faith of Israel. (1956) p. 179.

time of the revelation of the Messiah when all would be accomplished.

There is another group of references to days which have a common theme, in that they refer to the time that has elapsed since the resurrection of Jesus. G.Delling¹ has suggested that early Christian references to the resurrection which contained a reference to $\epsilon\mu\epsilon\rho\alpha$ were influenced by Hos. 6:2²:

"After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up that we may live before him".

Bultmann's attempts to connect the Transfiguration with the resurrection appearances of Jesus, as an appearance of the resurrected Jesus which had been mis-placed by the Evangelists into the terrestrial life of Christ, were aided by later Rabbinic writings (Eg. 2. Esd. 7:29ff) where the resurrection was to take place "after seven days". C.E. Carlston writes that,³ "It is thus by no means impossible that the dating was for some unknown reason taken from the original context and that this context was, in fact, a resurrection story". Stein, however, does not believe that this exact reference to 'days' necessarily means that we must understand the Transfiguration as being somehow related to the resurrection appearances of Jesus. Our earlier conclusion that the six days of Mark/Matthew, and the eight days of Luke, are both attempts to suggest a period of "about a week", as well as the need on the part of the Evangelists to somehow connect the Caesarea discourse to the Transfiguration, are both further examples which illustrate alternatives to a connection between Transfiguration and resurrection,⁴ as a result of Mark's reference to days. Furthermore, there are several other direct temporal references in the Gospels that

1. G.Delling. article in TDNT 2. p.943-953.

2. Delling. art.cit. p.949.

3. Carlston. art.cit. p.236.

4. Stein. art.cit. p.83.

have nothing whatsoever to do with the resurrection of Jesus (Eg. Mark 1:32, 35; 11:12, 20; 14:1, 12; 15:1) and this is further evidence to support Stein's suggestion that Bultmann was incorrect to interpret the Transfiguration in the light of resurrection tradition¹; "Moreover, the reference to 'after six days' would be most unusual for a resurrection appearance since the temporal designations associated in the tradition with the resurrection are 'after three days', 'on the first day', and 'during forty days'".

We must conclude that on the question of the opening phrase of the Transfiguration narrative we have a rare example of a chronological reference by Mark. It is highly likely that Mark has used this phrase (and it is therefore to be regarded as redaction on the part of Mark) in order to connect the events of Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration directly by suggesting that "about a week" had passed between the two events occurring. The possibility that in using the word *ἡμερᾶ* Mark meant us to interpret it in the light of current Jewish expectation of the Messiah whom Peter had recognised is not impossible, but this would seem unlikely. The linking phrase simply highlights the christological connection between the two events. No possible link between Transfiguration and resurrection is upheld following Stein's criticism of Bultmann.

And Jesus Took With Him Peter and James and John.

Chilton suggests that the use of the verb *παράλαβεν* is redaction on the part of Mark,² who uses the word elsewhere in his Gospel.³ When employed in the New Testament the word is often followed by the accusative of a person which highlights the taking of someone with oneself, the

1. Stein. art.cit. p.83.

2. Chilton. art.cit. p.116.

3. Eg. Mark 4:36, 5:40, 10:32, 14:33.

selection of a certain group from a larger number, the offering of fellowship to a particular group. In the case of the Transfiguration narrative in all three synoptic accounts, this group consists of the three named disciples, Peter, James and John. The omission of an article before John's name has the effect of linking him more closely with James and this also highlights the role and individuality of Peter in the Transfiguration scene. In 2 Peter, the first person plural replaces any direct reference to the names of those who were there. The Transfiguration is not the only event in the Gospels at which these three disciples are said to be present together. They are the first three disciples to be named by Mark (3:16,17); at the healing of the Official's daughter Jesus allows no one to follow him but Peter, James and John (5:37); Jesus takes the same three with him later to the Garden of Gethsemane after the Transfiguration (14:33). Chilton believes that such an apostolic subset is not an invention of the Evangelist, but that a select group of three was a part of the tradition accepted by the Early Church;¹ "The Pauline evidence is consistent with the view that Peter, James and John were responsible for the traditional shape of the transfiguration narrative".

This may also explain the author of 2 Peter's omission in not identifying the disciples present, by actually naming them in his reference to the Transfiguration. It could well be that the Early Church were so well acquainted with the importance of Peter, James and John as a group in their own right, that he felt he had no need to actually name a group of apostles who were known to the community he addresses.

Peter, James and John have come to be regarded as a "representative inner-circle of disciples"² who were particularly responsible for the

1. Chilton. art.cit. p.117.

2. Cf. E. Best. op.cit. p.56.

H. Anderson. op.cit. p.224.

recording of the life and ministry of Jesus after his death and resurrection. Other scholars ¹ have suggested that the names of James and John were added to that of Peter to take the spotlight off the apostle who had played such a key role in events at Caesarea and who is the only disciple actually to speak during the Transfiguration of Jesus. This is less likely than the simple explanation that Jesus chose his three, closest disciples to witness the manifestation of his glory with him on the mountain as he had chosen them at the other key points mentioned above. If Peter was responsible for informing the Evangelist Mark of events that had taken place, it is likely that he emphasised his own particular role in the material he handed down and this would explain his particular prominence in the Transfiguration story.

Farrer considers the Transfiguration narrative to be the first element in a cycle of Mark which includes 9:2 - 10:31.² He suggests that the theme of Apostolic Calling in this verse of the Transfiguration story reappears.³ The three disciples are selected from the twelve to witness the mystery which is revealed to them.⁴ "The Transfiguration is the calling of the three apostolic witnesses to the full exercise of their function and as such it takes place in the series of apostolic scenes". Their presence on the Transfiguration mountain enables them to see the glory of God made visible in Christ and this is to become an essential part of their apostolic witness concerning the revelation of Christ in the world.

1. E. Best. art.cit. p.557.

2. Farrer. op.cit. p. 110.

3. Farrer points back to Mark 3:13-19 where he believes the concept of the three disciples and the twelve disciples as two groups is introduced for the first time.

4. Farrer. op.cit. p. 111.

to a High Mountain where they were alone, by themselves.

The mountain as the venue for the Transfiguration introduces us to the first, central motif of the narrative which not only appears in all three synoptic accounts but also in the account in 2 Peter (v. 18 $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\omega\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omega\ \acute{\omicron}\rho\epsilon\iota$). The Marcan description is reproduced identically in Matthew whilst Luke writes simply that they ascended $\acute{\epsilon}\iota\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\ \acute{\omicron}\rho\omicron\varsigma$ (9:28). It is unclear whether the mountain has both a historical and a theological function, or whether it is purely theological in its significance as a venue. If we are to regard the Transfiguration as "a chronicle" ¹ the mountain must obviously have been geographically situated approximately six days travelling time from Caesarea Philippi which has led some scholars to suggest various mountains within that vicinity. Whilst most agree that the identity of the Transfiguration mountain must ultimately remain a mystery, C.Kopp ² suggests that Mount Tabor could easily have been reached within six days of leaving Caesarea. Furthermore, Kopp believes that Mark 9:30 (They went on from there and passed through Galilee) adds further weight to the credibility of Tabor as the Transfiguration mountain. The most serious contender to Mount Tabor is Mount Hermon, but it would seem to be less favourable a candidate for geographical reasons, even though Bishop Ramsey suggests it would have been a more isolated and suitable venue.³ Indeed, the quest to identify the Transfiguration mountain will always result in uncertainty because there is no concrete evidence available to us and we rely purely on conjecture. Furthermore, we must bear in mind the point made in the

1. Chilton. art.cit. p.116.

2. C.Kopp. The Holy Places of the Gospels. (1962), explores OT references to Hermon (Eg.Ps.89:12) and points out the Pagan Cult there in 218 BC.

3. Ramsey. op.cit. p.113.

earlier part of this Chapter regarding the redactional work of the Evangelists, which means that we cannot always take their chronology seriously.

The theological significance of the mountain is less difficult to establish. Riesenfeld ¹ has examined the role and function of the mountain in various religions, especially amongst Palestinian groups, where it played a vital part in religious ritual. In the Jewish tradition the mountain's central function was as a venue of revelation. The key events in the history of Israel where God communicates with his people are said, frequently, to have taken place on a mountain. Thus Isaac was to be offered as Abraham's sacrifice upon a mountain (Gen.22:2); during battle, Moses is reported to have prayed to Yahweh on the top of a mountain (Ex.17:9); Elijah prays at the summit of Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:42)². The Hebrew tradition therefore clearly associated the mountain with the presence of Yahweh and the stage for God's revelation in the world.

It is upheld by several commentators that the Old Testament understanding of the mountain played a key role in the minds of the Evangelists in their recording of this narrative.³ To interpret ὄρος ὕψιμον as a reference to the Old Testament understanding of revelation strengthens the arguments of those who argue for a Transfiguration-Exodus typology. Chilton, for example, believes that the various motifs (of which the mountain is one) of the Transfiguration narrative can lead us to the conclusion that ⁴ "At the level of tradition and redaction, it is beyond reasonable doubt that the Transfiguration is fundamentally a visionary experience of the Sinai motif of Exodus 24". That the imagery of the

1. Riesenfeld, op.cit. p.217-222.

2. Cf. also Ps.2:6, 15:1, 43:3; Is.2:2, 27:13, 66:20; Mich.4:7.

3. Eg. Rawlinson, Anderson, Chilton and Hill.

4. Chilton, art.cit. p.122.

Old Testament played a key role in the understanding of the Evangelists is undeniable. Jesus himself had lived as a Jew and the Sitz im Leben of the Gospel writers was very much that of an era which relied on the past and looked forward to the future without much regard for the present. Whether the Exodus traditions were the only factor behind the mountain as the venue for the Transfiguration is another question.

In the New Testament, the mountain figures in a diversity of different incidents.¹ Only in one place (Mt.28:16) does it feature in the context of the resurrection and this (as we have already said with regard to the question of the six days) hardly provides evidence enough to suggest that we are dealing with a mis-placed resurrection account.² More frequently, the mountain is associated with Jesus when he desires solitude or isolation, usually in order to pray;³ in these cases something of God's will is revealed to Jesus as the Son of Man who longs for a more direct and visible vindication from God of his role as Son of God. Something of this isolation, a setting apart so that the will of God might be revealed (the disciples and Jesus were alone, by themselves) is appropriate to our understanding of the Transfiguration narrative but there is a further possibility to be explored.

Boobyer notes that the mountain⁴ "has prominence both in the New Testament and in other Christian or Jewish literature, as the place specially fitted for eschatological teaching or revelation". Both in Rabbinic literature⁵ and in later parts of the Old Testament the mountain

1. Eg. Mat. 4:8, 5:1, 14:23, 26:30; Mark 3:13f.

2. Cf. Bultmann, Carlston, Schniewind.

3. Eg. Luke 6:12; Mt. 14:23.

4. Boobyer, op.cit. p.65.

5. Riesenfeld gives several examples. op.cit. p.219.

was not only a place where God dwelt or revealed his immediate plan for his people, it was the expected venue of the Day of the Lord, the End Time, the Parousia as it came to be known in this period. Lacoque¹ has shown how the mountain in Dan. 9:16f is to be regarded as the universal rallying point at the end of time. Boobyer points to several New Testament passages² where such an understanding of the mountain would be highly appropriate, and suggests that Mark may well have had such an understanding in mind in writing down the Transfiguration story, bearing in mind its context both in the Gospel and in 2 Peter. Certainly, the account recorded in 2 Peter where the mountain is designated as a 'holy mountain' adds weight to the suggestion that what is being referred to is a mountain upon which the events of the last day will take place. There is little evidence in the works of later Jewish writers that there was a definite place in Jewish expectation for the mountain as a venue for all that was to take place. It is therefore true that there is no concrete evidence to suggest that the Transfiguration mountain has a natural place in the events of the Parousia or in the events leading up to it. Despite this, the overall emphasis on the presence and power of God, the continuity of God's revelation and action in the world, and the expectation that God would save his people once and for all at the End Time, suggests that what was once an exclusive Old Testament motif had become a sign that God would work just as actively in the future.³

1. A. Lacoque. The Book of Daniel. (1979) p.106.

2. Mt. 24:3; Mark 13:3; Rev. 21:10.

3. Boobyer. op.cit. p.64.

And He was Transfigured Before Them.

The exact meaning of this phrase is unknown. The verb *μεταμορφῶω* occurs in the New Testament only in the Matthean parallel, in Rom. 12:2 and in 2 Cor. 3:18. Pauline influence on Mark is dismissed by Cranfield¹ and Taylor² who understand Paul to be describing an abiding glory of Christ, whereas in the Gospels the event is essentially a temporary glimpse of that which is being revealed. Luke is alone among the synoptic writers in his omission of this verb, but it is also absent from 2 Peter which, like Luke, describes the transformation as a manifestation of *δόξα*. The reasons for the difference in describing exactly what happened to Jesus will be discussed shortly.

The concept of being transformed from one being into another is a feature of both Greek and Latin literature.³ In the Christian tradition the word has a less obvious and rather scanty history. There is no linguistic equivalent of *μεταμορφῶω* in the Old Testament but the shining of Moses' face (Ex. 34:29f) and the vision in Daniel (10:5f) are frequently quoted as Old Testament examples of Transfiguration experiences.⁴ Cranfield believes that although the word was familiar within Pagan circles, the Evangelists' understanding of the word was more likely to be rooted in the Jewish eschatological tradition; examples of usage here can be found in Dan. 12:3; 2 Bar. 51:3; Enoch 38:4, 104:2; 4 Ezra 7.9.1. The distinct lack of any direct reference to the idea of transfiguration in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, however, adds more weight to the exclusive importance of this particular event in the life of Jesus.

1. Cranfield. op.cit. p.290.

2. Taylor. op.cit. p.389.

3. Both Ovid and Apulieus wrote works which were entitled Metamorphoses.

4. Cranfield. op.cit. p.290.

Luke's decision not to employ the verb *μεταμορφῶω* paradoxically deepens our understanding of the experience of Jesus at his Transfiguration, in that Luke explains the event in terms of a glorious appearance, the manifestation of *δόξα*. Luke states that ¹ τὸ εἶδος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἕτερον and later speaks of those assembled as appearing ἐν δόξῃ which is generally taken as replacing the verb 'transfigured' in Matthew and Mark. Some have suggested ² that Luke did not explain the manifested glory in terms of Transfiguration because of the Pagan overtones associated with the word *μεταμορφῶω*. Instead, it would seem that Luke relied more heavily on the Apostolic Testimony as it is preserved in 2 Peter: v.16 ἀλλ' ἐπὶ ὁπταί γενηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος v.17 λαβὼν γὰρ παρὰ θεοῦ Πατρὸς τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν If the case argued for earlier in this thesis is correct - that the Transfiguration recorded in 2 Peter is the most primitive Petrine account of the events that took place on the mountain-it is relatively easy for us to imagine how the synoptics have dealt with their source, how Mark has interpreted 2 Peter 1:16-18 as an experience of Transfiguration, and how Luke has used very similar vocabulary to that of the Epistle. Mark acknowledges that the Transfiguration is a manifestation of God's glory in Christ and he uses the verb *μεταμορφῶω* to describe the change that came over Christ as a result of his experience. Matthew accepts the verb as adequate to describe Jesus' experience and also uses it in his own account (Mt.17:2). Luke, however, realising that some of his readers might identify the word as essentially a Pagan concept, omits it and prefers a direct reference to the glory (*doxa*) which is manifested on the mountain and which is described in even greater

1. Luke 9:29.

2. Riesenfeld has argued this.

detail in 2 Peter. The result of the various accounts of the Transfiguration in the New Testament is a direct, theological link between the concepts of 'Transfiguration' and 'glory'. The title of Bishop Michael Ramsey's book, The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ suggests that these two concepts are inextricably linked and that one is the result of another. To be transformed demands an encounter with and an experience of the glory of God.

The chief significance, therefore, of Jesus' Transfiguration lies in the fact that the glory of God was made manifest. "Glory" is an exceedingly common biblical concept unlike the verb "Transfigure". The Greek word $\delta\omicron\varsigma\epsilon\alpha$ was the most common translation of the Hebrew word קָבוֹד which had a variety of meanings.¹ Ramsey suggested that² "Kabod denotes the revealed being or character of Yahweh and also a physical phenomenon whereby Yahweh's presence is made known". This is a definition which underlines the active nature of this glory which God has made known to the world. Thus, in the Old Testament, קָבוֹד suggested an active, working God who manifested himself to Israel, often in dramatic ways³ and with the result that God was made known to the world. Included in this Hebraic understanding was an acceptance of the promise that a full manifestation of the kabod was expected in the last days, the purpose of which was to bring salvation to Israel⁴ and to convert the nations.⁵ Eventually, the glory of God came to be essentially concerned with the eschatological expectation of the intertestamental period which

1. These are fully explored by Kittel, article on doxa TDNT vol. II. p.244-257.

2. Ramsey, op.cit. p.9.

3. Ex.16:7, 33:18; Is.40:5, 60:1; Ps.19:1, 96:3.

4. Is.60:1; Ezek.39:21f.

5. Ps.96:3-9; Zech.2:5-11.

exhibited a strong interest in the heavenly world and the role of the doxa within it.

Kittel describes how, in the Targums,¹ the 𐤒𐤓𐤕 of God is always described as 𐤒𐤓𐤕 but the latter has a rather deeper meaning than kabod. In Rabbinic Judaism, however, 𐤒𐤓𐤕 can denote something very similar to that which is implied in the Old Testament but, as Kittel points out² "At the same time 𐤒𐤓𐤕 is used consistently for the divine and heavenly mode of being". Several documents describe how man originally had a part to play in the kabod of God but that this was taken away following the fall of mankind. (Gn.r.11 on 2.3); attempts to rectify this position have failed, despite the promises of God. In later Rabbinic Judaism, (Eg. Peskit r.37 163a) there are attempts to portray the role of the Messiah as one who would embody within himself the kabod of the Lord. As Kittel goes on to illustrate,³ this theme of the Messiah's role was used and developed in a great deal of eschatological literature. This connection between future events and the doxa which is referred to in the New Testament is obvious and important if we are to take into account the understanding of the Rabbinic and Hellenistic periods.

Kittel concludes his brief survey of the use of doxa in the New Testament with the following statement which we will quote in full:⁴

"All these statements concern the glorification of the risen Lord after Easter. The application of the word to the incarnate Jesus is strictly limited. In Matthew and Mark it is concerned only with the Parousia (Mark 8:38, 10:37, 13:26 and par. Mt.19:28, 25:31). In Luke the word is also found in the stories of the birth and the transfiguration. The

1. Kittel. art.cit. p.245.

2. Kittel. art.cit. p.245.

3. Kittel. art.cit. p.247.

4. Kittel. art.cit. p.250.

revelation of doxa at the birth of Christ (Luke 2:9) like the appearance of the angels, points to his coming from the divine world; it has the same force in John 17:5 $\delta\omicron\epsilon\chi\epsilon\iota \hat{\mu}\hat{\iota} \hat{\epsilon}\hat{\iota}\chi\omicron\nu\ldots\pi\alpha\rho\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota$. His transfiguration is an eschatological anticipation". Kittel's statement is quoted in full because of the importance of his basic understanding that the Transfiguration glory is directly related to the Parousia expected by the Early Church. This conclusion of Kittel has not been seriously questioned by scholars because of the widely accepted eschatological understanding of doxa. We have already explored the implications of the word as it appears in 2 Peter and it would be possible for us to explore even further its importance outside of the New Testament and in the context of the Early Church. Because of our limited brief in this matter, however, it is rather more important for us to consider at what stage in the process of Christ's manifestation to the world, the glory of God is seen to be important.

Boobyer argues that in Judaism and in the New Testament ¹ the transformation into a glistening body of doxa ² "has outstanding reference to the events of the last days". Whether the glory that is revealed is pre-existent or not, ³ this link between the Transfiguration and the Parousia is very important and marks a vital stage in the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God and as the expected Messiah. Bishop Ramsey states confidently that "the changed appearance of Jesus has clear affinity to the Apocalyptic ideas of the glory of the Messiah and the Saints in heaven and to Jesus' own predictions of the coming of the Son of Man in his glory". ⁴

Burkill also reminds us that there is an

1. Boobyer. op.cit. p.69.

2. See next section on the glistening garments.

3. Bernadin. art.cit. p.20.

4. Ramsey. op.cit. p.109.

important christological link between Mark 8:38 and the Transfiguration pericope suggesting that the events on the mountain provide a dramatic demonstration of the glorious nature which properly belongs to Jesus as Messiah and which acts almost as a divine seal of approval after the events of Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi.¹ Jesus is thus "totally engrossed with the future"² in an event which succeeds in manifesting the messianic glory which will ultimately belong to him at the Parousia. We will agree with I.H. Marshall³ who suggests that the question of whether the glory of Jesus was pre-existent or whether it was manifest on the mountain for the first time, is, in the final analysis, an unreal question. On the mountain of the Transfiguration the glory of God was made visible in the person of Christ - an attribute expected of the Messiah and totally at home within the context of eschatological events.

The concept of glory is so extensive in its implications that our brief consideration of it here hardly does it justice. Nevertheless, it is possible to establish several important conclusions which are important to our overall consideration of the theological significance of the narrative in Mark. The verb *μεταμορφώω*, as employed by Matthew and Mark is inextricably linked to the presence of the *doxa* recorded in Luke and 2 Peter. The Transfiguration of Jesus consisted of a visual demonstration of Jesus' messianic glory as it would be revealed at the Parousia. The glory motif is not to be understood as adding weight to any misplaced resurrection account theory nor is it rooted exclusively in the Old Testament *kabod* traditions which we have already discussed. *δόξα* in

1. Burkill. op.cit. p.162.

2. Badcock. art.cit. p.324.

3. Marshall. op.cit. p.383.

the New Testament predominantly denotes the glory that will be revealed at the Parousia.¹ Our earlier discussion as to the significance of the 2 Peter account adds further weight to the argument that, in the Synoptic Gospels, the Transfiguration of Christ is understood as it was by the author of 2 Peter to be a visual demonstration of Jesus' futuristic glory. This is what is revealed when Jesus was μεταμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν ; Boobyer's conclusion is both acceptable and plausible that... "the transfiguration was to Mark a vision, given beforehand, of Jesus as he will be at his second advent".²

9:3

καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο στίλβοντα λευκὰ
λίαν, ὥς ἡναγεῖς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐ δύναται
οὕτως λευκᾶναι.

And His garments became glistening, intensely white, whiter than any fuller on earth could bleach them.

Our consideration of this verse need only be brief, as we are concerned with the visible effects of the glory in the person of Jesus. The most surprising omission in the Marcan account is a reference to the shining face of Jesus, which is added in both Matthew and Luke. B.H.Streeter³ suggested that such a reference in Mark had been lost at a very early stage which Cranfield admits is "conceivable".⁴ If, however, such a reference was never a part of the source used by Mark (and there is no

1. Other New Testament references emphasise this: Mt. 16:27, 19:28, 24:30, 25:31; Titus 2:13; Phil. 3:21.

2. Boobyer. op.cit. p.69.

3. B.H.Streeter. The Four Gospels. (1924). p.315f.

4. Cranfield. op.cit. p.290.

reference to a shining face in 2 Peter) the question remains as to why Matthew and Luke have added this detail to their accounts. The most obvious answer is that a key passage in the book of Exodus was in the minds of Matthew and Luke when they wrote down their accounts:

"When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God". (Ex. 34:29f).

In the light of other parallels between Jesus and Moses, especially in the Gospel of Matthew ¹, it is not surprising that this detail was added to the Marcan account in order to heighten the parallelism between Jesus and Moses as Servants of God, vindicated by Him. The appearance of Moses at the Transfiguration itself adds weight to this possibility and may well be the reason for his presence.

The possibility that we are to interpret the description of the transfigured Jesus as being in some way related to eschatological expectation is obvious. Shining garments, for example, are an essential part of the imagery of the apocalyptic tradition ², as are the images of whiteness. This imagery is almost certainly rooted in the Old Testament from where many of the mythological ideas and images have been derived. In Dan. 10:5ff for example, there is the following description:

"I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen whose loins were girded with loins of Uphaz. His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightening, his eyes like flaming torches, his eyes and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the noise of his words like the sound of a multitude".

Such imagery obviously had an effect upon the apocalyptic tradition since many of the above images are frequently reproduced there.

1. D. Hill explores the parallelism between Jesus and Moses throughout his commentary. op.cit.

2. Cf. Rev. 3:5, 4:4, 7:9 and Michaelis TINT 4, p.242f.

A word of caution needs to be expressed here with regard to our terminology concerning the Parousia. C.Rowland ¹ has recently argued, in a very persuasive manner, that eschatological and apocalyptic are not interchangeable adjectives of imagery and events leading up to the Parousia. In our discussion of the various motifs of the Transfiguration narrative, bearing in mind its context within the Gospel of Mark and its context in 2 Peter, it is important that we understand exactly what is meant by this terminology. We have already stated above that the Old Testament provided the apocalyptic tradition with much of its imagery but, following Rowland's argument, this does not necessarily mean that we are concerned with eschatological, futuristic events. A summary of Rowland's arguments is thus called for.

Rowland points out ² that the apocalyptic movement was not confined to the Jewish-Christian tradition nor to one particular period in the history of either of these religions. "To speak of apocalyptic, therefore, is to concentrate the theme of the direct communication of the heavenly mysteries in all their diversity".³ Rowland suggests that there has been a general tendency to regard what we would classify as 'apocalyptic' as necessarily 'eschatological'. "Indeed, to many, the word apocalyptic is really little more than a particular kind of eschatology prevalent in the early Jewish and Christian traditions".⁴ Rowland proceeds to outline the basic point that there are apocalypses which show little or no interest in eschatology and that "the bits of eschatology present in the apocalypses tend to be very varied".⁵ Thus, we may define apocalyptic as a way of

1. Rowland. op.cit. p.14.

2. Rowland. op.cit. p.10

3. Rowland. op.cit. p.14.

4. Rowland. op.cit. p.25.

5. Rowland. op.cit. p.29.

comprehending the divine will of God, and eschatology as being concerned primarily with the nature of the divine hopes for the future.¹ "As a result it is impossible to separate out a strand of eschatological expectation which is coherent enough to be distinguished as an apocalyptic sectarian ideology". In our consideration of the motifs of the Transfiguration narratives, if we are to proceed on the understanding that its true context is that of an anticipation of the Parousia, we are dealing with what are essentially eschatological motifs rather than purely apocalyptic images and the two are not necessarily interchangeable.

On the evidence of Rev.3:4, 5:18, it is clear that white garments were frequently understood to be as eschatological in their significance. *Λευκός* in secular Greek meant 'light', 'fair', 'bright' or 'clear' but in the New Testament tradition whiteness became the recognised colour of the eschatological time.² Michaelis explains the 1st Century A.D. custom in which the dead were buried in white and he suggests that this might be connected with the imagery of the garments worn by the saints in their transfigured states (Eth.En.62.14f; Sl.En.22.8). The glorified Christ in the first vision of John (Rev.1:14) is described vividly: "his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow"; and it is obvious that we are to see an emphasis on the colour white.

This is similar to the scene of great glory which is described in 1 Enoch 14:20 where two aspects of divinity are mentioned, the first concerns the raiment of the figure described ("his raiment was like the sun brighter and lighter than any snow") and, the second, the face of the figure which glows. The parallel to the transfigured Jesus is obvious here. In all three synoptic accounts the bodily whiteness is described whereas only in Matthew and Luke is the face also reported to

1. Rowland. op.cit. p.36.

2. Michaelis. art.cit. p.242.

shine. Rowland points out that ¹ no less than five words are used in both the Greek of 1 Enoch and the synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration and these are:

- a. sun
- b. face
- c. white
- d. snow
- e. clothing

It is also true that there are a few linguistic differences between the use of these words.² There are similar parallels between the description of the transfigured Lord and the description of Abel in the Testament of Abraham (12). Such parallels lead Rowland to conclude that an explanation of the Transfiguration of Jesus may well lie in "the direction of apocalyptic theophanies and angelophanies".³ Such a conclusion might be acceptable if the Transfiguration consisted only of a description of the change in appearance that came over Jesus. Unfortunately, however, Rowland, whilst pinpointing important parallels between the imagery used in the Transfiguration and similar imagery used in apocalyptic theophanies, fails to examine the other important motifs of the narrative in any great detail. This omission means that his conclusion as to the purpose of the Transfiguration rests solely on the description of the transfigured Jesus and does not take into account the other details and motifs, nor the context of the story in the Gospels. The main benefit in Rowland's contribution, however, lies in our ability to comprehend the background to the Evangelists' description of the transfigured Jesus and that notions of glowing, white raiments and glowing faces, were an accepted part of the eschatological tradition. Indeed, there is little doubt that this

1. Rowland. op.cit. p.367.

2. Eg. word for garment = himatia (Synopt.) peribolain (I.En.).

3. Rowland. op.cit. p.367.

verse confirms the view expressed in our consideration of v.2 that the theological emphasis lying behind this description of the effects of Jesus' Transfiguration is best understood in the context of an eschatological setting, where the imagery used can be explained in terms of eschatology or apocalyptic. The garments were an accepted part of such a tradition whilst the glowing face had been taken from the Old Testament and added to the apocalyptic tradition. The white and shining garments of Jesus indeed fit perfectly into our understanding of the Transfiguration as a visual demonstration of the Messiah's appearance at his Second Coming.

9.4

καὶ ὤφθη αὐτοῖς Ἡλείας σὺν Μωϋσεῖ, καὶ
ἦσαν συνλαλοῦντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ.

And there appeared to them, Elijah with Moses, and they spoke with Jesus.

The use of the verb ὀράω in Mark is rare (Cf. Mark.1:44) but the form ὤφθη is unique to this verse; "It is presumed that it is used, as elsewhere in the New Testament (Cf. 1 Cor. 15:5-8), of the sudden appearance of a heavenly form".¹ This understanding of the word is clearly seen in those examples found throughout the New Testament (Eg. Luke 1:11, 22:43, 24:34; Acts 2:3, 9:17). Mark suggests that all three figures, Moses, Elijah and Jesus were engaged in conversation. Both Matthew and Luke record the appearance of the two heavenly figures, but with some interesting modifications. Both reverse the order and put the name of Moses first (Eg. Mt. Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἡλείας) "which seems more natural".² Luke's account has further additions concerning the

1. Taylor. op.cit. p.389.

2. Cranfield. op.cit. p.291.

appearance of Moses and Elijah. Luke instructs us as to the subject of their conversation (ἔλεγον τῷ ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ, ἣν ἡμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ) and this introduces Jerusalem both as the future venue of Jesus' execution and also, as the place where the process of Jesus' eventual glorification will begin. Luke informs us that they were talking about Jesus' exodus:¹ "the departure par excellence.... The precise force here is uncertain; it may refer to: 1. simply the death of Jesus (Michaelis TDNT 5 107; Schürmann 1 558); 2. the whole event of Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension as his departure to heaven (Cf. 9:51 Zahn 383); 3. the death of Jesus as an act of salvation". Marshall is right to state that an exact interpretation of the word is impossible and will remain uncertain, but it seems impossible for us to deny that we must interpret the word as referring to some future event in the life of Jesus.

Moses and Elijah are obviously an important part of the synoptic tradition concerning the Transfiguration of Jesus. In the 2 Peter account we have already shown how there is no direct reference to the two Old Testament figures, and that it is possible that Peter did not give this information to the Evangelists. The plural we could have been interpreted as referring to a group outside the three apostles who were so well known within the Early Church that the author of 2 Peter had no need to name either the three (Peter, James, John) or the five (Peter, James, John, Elijah, Moses). In our own view, it would seem more likely that the motif of Moses and Elijah may well have been added by Mark in his attempt to explain the theological significance of the person of Christ as a result of this manifestation of the glory of God. The person of Jesus in the Early Church was not clearly understood; indeed, he was a figure subject to great controversy and there was a need to place Jesus in his correct context as the Messiah of the people of God.

1. Marshall. op.cit. p.384.

In a quite recent article concerning the importance of Moses and Elijah in the Transfiguration narrative, Margaret Thrall¹ has advocated the need for a more serious consideration of the role of Moses and Elijah in the Transfiguration story. Her central argument is that Moses and Elijah are far more important than some scholars would suggest² and that too many commentators have been guilty of treating the two figures as "peripheral and additional symbols" within the narrative.³ Thrall is convinced that five of the seven verses of the Marcan account are concerned either directly or indirectly with Moses and Elijah, and she believes that they are "absolutely essential"⁴ to our understanding of the Transfiguration narrative. Thrall insists that "They are not merely part of the symbolic background scenery" and that "In some senses they are figures upon whom the whole story turns".⁵ Whether we are able to agree on their importance to this extent is doubtful but it is important for us to suggest in what ways we can explain the theological significance of the presence of Moses and Elijah on the Transfiguration mountain.

G.H. Boobyer begins his assessment of this verse with a reference to the mis-placed resurrection account theory and points out that this verse, more than any other, is least complimentary to those who hold the view that the Transfiguration was originally a mis-placed resurrection account.⁶ The alternative explanation, which is expounded by Boobyer, is that the Transfiguration is connected to the Parousia, and the presence of Moses and Elijah is thus less difficult to explain because of the role played by

1. M.E. Thrall. "Elijah and Moses in Mark's account of the Transfiguration". NTS 16 (1969) p.305-317.

2. Eg. Boobyer, Leany, Baltensweiler.

3. Thrall. art.cit. p.305.

4. Thrall. art.cit. p.305.

5. Thrall. art.cit. p.305.

6. Stein also gives several key reasons against the role of Moses and Elijah in a mis-placed resurrection account.

key figures in Jewish eschatology; "Enoch, Elijah, Moses, Ezra, Baruch, Jeremiah, perhaps even Job (LXX xliii.17), are all associated with the expectation of the new age".¹ There are also several New Testament passages which imply that outstanding figures from the past would have a vital role to play in the future (Eg. Mt.8:11; Mark 12:25-27), and these need to be kept in mind.

The presence of Elijah on the mountain of the Transfiguration is conceivably easier to justify than that of Moses. During the inter-testamental period and in Rabbinic Judaism the role of Elijah in the 'eschatological plan' polarised itself significantly. Elijah was expected to deliver Israel in the last days from the wrath that would befall her (Sir.48:10); he would be the forerunner of the Messiah and the High Priest of the messianic age. This explains the questions of the disciples to Jesus on their way down the mountain.² The confusion which arose between John the Baptist and Elijah in the New Testament is thus easy to comprehend. (Cf. John 1:21,25), and it is clear that Elijah's role was confused in the minds of many individuals of the New Testament era. Whether John the Baptist was a personification of Elijah, or even if this was merely an error on the part of the Evangelists, there was a clear relationship between the two in the minds of the Early Christians:³ "In Christian eyes Jesus had already initiated and ushered in the end time and thus Elijah must have already come. And who better to fulfill that role than John?" It could therefore be suggested that the appearance of Elijah with Jesus at his Transfiguration announced the beginning of the end of time.⁴ Ziesler concludes that the most likely explanation of Elijah's presence is "that he is here as one who appears at the end, as

1. Boobyer. op.cit. p.70.

2. Mark 9:9f.

3. J.K.Elliot. Questioning Christian Origins. (1982) p.20.

4. W.Gerber. "Die Metamorphose Jesus" ThZ. 23 (1967) p.385-395.

the precursor of the Messiah",¹ and this understanding is consistent with the conversation between Jesus and his disciples. Elijah, therefore, easily fits into a possible eschatological understanding of the pericope, even if his actual function within the eschatological plan and in the Transfiguration is not entirely clear.

Moses is more difficult to examine, because there are very few references to the expected return of Moses at the Parousia. We have already seen the obvious parallel between the Transfiguration of Moses and other passages which may well have influenced the synoptic writers and which involve Moses and similar imagery to that of the Transfiguration within the Old Testament (Eg. Ex.24:15-18)². But we would agree with W.D.Davies who shows that there are elements which constitute a Jesus-Moses typology but who also points to the exclusive character of the person of Jesus and his mission by which Moses is a contrast:³ "Matthew presents Jesus as giving a Messianic law on a Mount, but he avoids the express concept of a New Torah and a New Sinai: he has cast around His Lord the mantle of a teacher of righteousness but he avoids the express ascription to him of the 'honorific New Moses'." In Jewish Haggada, Moses is visualised either as a reflection of Adam or as a model of the Messiah and Jeremias has given us sufficient detail to allow us to deal briefly with this point here.⁴ Of great importance in Rabbinic expectation was Dt.18:15:

"The Lord will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among you, from your brethren - him you shall heed".

There are two clear alternatives available to us in interpreting this verse. On the one hand it is quite possible to think not of one

1. Ziesler. art.cit. p.266.

2. See Page 104

3. W.D.Davies. The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount. (1964). p.108.

4. Jeremias. TINT 4.p848-873 (p.857.)

particular individual prophet but a succession of prophets who "will continue to fulfil Moses' role as Covenant Mediator".¹ Such an interpretation demands a purely historical interpretation of this verse.

In later Jewish thought, cited again by Jeremias,² the emphasis is increasingly on the need for a futuristic, prophetic and eschatological understanding of the verse. Jeremias, however, issues a warning:³

"It would be a fatal error to assume that investigation of later Jewish exegesis of Dt. 18:15 settles definitely the question whether the figure of Moses influenced Messianic expectation". By the time of the New

Testament, however, it would seem that there was a clear area of thought which conceived of the Messiah as a "Second Moses" or a "New Moses";⁴

"The unanimous testimony of the Damascus document Jos, the New Testament and the Samaritan tradition shows that a Moses/Messiah typology was very much alive in the New Testament period and repeatedly exercised a decisive influence on the course of events". Thus, at least in some areas of New Testament thought, at the time of the writing of the Synoptic Gospels it would seem that Moses was associated with the coming of the Messiah and that he had a role to play in the events of the Last Day.

Our chief problem, however, lies in the failure of the New Testament to attribute any direct role to Moses within the various books included in the Canon. Only in John 5:45 is Moses unequivocally given an eschatological role:

"Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father;
it is Moses who accuses you, on whom you set your hope".

Elsewhere (Eg. Mark 9:13) there is the suggestion that the community did

1. A. Phillips. Deuteronomy. (1973). p.126.

2. Jeremias. art.cit. p.859f.

3. Jeremias. art.cit. p.859.

4. Jeremias. art.cit. p.863.

not expect a personal return of Moses before the Parousia. Indeed, we must conclude that the role of Moses in the New Testament is confusing and often contradictory. Jeremias contrasts the person of Jesus with that of Moses in a summary of the New Testament evidence concluding that a clear typology is not in evidence.¹ There are several, clear examples of literature where Elijah and Enoch are cited as expected forerunners of the Messiah. (Eth.Enoch. 90:31; 4 Ezra 6:26; Apoc.Peter 2), but there is unfortunately no comparable evidence giving Moses the same prominence.² as Elijah.

Other than their role in the eschatological events concerning the Messiah, the traditional explanation accounting for the presence of Moses and Elijah on the mountain is that they represent the law and the prophets.³ More recently, however, this view has been challenged. Carlston shows that there is no evidence in Jewish literature to support the suggestion that the two Old Testament figures ever had such a representative role,⁴ whilst Chilton suggests that the Transfiguration "is the only place in Mark's work in which Moses is not explicitly representative of the law".⁵ Such a view - that Moses and Elijah appeared as representatives of two of the central foundation stones of Israelite religious history - now seems unlikely and it is no longer necessary to regard Moses and Elijah in this capacity.

Throughout the discussion that has prevailed this century the role of Moses and Elijah seems to have been best understood, in our opinion,

1. Jeremias. art.cit. p.867.

2. Cf. W.Bousset. Der Antichrist. (1895) p.134-139.

3. Cf. Lagrange. op.cit. p.219 and also Bernadin, Filson, Rawlinson.

4. Carlston. art.cit. p.237.

5. Chilton. art.cit. p.118. Cf. Mark 1:44, 7:10, 10:34, 12:19, 12:26 where Moses would seem to be a representative of the law.

by G.H. Boobyer:¹ "They can fittingly belong to a story understood by Mark as a confirmation of Christ's Messiahship in the form of a prediction of his Second Coming". A majority of scholars, since Boobyer,² have been sympathetic to his argument. Many remain unconvinced that Boobyer's answer is entirely correct but they see in his reasoning an obvious role for the future as well as the past. Even Riesenfeld, who rarely agrees with Boobyer's arguments, is forced to admit that Moses and Elijah "jouent un rôle dans l'éschatologie non seulement juive mais aussi chrétienne".³ A.R.C. Leaney suggests that in talking to Jesus about his exodus the two figures are seen to share in the christological destiny which was about to be realised, which included suffering, resurrection and the final revelation of the doxa which is temporarily revealed at the Transfiguration.⁴ Caird agrees that they have a present significance but believes that they "belonged to the old order which was now giving way to a more adequate and fuller revelation of God's character and purpose".⁵ The presence of Moses and Elijah in the Transfiguration narrative highlights the christological and eschatological significance of Jesus as Messiah and places him within the expected framework of God's plan of salvation and his intentions concerning the destiny of the created order. Whether Moses and Elijah are as essential to the narratives as Thrall would have us believe⁶ is a matter of opinion. It is our belief that they were probably not a part of the original tradition as it was passed on to Mark

1. Boobyer. op.cit. p.75.

2. Carlston. art.cit. p.237-238.

3. Riesenfeld. op.cit. p.297.

4. A.R.C. Leaney. Christ in the Synoptic Gospels. (1966) p.222-225.

5. Caird. art.cit. p.293.

6. Thrall. art.cit. - her general point that they are 'absolutely essential to the narrative'.

by Peter, but that they were added to the Petrine story by the redactional work of Mark, in order to explain the significance of what happened to Jesus. This explains the lack of any direct reference to them in the account recorded in 2 Peter which we have also attributed to Peter. Although certain doubts remain concerning the exact function of Moses and Elijah in the synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration, it would seem that they were introduced into the narrative because the Evangelists thought that they helped to illustrate the importance of the glorified Messiah on the mountain. Like Moses, Jesus was transfigured; like Moses and Elijah, Jesus had divine authority and vindication from God. In that the two figures are not totally irrelevant to any discussion concerning the return of the Messiah, especially in the light of our discussions above, we must conclude that their presence with Jesus on the mount of the Transfiguration is not inconsistent with our overall conclusion that the Transfiguration is connected in some way with the Parousia, and that they were introduced by Mark as part of his redactional intention in order that we should envisage Jesus not only in the light of the glory that was to come, but also as a result of all that had gone before.

2:5

καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ, ῥαββί, καλοῦν
 ἔστιν ἡμᾶς ὥστε εἶναι, καὶ ποιήσωμεν τρεῖς σκηνάς,
 σοὶ μίαν καὶ Μωϋσεὶ μίαν καὶ Ἡλεΐᾳ μίαν.

This verse introduces Peter as the spokesman for the apostles but also brings with it several problems concerning the exact meaning of the apostle's remark. To Rawlinson, Peter's statement is "half-related to the supposed tradition, semi-reasonable and yet fundamentally foolish".¹ He believes it is possible for us to interpret the statement as the

1. Rawlinson. op.cit. p.118.

result of a man in a dream or trance, or even of someone hypnotised by the event he has witnessed. The response of Peter has led some to suggest¹ that the Transfiguration is "an experience of the disciples rather than of Jesus himself.....a vision experienced by the disciples". An alternative suggestion has been put forward by Chilton², who is certain that *Ραββει, καλόν ἐστὶν ἡμῶς ὥδε* is an invention of Mark and was not a part of the original tradition. This would explain its absence from the account recorded in 2 Peter if, as we have already stated, we are there dealing with an authentic, Petrine story. If such a comment from Peter had been a part of Peter's own story there is little doubt that it would have been recorded and accepted by the Early Church as historical. Thus, it would seem that we are here concerned with a creation of the Evangelist or an example of Mark drawing on a tradition other than that which Peter gave him.

Two points in this verse need some clarification. The use of the term Rabbi is interesting. In its use, Mark prepares the way for Peter's suggestion to build three tabernacles but it is important to bear in mind that our contemporary understanding of the title Rabbi is rather different to that of the New Testament period. In Jesus' day the title would have suggested someone who commanded respect from ordinary people - the scribes were often addressed in this way or a pupil could use it of his teacher. Jesus is addressed as Rabbi by Nicodemus (John 3:2), Nathaniel (John 1:49), Judas (Mt. 26:25,49) and elsewhere by Peter (Mark 11:21). The other disciples and other groups of people are also reported to have addressed Jesus in this way (John 1:38, 4:3, 6:25, 9:2, 11:8,14:45). In the Transfiguration narrative, Peter, as a representative of his fellow-disciples,

1. Rowland. op.cit. p.366.

2. Chilton. art.cit. p.118.

U.B.Müller. "Die Christologische Absicht des Markusevangeliums und die Erklärungsgeschichte". ZNW LXIV (1973). p.179.

addressed Jesus in a manner similar to that at Caesarea Philippi where Peter was also their spokesman. Despite this,¹ "It is strange to find Jesus addressed as 'Rabbi' in such a narrative as this, and not surprising that Matthew substitutes Lord and Luke Master". It is possible to conclude only that Rabbi emphasises the exclusive nature of the pericope and shows Peter's respect through a title rarely employed in the Gospel of Mark.

The second point needing clarification in this verse is Peter's offer to build three tabernacles. This suggestion has long baffled commentators because its immediate relevance to the scene is not obvious. The most frequently held view is that Peter somehow wished to prolong the scene. The $\sigma\kappa\eta\upsilon\alpha\iota$ were to be built for Jesus, Moses and Elijah and we are not told what provision Peter suggested he should make for the two disciples who were with him and for himself. Michaelis believes that "Peter's proposal, or offer to build three $\sigma\kappa\eta\upsilon\alpha\iota$, is obviously with a view to a fairly lengthy stay rather than a temporary one."² The purpose of the $\sigma\kappa\eta\upsilon\alpha\iota$ has been a source of much debate.

In Lohmeyer's opinion³ it was the eschatological dwelling in $\sigma\kappa\eta\upsilon\alpha\iota$ which was at the forefront of the Evangelist's mind when he introduced this detail. Bearing in mind the context of the Transfiguration narrative and other elements which tend towards an eschatological understanding of the story in the Gospel of Mark perhaps this is hardly surprising. Lohmeyer points out that there are frequent references in 'Apocalyptic Judaism' to the day of Salvation as being a day when the Lord would once more pitch his $\sigma\kappa\eta\upsilon\alpha\iota$ with his people as he had done during the forty years of the wilderness wandering.⁴ Even the Feast of Tabernacles

1. Taylor. op.cit. p.391.

2. Michaelis. art.cit. p.379.

3. Lohmeyer. op.cit. p.191f.

4. Lohmeyer calls to mind - LXX of Ex.37:27, 43:7,9; Joel 3:21; Zech 2:10f.

(one of the most important of Jewish Feasts celebrated near the Passover) had itself acquired an eschatological significance¹ though it could not be regarded as essentially an eschatological feast.² It is, however, certain that Mark was thinking "of shelters made of intertwined branches or twigs such as were used in the Feast of Tabernacles".³

Any conclusion concerning the theological significance of this reference to tabernacles in the Transfiguration narrative cannot ignore the opinion of Michaelis:⁴ "The whole context and the singularity of the three figures who are to reside in the σκηναι suggests that an eschatological or Messianic understanding of this dwelling in σκηναι has to be taken into account here. But it is hard to say what the particular background is". Michaelis believes that although our understanding of the event may well be eschatological, it is almost impossible to present historical or traditional data to support this. Certainly, the reference to the three σκηναι is not sufficient evidence in itself to deepen the parallelism that does or does not exist between Jesus and Moses (Dt.18:15):⁵ "At any rate σκηναι played no part in either Ex.24 or Ex.34 and therefore the σκηναι of Mark 9:5 and par. cannot be claimed as arguments in favour of a Moses=Christ typology". Even though Michaelis is convinced of the need to interpret the tabernacles as eschatological in their function within the story, there is no overt, persuasive evidence to persuade us that he is correct. Michaelis does point out that it cannot be proved that there was a notion of

1. Eg. Zech. 14:16-19.

2. Michaelis. art.cit. p.371.

3. Cranfield. op.cit. p.291.

4. Michaelis. art.cit. p.379.

5. Michaelis. Cf. also S.Schulz. Die Decke die Moses. ZNW 49 (1958) p.30.
G.Schille Die Topographie die Markusevangelium
ZDPV 73 (1957) p.159.

eschatological dwelling of the Messiah current at the time of the Gospel, and there remains the question of the three tabernacles as opposed to an exclusive dwelling for the Messiah. To this extent, the reference to tabernacles undoubtedly denotes something of the presence of God with his chosen people at that particular moment in time and history; whether the reference to $\sigma\kappa\eta\upsilon\acute{\alpha}\iota$ did have an eschatological significance remains uncertain. Nevertheless, the reference to Peter's remark and to the building of three tabernacles, although undoubtedly an addition of the Evangelist as he went about redacting his Petrine source, teaches us something about the presence of God with Christ and does not detract from the possibility that the presence was meant to be interpreted as in some way pointing forward to the future.

9:6

$\text{οὐ γὰρ ᾔδει τί ἀποκριθῇ, ἐκφοβοὶ γὰρ ἑγένοντο.}$

This verse demands little comment since it is so obviously related to the preceding verse. It is a return to the "Petrine representation motif"¹ and forms a natural link with Mark 14:40, perhaps emphasising the link between the Transfiguration narrative and the events in the Garden of Gethsemane.² Certainly it is generally accepted that Mark uses this verse to excuse Peter's irrelevancy in v.5,³ which we have already suggested is a creation of the Evangelist in order to emphasise Peter's role as spokesman for the disciples. Caird finds the 'apology' interesting because there is a famine of comments that can definitely be classified as Mark's own, although Mark 3:30, 7:19, 13:14 are further

1. Chilton. art.cit. p.105.

2. A.Kenny. art.cit. has drawn parallels between the two events using this as criteria.

3. "So Mark excuses the incongruous remark". Cranfield. op.cit. p.291.

examples. Caird believes this could have been an addendum to Peter's original story ¹ which has been passed on to the Evangelist some time later, and this would explain why (if the 2 Peter account represents a primitive Petrine record of the original event) it was not included in the 2 Peter account. Only the important facts of the Transfiguration are recorded in 2 Peter and "it is quite out of order to give Moses and Elijah a permanent position on the mount of revelation. There was no need for three tabernacles nor even for one. For Jesus himself was the new tabernacle of the Divine Glory".² Caird's understanding of Jesus' glory, as it is revealed in this pericope, establishes Jesus as a new order, a result of a renewed attempt on the part of God to reveal God's glory on the earth surpassing all that had gone before. "What we now call the transfiguration of Christ is in a deeper sense the transfiguration of glory".³ We must conclude that it seems likely that Peter missed the point of exactly what was taking place in his presence; the editorial comment of v.6 almost makes redundant his statement in the previous verse and simply reminds us of Peter's vulnerability as the spokesman of the disciples.

2:7 καὶ ἐγένετο νεφέλη ἐπισκιάσασα αὐτοῖς,
καὶ ἐγένετο φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης, Οὗτός ἐστιν
ὁ Υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ.

This verse introduces us to the final stage of the narrative in which the divine voice speaks from a cloud and confirms Jesus' messianic role as the Son of God. The incident is strongly reminiscent of the

1. Caird. art.cit. p.293.

2. Caird. art.cit. p.293.

3. Caird. art.cit. p.294.

baptism pericope where a similar voice is reported to have said similar words.¹ The theological significance of the voice and of the cloud will obviously play a major role in our overall understanding of the narrative because of their history in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

And a cloud overshadowed them.

The bulk of this verse would seem to be traditional. Matthew slightly alters the rendering of Mark to ἰδὺν νεφέλην φωτεινὴν ἐπεσκήσασεν αὐτούς whilst Luke has ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ἐγένετο νεφέλη καὶ ἐπεσκήσασεν αὐτούς and both Matthew and Luke link the arrival of the cloud more closely with Peter's remark in the previous verse adding to the drama. In 2 Peter there is no direct mention of a cloud but we are told that the voice speaks ἐξ οὐρανοῦ² and it is likely that this was interpreted by Mark as signifying a cloud similar to that frequently described in the Old Testament.³ It is also likely that Mark wished us to see a close parallelism between the baptism and Transfiguration narratives.

The theological function of the cloud within the narrative needs some comment. Throughout the New Testament, we are presented with a mixture of Old Testament, Jewish and Hellenistic interpretations of the role of the cloud in the revelation of God. It is certain that the Old Testament references, such as those mentioned above involving the Wilderness Wanderings, played an important role in the understanding surrounding the cloud in the New Testament era. In the Old Testament, a cloud denoted the presence of God.⁴ In particular, the accounts of the Wilderness

1. Mark 1:9-11.

2. 2 Peter 1:18.

3. Eg. Ex. 19:16, 24:15f.

4. Eg. Dan. 7:13.

Wanderings give special prominence to the cloud as the vehicle by which God manifests himself to his people. In such cases, Lagrange envisaged the cloud "*comme une manifestation extérieure de la présence divine*", and he underlines the importance of the fact that it is "*Dieu qui entre en scène avec la nuée*".¹ The Old Testament cloud could readily be identified with the appearance of God to his people, especially in scenes which are generally regarded to be theophanic episodes where fire, thick darkness, thunder and lightening were frequently apparent. (Eg. Ex.24:15-18):

"Then Moses went up on the mountain and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai and the cloud covered it six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. And Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights".
(Ex.24:15-18).

Apart from the purely theophanic influence that the Old Testament had upon later Jewish thought, there are other references which have obviously been taken up in the imagery surrounding eschatological expectation. Passages such as Ezekiel 1 have had an obvious effect upon much of the 'apocalyptic' imagery used in the book of Revelations and elsewhere. For example (Ez. 1:4):

"As I looked, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness around it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were, gleaming bronze".

is typical of the kind of imagery referred to by Rowland, who insists that such Old Testament passages are major reservoirs of mythological ideas used in later apocalyptic writings.² The role of the cloud in eschatological expectation and thought can hardly be denied, We must bear in mind Rowland's point mentioned earlier that apocalyptic and

1. Lagrange. op.cit. p.230.

2. Rowland. op.cit. p.60.

eschatological imply two very different concepts and it is quite obvious that some apocalyptic references to the cloud are not necessarily eschatological. Despite this, however, there are examples, even within the New Testament (Eg. Mark 13:26, 14:62; Apoc.1:7, 14:14) of passages where the cloud has an obvious and undeniable eschatological role to play. Riesenfeld looks at the above passages and suggests that we are dealing with two different types of cloud; "d'une part la venue de Messie sur les nuées (Dan.7:13; 2 Bar.53:1-2; 4 Esd. 13:3) et d'autre part la nuée qui annonce la présence eschatologique de Dieu".¹ Clearly, on the evidence of Dan.7:13 and of Mark 13:26, 14:62, the expectation that the coming of the Son of Man would involve a cloud (or clouds) was very much a part of contemporary thought and expectation. An eschatological Son of Man would be, in part, identifiable because of the presence of God in a cloud.

Sabourin suggests that Rabbinical writings gave birth to such expectations:² "The themes of divine illumination form the pillar of cloud and the divine protection manifest in the covering cloud are used in the Rabbinical writings to express the special care God will take in eschatological times". Sabourin illustrates how a combination of Is.4:6 and Is.35:10, as well as the Rabbinic composition Mekilta 48, leads us to expect that "a canopy will cover the heads of the redeemed and this canopy is the cloud of glory".³ It is obvious, then, that we should see a link between the two motifs of cloud and glory. Boobyer suggests that in the minds of those responsible for the writing down of the Targums, the glory was often manifested at the same time as the appearance of a cloud.⁴

1. Riesenfeld. op.cit. p.246.

2. Sabourin (L.), "The Biblical Cloud. Terminology and Traditions". BTB 4 (1974). p.303.

3. Sabourin. art.cit. p.303.

4. Boobyer. op.cit. p.84.

This is obviously linked to the idea of the shekinah = God's presence or dwelling in glory. This leads us back to how we are to understand the Transfiguration cloud, with all of this important background information to consider.

It is likely that the most obvious explanation for the Transfiguration cloud's presence is one which is rooted in an eschatological explanation. It is difficult to argue with Taylor, who surmises that Mark regarded the cloud as ¹ "the vehicle of God's presence". He suggests that, as we have already stated, the 'revealing' function of the cloud was rooted in an Old Testament understanding (Cf. Ex.33:9, 40:33; Dt.31:15) of God's self-revelation to his people. We would therefore disagree with Riesenfeld who assumes that the cloud ² "ne se trouve plus associé à l'idée de theophanie répétée", and we would stress the need for an understanding of the cloud which is primarily for the purpose of revelation. It is also true that in later Israelite thought the cloud not only acted as a vehicle whereby God might be revealed but also as that which was expected to appear at the Second Coming of the Messiah. Dan.7:13 is a particular example of such an understanding:

"and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like the Son of Man".

An eschatological interpretation is obviously required here. Riesenfeld has also suggested, with reference to this particular verse, that it had an important influence on the authors of the Targums (Eg, in Riesenfeld, Targ.Heir. on Ex.12:42) ³ where clouds are frequently referred to in an eschatological context. It seems likely, therefore, that early Christians who heard and read Mark's account of the Transfiguration narrative would have presumed that the cloud had an eschatological function.

1. Taylor. op.cit. p.391.

2. Riesenfeld. op.cit. p.248.

3. Riesenfeld. op.cit. p.248.

It was a cloud similar to the clouds which had continuously revealed the presence of God in the Old Testament, but which had, by the time of the New Testament, assumed an eschatological dimension fundamental to the community's understanding of the presence of the cloud.

Most critics believe that an eschatological understanding of the Transfiguration cloud is both necessary and obvious.¹ There are two points of interest which nevertheless arise. First, Stein pinpoints the problem: "whereas the Son of Man at the Parousia comes with the clouds of heaven, in this account the cloud goes away and the Son of Man remains".² Boobyer and Lohmeyer have also both pointed out that Jesus should come on the clouds and not the clouds upon him. In one sense these discrepancies are important because it means that in the Transfiguration sense, Jesus does not totally fulfill the eschatological expectation of his day. However, Boobyer singularly fails to point out also that the Transfiguration is not, of course, the Parousia itself but a prefiguration of it, and there is no absolute need to expect the events of the Parousia to occur on the mountain at the Transfiguration. The presence of the cloud denotes what will happen. The cloud serves only to remind us of what is to happen in the future, following the passion and resurrection of Jesus.

Secondly, there are other significant references to clouds in the New Testament other than those we have mentioned and not all of these are similarly explained. The most important, perhaps, is the account of Jesus' ascension in Acts 1:9f where both the mountain and the two heavenly visitors also appear as they do in Mark 9:2-8. The most important difference between the ascension and the Transfiguration clouds is that, at the ascension, the cloud "received Him out of their sight".

1. Eg. Marshall, Boobyer, Taylor.

2. Stein. art.cit. p.81.

Stein is quite clear on this point, concerning the Transfiguration cloud:¹ "It is not an Ascension cloud at all, for when it disappears Jesus remains behind whereas Elijah (2 Kings 2:1-2) and Moses have ascended". Despite this, the cloud represents the emphasis upon God revealing himself through Jesus in glory and the promise of future vindication, in both incidents of Transfiguration and ascension.

The question of *αὐτοῖς*, and to whom it refers, need not detain us here. The most common interpretation is that the word refers to Jesus, Moses and Elijah² and Marshall is in no doubt that "the former group is meant (Moses, Elijah, Jesus); the doubts concern the latter". The obvious has been stated by both Boobyer and Stein³ who, though sympathetic to the view that the group of three is probably meant, suggest that we simply cannot be sure and that, in the final analysis it does not really matter.

The cloud motif in the Transfiguration narrative is, as we have attempted to illustrate, a symbol of present revelation and future glory. In a unique way, it combines the role of the cloud in the Old Testament with a much later understanding of its role in the eschatological events of the End Time. The Transfiguration cloud, unlike the cloud at the Baptism, not only reveals God's pleasure in the work of the Son of God but takes upon itself a theme of victory over suffering and death by its association with Jesus' transfigured state:⁴ "The cloud in the Transfiguration is, without doubt, a theophanic cloud from which God speaks as his dwelling place. Its apparition and its function on the mountain point to a new exodus, to a new revelation, to the birth of a new people of God, that of End Time".

1. Stein. art.cit. p.81.

2. Marshall. op.cit. p.387. Cf.also Riesenfeld.op.cit. p.134

3. Stein. art.cit. p.81.

4. Sabourin. art.cit. p.317.

And a Voice came out of the Cloud.

Mark then describes the presence of a voice from the cloud. Chilton claims that this "is part of a deliberate borrowing from Mark 1:11" where a voice also appears, although the meaning is not the same.¹ In the Baptism narrative, the word order is varied and it is said to originate $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\ \tau\acute{\omega}\nu\ \omicron\upsilon\rho\alpha\nu\acute{\omega}\nu$. The voice is also referred to in the account recorded in 2 Peter² and would therefore seem to have been an accepted part of the apostolic understanding of this narrative. In the Gospel of Luke the word order is slightly different, ($\phi\omega\nu\acute{\eta}\ \acute{\epsilon}\xi\epsilon\nu\epsilon\tau\omicron$) and in Matthew $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\epsilon\nu\epsilon\tau\omicron$ is replaced by $\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\upsilon$, but these variations are slight and the synoptics agree on the important details. It is the voice of God which speaks from the cloud.

In the LXX $\phi\omega\nu\acute{\eta}$ usually translates לרעם which rarely employs the definite article and can signify a variety of different adjectives. It frequently denoted the voice of thunder (Eg. Ex.9:23,29,33f; 19:16, 20:18; Job 28:26), the roar of water (Eg. Ps 42:7, 93:3f; Ez 1:24, 43:2) or even the cracking of the fire (Eg. Jer.11:16). The most popular and well-known meaning of the word לרעם , however, denoted the voice of a human being or the voice of God. As was stated in the case of the cloud motif, the voice of God was most prominent in the Old Testament in the Wilderness Wandering narratives where the voice of God emphasised his presence and his dealings with his people (Eg. Dt.5:4, 9:15; Ex.3:2). In Ex.19:19 (לרעם רעם וס'תלחח) and also in Ex.20:18 (רעם רעם וס'תלחח) "the reference is not just to the noise of thunder but also to the intelligible voice of God"³. The function of

1. Chilton, art.cit. p.119.

2. 2 Peter 1:17.

3. Betz, art.cit. p.283.

the voice in these narratives is the personification of God in order to give him the opportunity to make his will known and, to that extent, is very similar to the function of the voice in the Transfiguration narrative. Bernadin comments that the voice here is similar to that when "God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai out of a cloud" (Ex.24:16, 34:4-7)¹, and it is difficult not to agree.

The voice of God in the Sinai narrative is not the only important background that needs to be borne in mind. Betz points out that there is no famine of pre-New Testament references which are important for us at least to consider ². In his extremely informative article Betz gives us the necessary background to the role of the voice in the thought of Rabbinic Judaism and in the Hellenistic world, which is an adequate summary for our purposes. It must be sufficient for us to state, however, that by the time of the Rabbinic period the voice had been given and had assumed a place in religious literature which was almost entirely eschatological; Betz informs us that "The apocalyptic view of God's voice is influenced on the one side by expectation of a new eschatological revelation and on the other by heightened awareness of divine transcendence". As well as denoting the abiding presence of God as is repeatedly the case in the Old Testament it is clear that the voice had come to have a close affiliation with the events of the End Time in later Rabbinic Judaism.

In his study of the Transfiguration narrative, Dabrowski ³ states that "Dans le Nouveau Testament, ce signe de la présence de la divinité intervient dans quelque événements"; he points to the ascension of

1. Bernadin. art.cit. p.182.

2. Betz. art.cit. p.205f.

3. Dabrowski. op.cit. p.100.

Jesus (Acts 1:9) and the expected Parousia as examples of this. It is clear that the word $\phi\omega\nu\mu\acute{\iota}$, as it is used in the New Testament, takes on a more clearly defined meaning than its Hebrew equivalent (kol). In its most simple form $\phi\omega\nu\mu\acute{\iota}$ can denote a simple, human voice (Eg. Acts 12:14). Undoubtedly, however, the majority of cases involve the direct, spoken voice of God based upon the Sinai tradition. As well as the references to God's voice in both the Baptism and Transfiguration narratives the voice of God has a revealing purpose in the Fourth Gospel. God is said to reveal his purpose through the speaking voice (John 3:8) and the hearing of the $\phi\omega\nu\mu\acute{\iota}$ is linked to the idea of personal salvation (John 8:14).

In the Synoptic Gospels the voice of God first appears in the Baptism narratives which, as we have already stated, have a direct and obvious relationship with the Transfiguration narrative. Mark 1:11 reads:

καὶ φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν ὅτι εἶ ὁ
Υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα.

Riesenfeld believes that the voice here is "à la même signification que celle de récit de la Transfiguration; elle rend manifeste la relation entre Père et Fils, ce qui fait entrer dans le cadre des conceptions messianiques".¹ Scholars remain uncertain as to the exact nature of the relationship between the Baptism and Transfiguration narratives although most agree that the Evangelists have redacted their material to enable us to see a certain parallelism between the two narratives. Lagrange stated that the Transfiguration was "en rapport" with the Baptism especially in the case of the voice², whereas Bernadin believed that the Transfiguration voice was "similar to the voice which Jesus alone

1. Riesenfeld. op.cit. p.251.

2. Lagrange, op.cit, p.139. Cf. also, final Chapter.

heard at the Baptism"¹. Chilton has laid great emphasis on the redactional work of Mark in the case of these two passages: "As you will see, this is part of a deliberate borrowing from Mark 1:11"². He regards both the Baptism and the Transfiguration pericopes as key events in the earthly ministry of Jesus which are endorsed by the presence of the divine voice. A christological connection between the two incidents is obvious, and we would agree with Chilton that Mark has clearly intended that we should see such a similarity between the events in the writing of his Gospel.

The influence of Rabbinic thought and especially the *qip nq* on the writing of Mark is interesting with regard to the Baptism and Transfiguration narratives. Betz informs us that, following the destruction of the Second Temple, an idea developed amongst the Rabbis that the spirit had left Israel with the latter prophets (Eg. Hag, Zech, Malac.) and that the voice from heaven replaced the spirit. Thus *qip nq* refers to "a voice that usually comes from heaven and declares God's judgement"³. Betz shows how no lasting relationship between God and Man is set up by the voice nor is there a call to the people of Israel as the chosen, exclusive people of God. Rather, the *qip nq* is universal in its address to the world:⁴ "It is often addressed to the world and calls from the mountain tops in all directions". The possible connection between the Rabbinic understanding of the *qip nq* and the voice in the Synoptic Gospels is clearly well founded. There are, however, several important differences between the two. Even though it is arguable that the divine voice can be understood in a universal manner, many scholars

1. Bernadin. art.cit. p.182.

2. Chilton. art.cit. p.119.

3. Betz. art.cit. p.288.

4. Betz. art.cit. p.289.

argue that the voices' principal function is to underline Jesus' messianic status to those who had recognised him as Messiah only days earlier. (8:28f). In this sense, the voice is personal as well as universal. This interpretation is also true of other passages where the voice plays a dominant role; in Rev. 1:10, 4:10, 10:8, 11:2 we have examples of a more specific and less general function for the voice.

So far, it would appear that the voice of God in the Transfiguration narrative is a rather curious mixture of references to the revealing voice of God as it is recorded in the Sinai narratives and to the understanding of some of the later Rabbinic thought which introduces eschatological elements. It is very difficult to emphasise an interpretation of the role of the voice motif in the Transfiguration narrative which would allow us to interpret the voice heard as the voice that will be heard at the Parousia of Jesus. Certainly, the emphasis would seem to be futuristic; the divine voice brings a message of vindication, encouragement and an emphasis upon Jesus' role as the Son of God. Boobyer, however, remains cautious ¹; "It is essential to avoid pushing the details of this story too hard to secure them a place in the theory set forward and consequently we in no way wish to press a suggestion which may be made about this point. But none the less it should not be overlooked that there is a voice to be heard at the Parousia". Boobyer suggests that there may be an eschatological background to passages such as that found in 1 Thess. 4:16, where we are told of the hope that Christ will descend *ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ*. Furthermore, the discoveries at Qumran have added weight to the arguments for an eschatological understanding of the voice of God; in the hymnal passage of the War Scroll ² the representatives of the true Israel are

1. Boobyer. op.cit. p.86.

2. 1 QM 10.10f.

called hearers of the "divine voice". Although such references to an eschatological voice are irregular and infrequent it would seem correct for us to conclude that the evidence of later Judaism points, at least, to the voice of the Transfiguration as being partly futuristic in its significance and message. The influence of the Old Testament cannot and has not been underestimated. The fact that the voice was more significant than the voice which spoke to the prophets and to Moses in the Old Testament is a point which we must very much bear in mind.

There was every reason for the Evangelists to have wanted to establish the revealing function of the voice. In 2 Peter, the author of the source used by the writer of the letter most probably included a reference to the voice probably because it was historically correct, but also because he knew about the eschatological significance of the voice as the vehicle for the direct manifestation of God's presence to his people. The Evangelists have clearly redacted their material so that there is a clear parallelism between the voice of God at Jesus' Baptism and that at his Transfiguration. It is possible that the Baptism voice has been adapted to fit that of the Transfiguration voice or vice-versa; this shall be discussed in Chapter V. In whatever way the Evangelist has moulded his material, the importance of the voice motif lies not only in its presence but in the message it is there to proclaim.

This is My Beloved Son, Listen to Him.

This is very similar to the message recorded by the author of 2 Peter,

Οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ υἱός μου, ὁ ἀγαπητός, εἰς οὗ ἐγὼ
 εὐδόκησα and is perhaps the most concrete evidence for our earlier

theory that both Mark and 2 Peter use an identical source which 2 Peter has used without any additions but which Mark has redacted and enlarged.

Matthew's meaning is the same but Luke puts it somewhat differently:

Οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἐκλεκτός, αὐτὸν
 ἀκούετε . Swete is correct in his observation that the specific

command to listen to Jesus ¹ makes the voice's message distinctive from
 1. Swete, op.cit. p.180.

the Bat Qol. Both Carlston and Marshall ¹ see a link in Luke here to Dt. 18:15 which we have mentioned earlier in the Chapter. Marshall writes: "Like the voice at the baptism....it bears witness to who Jesus is; unlike the voice at the baptism, but in terms closely reminiscent of the promise of a Mosaic eschatological prophet, it enjoins obedience to Him". Similarly, Marshall identifies the imperative (listen to him) as a reflection of Dt.18:15 "and which maybe meant implicitly to identify Jesus with the prophet like Moses". It is not surprising that Jesus is singled out as having a crucial role in God's plan and as being somehow directed by these authoritative words. Some scholars, amongst them Margaret Thrall ², believe that this divine imperative directs "our attention to the sayings which immediately precede this section, i.e. the saying contained in 8:27 - 9:1". Lagrange, however, was not as certain:³ "ce qui dit la voix au nom de Dieu n'est point une confirmation de la confession de Pierre; il n'est fait aucune allusion à la vocation messianique de Jesus mais seulement à sa relation de Fils avec celui qui parle".

The function of the voice motif is almost certainly the emphasis given to the role of the person of Christ as Messiah and Son of God. His messianic status, revealed by Peter at Caesarea Philippi is made manifest by God and ratified by God's personal vindication through the audible words of his voice through a cloud:⁴ "in the declaration of the voice from the cloud it is expressly acknowledged that Jesus enjoys a unique, filial relationship to God". That both the cloud and the voice are to be understood both in their present context and as pointing forward to that which Jesus had to endure and gain victory over - the suffering,

1. Marshall. op.cit. p.387.

Carlston. art.cit. p.238.

2. Thrall. art.cit. p.314.

3. Lagrange. op.cit. p.230.

4. Burkill. op.cit. p.158.

death, resurrection and Parousia of which Jesus had foretold - is a most likely interpretation to which we must give due consideration in our final Chapter.

9:8

καὶ ἑξάπινα περιβλεψάμενοι οὐκέτι οὐδένα εἶδον ἀλλὰ
τὸν Ἰησοῦν μόνον μεθ' ἑαυτῶν.

And Suddenly looking around they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

This verse concludes the Marcan narrative. Lagrange has suggested that ¹ "les trois regardent autour d'eux comme s'ils attendaient à voir encore quelque merveille". Certainly, the suggestion that this happened ἑξάπινα brings the pericope to a swift conclusion. Taylor agrees that the story "ends abruptly" ² and, like most commentators on Mark, believes there is little of theological significance in this verse.³

Following the descriptions of the transfigured Jesus, the appearance of Moses and Elijah and the intervention of God by his voice through a cloud, Mark uses this verse as a bridge between the narrative itself and the conversation between Jesus and his disciples on the way down the mountain.

(iv) Conclusions

The Marcan account of the Transfiguration narrative is obviously a complex and difficult episode in the sense that the author introduces his reader to a wide variety of theological motifs and ideas. It is unparalleled in the Gospel of Mark, particularly with regard to the effect that it has on Jesus' ministry as a whole. The Transfiguration heralds the end of Jesus' Galilean ministry and the commencement of his discourses

1. Lagrange. op.cit. p.231.

2. Taylor. op.cit. p.392.

3. Eg. Crenfield/Rawlinson.

concerning his Passion in Jerusalem - events which he can now reveal to his disciples. Our brief examination of the narrative has revealed the complexity of the story with regard to the problem of identifying the sources used by Mark and his own redactional work upon his sources. We have, however, made various suggestions as to those elements within the pericope which are almost certainly Marcan redaction. For example, the selection of the three disciples and the use of Peter as their spokesman is characteristic of the Gospel of Mark as a whole; also, the parallels which exist between the Baptism of Jesus and the Transfiguration would suggest that Mark intended us to see a close allegiance between these two narratives and, in particular, their christological significance. In the Baptism, Jesus is designated Son of God and the context of his Sonship is the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14); in the Transfiguration, Jesus is once more designated as the Son of God and the reference to the Kingdom is also in evidence. (Mark 9:1).

Despite Mark's redactional activity, however, the Transfiguration in Mark must also be based on a source which was used by the Evangelist, but which he has redacted in order to portray the event of the Transfiguration in his own, individual way. The identification of the source used by the Evangelist is of great importance because of the theological understanding which may well have been attached to this source in the context of the Early Church. If we could identify this source used by the Evangelist in his recording of the Transfiguration narrative, it is extremely likely that Mark would have used the source in a similar, or identical way, to that of the Early Church. The nearest we come to a solution to the question of the identity of this source is what we believe to be the primitive, apostolic account as it is preserved in 2 Peter 1:16-18. The context of this reference to the Transfiguration is an apology for the delay in the Parousia. We must conclude that if Peter

was responsible both for the 2 Peter account and for the source used by Mark, (before he redacted it, almost beyond recognition) it is more than likely that the Evangelist was influenced by the theological understanding of the Transfiguration in the Early Church.

This conclusion brings us back to the suggestions made earlier in this thesis. We must now proceed on the assumption that Peter played a dominant role both in providing information to the Evangelist Mark and in the telling of the Transfiguration story as it is recorded in 2 Peter 1:16-18. Such a presupposition rests heavily on speculation. There are, nevertheless, sufficient grounds for us to presume that the similarity that exists between 2 Peter 1:16-18 and the central framework of Mark 9:2-8 is because the apostle Peter was responsible for both accounts. In 2 Peter, Peter's reference has been preserved for us by the pseudonymous author; almost certainly Peter passed on to Mark, a similar account of the Transfiguration; Mark has then redacted and this is preserved for us now in Mark 9:2-8. This account, which we have examined, relies heavily on the Petrine account for its outline but it has been added to and enlarged by Mark, both to strengthen its theological significance and to form an important and crucial demonstration of Jesus' true identity in the Εὐαγγέλιον portrayed by Mark.

Throughout our examination of the use of the Transfiguration in 2 Peter it was obvious that it was used very much in the context of an apologia for delay in the return of Jesus at his Parousia. It would also seem that the context in which Mark has placed the Transfiguration in his Gospel could well be because of the connection between the Transfiguration and the Parousia, accepted in the Early Church, and built upon by the Evangelist. Boobyer, who also analysed the Transfiguration in Mark arrived at a similar conclusion:¹ "A return to Mark's Gospel as a whole

1. Boobyer. op.cit. p.87.

looked forward to the revelation of Christ at the resurrection and the parousia; and the immediate context of the transfiguration in the Gospel gave every ground for supposing Mark shared the attitude of others in the Early Church to this narrative". Of course, even if we were to conclude that the Transfiguration is connected in the Gospel of Mark to the Evangelist's understanding of the nature of Jesus at his Parousia, we could not deny that the Transfiguration also plays a very dramatic and significant role in the earthly life of Christ within his earthly ministry. That Jesus was transfigured six days (or some time) after Caesarea Philippi, not only informs us that Peter's response of Jesus as the Messiah was correct, but also that the Messiah whom he identifies will return again, following his resurrection, in glory.

As scholars have debated the possible explanations concerning the theological significance of the Transfiguration narrative in Mark, many have failed to analyse the narrative through the eyes of the Early Church and, in particular, in light of the expectations of the Early Church concerning the return of Christ. In our view, the arguments of scholars such as Carlston and Bultmann, and of Riesenfeld and Dabrowski ¹ have singularly failed to put the Transfiguration back into its true perspective; its significance and role in the life of the Early Church. There has been a tendency amongst commentators to explain the Transfiguration of Jesus exclusively in the light of the accounts recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, whilst ignoring the theological ideas and expectations of the community in which these stories evolved. Many have been too pre-occupied with the need to find an explanation in the Old Testament ² or within the synoptics themselves.³ In our view it is the Early Church

1. All these scholars have been mentioned throughout our study.

2. Riesenfeld was especially guilty of this.

3. Doobyer and Carlston believed a theological answer was to be found in the synoptics.

which holds the key to our understanding of the Transfiguration in the synoptics. To this extent 2 Peter illustrates the point that the Transfiguration in the Early Church was inextricably linked to the expectation of the Parousia of Jesus, which they expected to take place at any time. In what way the Transfiguration and the Parousia is linked, and how this affects our overall conclusion as to the theological significance of the Transfiguration narrative is to be the subject of our final Chapter.

CHAPTER V. TRANSFIGURATION AND PAROUSIA

Our discussion so far has enabled us to establish several points of great importance in our attempts to discover the theological significance of the Transfiguration narrative in the Synoptic Gospels. First, that in the context of the Early Church there was a close connection between the expected Parousia of Jesus and the Transfiguration scene. This is obvious if we are to understand the reference to the Transfiguration in 2 Peter as representative of the Early Church's understanding concerning the Transfiguration. Also, it would seem likely that the apostle Peter played an important role in the emergence of the Transfiguration narrative both in 2 Peter and in Mark's Gospel. In 2 Peter, a pseudonymous author has utilised an authentic, Petrine tradition in order to make his work appear more authentic, and it is reasonable to suppose that Peter told Mark a similar, if not identical, story concerning the events on the Transfiguration mountain, which Mark has used as the framework for his narrative. In both cases, the Transfiguration was somehow related to the expectations of the Early Church concerning the Parousia. In 2 Peter, this is obvious from the Transfiguration narrative's context in the Epistle. In Mark, as we have seen in our previous Chapter, there is enough evidence to suggest that Mark basically understood the Transfiguration as an event which was in some way connected to the Parousia, as well as being an event of great immediate significance in the life of Jesus, in its confirmation of Jesus as Messiah. The question we must now essay to answer is that of the nature of the relationship between the Transfiguration now, and the Parousia, yet to come.

The role and function of the Parousia in the thought of the Early Church, the New Testament and also in the teaching of Jesus, is extremely ambiguous and uncertain. There is no clear or obvious doctrine of the Parousia in the New Testament era, perhaps because of the speculative

nature of the period. This lack of any clear and concise statement of the expectation of the Early Church concerning the Parousia, presents us with an obvious problem as we attempt to unravel the complex relationship that would seem to exist between the Transfiguration and the Parousia. Uncertainty exists concerning the timing of the Parousia, its effects, the nature of the final judgement, the manner in which God will glorify himself and, most especially, the effects the Parousia will have on those who are justified in Christ. Our aim in this Chapter is to briefly introduce the well-known expectations of the New Testament era concerning the Parousia, before looking at parallels between this expectation and the Transfiguration of Jesus.

The expectation that a Messiah would return at an undisclosed time in the future was very much in evidence during the period of Jesus' ministry and immediately after it. It is also very likely that, by the time of the death of some of the first generation Christians, the imminence of the Parousia was an idea frequently advocated and discussed even though an agreed timescale was seemingly totally lacking. It was this "indefinite imminence" which was at the root of the confusion as R.P.C. Hanson has recently explained:¹ "Indefinite imminence is a contradiction in terms.....But though we may demythologise or transpose New Testament eschatology it is much too deeply engrained in the texture of New Testament thought for us simply to excise it without damage. Eschatological language was a Jewish way of writing. Apocalyptic literature, which strikes us as bizarre and grotesque, was in fact a familiar form of expression in Jewish circles from the second century B.C. to the second century A.D. Eschatological interpretation of Jesus Christ was a Jewish way of emphasising his unlimited significance". The Second Epistle of Peter and the Synoptic Gospels must all be placed within this

1. R.P.C.Hanson. "The Doctrine of the Trinity". New Fire (8) 1984.p.8-11.

Sitz im Leben, in that the figure (and significance) of Jesus was being compared directly with the eschatological thought and expectation prevalent in the society into which he came. We must now consider, very briefly, the background to the eschatological expectation of the New Testament era, with particular reference to the event of the Parousia.

A.L. Moore's contribution to the background of the Parousia in the New Testament remains useful to the present day.¹ Beginning with the influence of the Old Testament, Moore suggests that "the central concern of the Old Testament is the sovereignty of God".² This sovereignty was an essential part of Israelite history since it was always of importance to the present day as well as having clear associations with a more perfect sovereignty, to be revealed at some time in the future. In the history of Israel, God's sovereignty was linked to the work of God in creation (Eg. Ps. 104:5, Ps. 119:90; Is. 47:16; 1 Chron. 29:11), through which God's intention and plans for mankind and the created order were revealed. Similarly, in the establishing of a Covenant between God and his people (Eg. Ex. 19:5; Dt. 14:2, 26:18; Ps. 135:4) the sovereignty of the Lord was made known in his dealings with mankind. As the architect of the Covenant, God was seen by his people in terms of a Kingly figure (Eg. Is. 6:5) who was to rule in the hearts of his people as ruler and judge over them. It was the failure of the people of God to accept the terms of the Covenant which led to "an increasing longing for the time when God would make his Kingship unambiguously clear".³ It was during the prophetic era that an expectation arose, despite the impending doom and warnings of destruction, in which God was expected to reveal himself finally and completely to his people.

1. A.L. Moore. The Parousia in the New Testament. (1966).

2. A.L. Moore. op.cit. p.7.

3. A.L. Moore. op.cit. p.10.

It is the nature of this revelation which remains something of a mystery. There is no clear definition of the expectation, nor of God's role in the events leading up to the final judgement. In some of the books of the Old Testament it is clear that God himself was expected to visit his people (Eg. Is.44:6-23; Zech.14), whilst others looked for an intermediary figure such as a Messiah ¹, a Suffering Servant ² or a Son of Man ³ to play an important role at the End Time. The function of such an intermediary, and his relationship with God, has been the source of much debate, if not only because this intermediary figure had played an important role in the later Jewish writings of the intertestamental period.

The messianic figure as a Suffering Servant is most vividly portrayed in Deutero-Isaiah and there are frequent references to the יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ in this book.⁴ The chief problem lies in identifying who the Servant figure is, because there is no clear explanation of his origin or purpose.⁵ His chief role would seem to be one who was chosen by God, in order to help the people of God as a mediator, when God reveals himself in glory, at some future time. Parallels between the Suffering Servant and the person of Jesus are thus obvious, since it is in his suffering that Jesus accomplishes an essential stage of God's process of reconciliation between himself and the created order.⁶ The essence of the role of the Suffering Servant is one of representation, for the community of the people of God.

1. Eg. 2 Samuel 7:12; Hos. 3:5.

2. Eg. Is.42:1.

3. Eg. Dan.7.

4. Eg. Isaiah 42:1, 44:2, Ch.53. etc.

5. R.N.Whybray. Isaiah. 40-66. (1975) deals adequately with these problems in the relevant verses.

6. Cf. J.Jeremias. "The Servant of God". SBT 20 (1957) p.81ff.

Is.42:1-3 is particularly important:

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice".

This short passage, along with the more extensive description of Is.53, are useful and precise descriptions of the role of the ebed figure as he was understood in the prophetic era. In later Judaism ¹ the ebed figure was more directly associated, even equated directly, with the expected Messiah, although the relationship between the Servant and Messiah titles is ambiguous and must not be oversimplified. The complexity of the relationship between the expected Messiah and the Suffering Servant figure is also in evidence in Qumran material, where the Teacher of Righteousness assumes some of the characteristics of the Suffering Servant.² In essaying to find parallels between the ebed figure and the expected Messiah - or even in trying to establish them as the same figure - our problem is the lack of any textual evidence suggesting that the Messiah must suffer before his arrival.

It is in the light of his own suffering that Jesus has been identified with the Suffering Servant figure and, as Messiah, has brought together the two concepts of Messiahship and suffering so that, by the period of the Early Church, the two were inevitably linked. This identification of Jesus with the Suffering Servant has come about because of the emphasis, throughout Jesus' ministry, on the need for him to suffer (Eg. Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33) but perhaps, most of all, because of the words spoken by the divine voice at the Baptism of Jesus: "You are my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased". (Mark 1:11). This is a direct

1. The ebed figure is directly identified with the Messiah in Enoch, Apocalypse of Ezra, Apocalypse of Baruch.

2. Cf. W.H. Brownlee. "The Servant of the Lord in the Qumran Scrolls". Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research. 132 (1953) p.8ff.

borrowing on the part of Mark from Is.42:1 and suggests that God addresses Jesus at his Baptism in the same way as the one is addressed at the beginning of the ebed hymn in Is.42. Later in this Chapter, we shall be examining the obvious parallelism between the Baptism and Transfiguration episodes but the identification of Jesus with the ebed figure who, in later Judaism, was to assume an eschatological role, is obvious. The role of the Servant figure in events leading up to the End Time was uncertain in the post-prophetic era but, in attributing the role of the Servant to Jesus, the necessity of suffering was equated with the messianic figure who, before establishing glory on earth, must suffer and taste death in a vicarious and representative manner. This would seem to be the understanding of the Early Christian community concerning Jesus as Messiah and Suffering Servant.¹

Similar problems arise as a result of the title Son of Man, which like the ebed Yahweh, has its roots in the Old Testament but it assumed a new meaning in the light of Jesus. Textual evidence for the use of the title Son of Man outside of the Gospels is scanty² but the most important occurrence is undoubtedly that in Dan.7:13³ where it provides us with some important guidelines as to the understanding of the title Son of Man in Jesus' day. Some have suggested that this reference in Daniel provides us with the beginning of a belief in a heavenly saviour-type figure who would be present at the End Time⁴. Others, however,

1. Cf. 1.Cor. 15:3; Ph.2:7; Rom. 5:12f.

2. Eg. Enoch 37-71; 4 Ezra 13.

3. Excellent background on the Son of Man in Daniel;

Cf. P.M. Casey. The Son of Man (1980).

J.D.G. Dunn. Christology in the Making. (1980).

4. Cf. S.Mowinckel. He That Cometh. (1936). p.346f.

H.E. Tödt. The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition. (1965)

interpret Dan. 7:13:

"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a Son of Man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him".

as a reference to a purely symbolic figure who would have no particular or definite role in the final revelation of God to the World ¹. The problems surrounding the reference to the Son of Man in Daniel, especially those of interpretation and its implications for the use of the title in the New Testament, are seemingly insurmountable. Nevertheless, in the light of current eschatological expectation prevalent about the time of Daniel, as well as apocalyptic imagery used generally within this period of Judaism, Rowland has recently suggested four concrete conclusions concerning the role of the Son of Man in Daniel 7 which we will agree with ². First, Rowland points out that the Son of Man is more than a symbol of the "Saints of the most high", because if he had only been this, it would have been made much clearer and it is not. This is connected to Rowland's second point which stresses the historical, rather than purely visionary nature, of the events recorded in Daniel 7. This leads Rowland to his third conclusion - that the coming of the Son of Man is, therefore, an event that we can expect to take place, and is not just a picture from which we must interpret something other than that which is described. As a result of Daniel 7:13, the coming of a Son of Man figure becomes a realistic expectation. Lastly, Rowland qualifies his other three conclusions, to some extent, by stressing the point that there is no obvious reason to expect the Son of Man to come as an eschatological judge - an interpretation added at a later stage and not applicable in Rowland's opinion.

1. Cf. M.D. Hooker. The Son of Man in Mark. (1967).

2. Rowland. op.cit. p.180-182.

T.W.Manson was convinced that the Son of Man in Daniel was a corporate figure, in the sense that he represented all those whom God had chosen by his redemption ¹. Mowinckel, however, disagreed and stressed the individuality of the Son of Man figure ². The question of the nature of the Son of Man as corporate or individual was obviously subject to great debate, even in the intertestamental period. It would have been easier to establish the Son of Man as an individual figure if the relationship between the titles Son of Man and Messiah had been made much clearer. As we saw in the case of the ebed Yahweh, there was no clear identification of the Son of Man with the Messiah in Judaism. It was mainly through the coming of Jesus ³ that Son of Man came to be in some way equated with the Messiah. Cullman suggests that Jesus probably did use the title himself even though some have suggested that it must have been a redactional addition of the Evangelists ⁴. "There are so many passages in the Synoptic Gospels in which Jesus definitely refers to himself as the Son of Man that we need not enumerate them all. Some scholars have asserted this title as a self-designation by him, as an invention of the Evangelists based on the theology of the Early Church, but this all too simple thesis is disproved by the fact that Son of Man was not at all a common title for Jesus in the Early Church". Certainly, the employment of the title Son of Man in the Gospels demands a variety of interpretations but its eschatological significance is extremely important (Cf. esp. Luke 17:22f; Mt.24: 27,37ff; Mark 8:38) and can hardly be disputed.

1. T.W.Manson. "The Son of Man in Daniel, Enoch and the Gospels" BJRL 32 (1950). p.171-193.

2. Mowinckel. op.cit. p.348.

3. Even though some scholars believe that Jesus did not readily think of himself as the Son of Man. Eg. H.Lietzmann. Der Menschensohn. (1896).

4. O.Cullmann. The Christology of the New Testament. (1967 ed.) p.155.

Son of Man and Suffering Servant are just two examples of figures referred to in Jewish literature who have been directly compared to the kind of figure who would play an intermediary role on God's behalf at the End Time. By the time of the intertestamental period, the emphasis upon some future, important event and God's judgement and authority being restored was very strong and Moore gives a thoroughly adequate summary of expectations around this time ¹. Although he finds the famine of references to the establishing of the Kingdom of God interesting (he suggests that this may have been supposed rather than stated)² he is certain that there was an increasing sense of imminence present concerning the Parousia and that the central figure in the drama was about to return at any moment. A typical example is the Qumran community where there is an obvious tension to be found in its writings, between the present and the future; "The intensity of the community's hope is reflected in the careful and detailed preparations for the work of its members in the Messianic Woes".³

It is against this particular background that we must assess the emergence of the idea of a Parousia. Various eschatological strands of tradition formed some kind of general expectation that God would re-establish his authority over the created order, but the nature, timing, effects and the identity of those to be involved, remained generally confused. Nevertheless, we can safely suppose that, by the time of Jesus, expectations amongst the Jews that a Messiah was to come, were very high. The person of Jesus, his proclamation of the Kingdom of God (Mark 9:1), his suffering, rejection and crucifixion (Eg. Mark 8:31) were all interpreted in the light of the understanding of the community into which he came as Son of God, Son of Man and Messiah. The problem lies in the fact that there was no clearly-defined process of eschatological revelation

1. Moore. op.cit. p.19-33.

2. Moore. op.cit. p.19.

3. Moore. op.cit. p.33.

that Jesus could fulfill. The crucifixion, in itself, was abhorrent to any Jew who was confronted with the suggestion that Jesus was the expected Messiah! As we will now argue, the Incarnation of Jesus as the $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ (John 1:1), who was with God $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta$, necessitated a re-valuation of expectation amongst the people of God. The Old Testament and intertestamental period had prepared the way for Jesus, but the New Testament had to put Jesus fully into context.

Two doctrines of eschatology in the New Testament have won particular support. The first is Consistent Eschatology which relies mainly on the work of Albert Schweitzer¹. Schweitzer maintains that Jesus' eschatological role was rooted in the concept of the Kingdom of God which is central to the teaching of both John the Baptist (as preparation) and Jesus (as fulfilment). The Kingdom is heralded by John the Baptist who is presented to the readers of the Synoptic Gospels as a prophet of the Kingdom until it is proclaimed by Jesus himself (Eg. Mark 9:11-13). From the moment of his Baptism, Schweitzer maintains that the theme of the presence of the Kingdom gradually becomes more important, particularly in Jesus' teaching (Eg. Mark 4). Schweitzer attempts to explain how Jesus entered a society which was caught up in the eschatological confusion we have already examined, and brought with him the concept of the Kingdom of God as an example of his divine authority and as a sign that his coming was to have a major impact on those who believed in him.

Consistent Eschatology relies on the centrality of the Kingdom of God

as an idea associated with God's eschatological intentions. Some scholars²

1. A. Schweitzer. The Mystery of the Kingdom of God (1925).

2. M. Werner. The Formation of Christian Dogma. (1957) has argued that Schweitzer is basically correct, but questions his methodology on two accounts: first, that some events do not fit where they are placed by the Evangelists (Eg. the Transfiguration is placed before Caesarea Philippi) and also, that Schweitzer fails to explain the complexity of ideas prevalent during Jesus' ministry and draws on eschatological and apocalyptic imagery rather too easily.

have questioned Schweitzer's methodology but his insistence that Jesus saw the imminence of the coming of the Kingdom of God as an essential part of his ministry is widely accepted.

The most serious alternative to Consistent Eschatology is that of Realised Eschatology, expounded mainly by C.H.Dodd in his work on the parables ¹. Dodd's concern is particularly with the parables of Jesus in which he puts forward a suggestion that the Kingdom of God has already come and is present now on earth (Eg. Mark 1:14-15; Mt.13:16-17; Luke 7:18-30). In emphasising that the eschatological expectation of the period was fulfilled in the person of Jesus, Dodd suggests the following framework for our understanding of Jesus' ministry:

- 1) Jesus always expected his own death (Luke 9:51-62; Mt.8:34).
- 2) There was an impending disaster ahead for the Jews (John 2:19; Luke 13:1-5).
- 3) The inevitability of Jesus' suffering and death. His resurrection (and Parousia?) Eg. Mark 8:31, ch.13).

The debate as to whether the eschatological expectation, prevalent in Jesus' day, was realised fully in his Incarnation, or whether, as Schweitzer suggested, Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom was the beginning of a new era of expectation, remains a key question in New Testament eschatology. In whatever way, however, we interpret the New Testament, (and there are references and teachings to support both the consistent and the realised theories) it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that it was in this era that the idea and expectation of a Parousia first arose, in the sense that Christians naturally expected Jesus to return in glory and majesty, this time forever. T.F.Glasson ² rightly suggests that, in the Early Church, eschatology was given a new significance and that, following the ascension, Jesus' role in future events became singularly

1. C.H.Dodd. Parables of the Kingdom (1935).

2. T.F.Glasson. The Second Advent. (1947 rev.)

important. The post-resurrection and post-ascension periods heralded a belief in the return of the crucified Messiah, who had become Incarnate as man, but who would return, at his Parousia, complete in the glory of God. No such expectation is obvious either in the Old Testament nor in the intertestamental period. Moore presents the views of J.A.T. Robinson on this particular point ¹; Robinson is convinced that the idea of a Parousia was almost totally absent in traditional Jewish expectation and that it became an expected event exclusively amongst those who had recognised Jesus as Messiah. Confusion amongst Jewish-Christians was only to be expected. The Messiah was not conceived of as a crucified man, convicted on the grounds of stirring up the crowds! His return in glory, a second time, was a unique idea. This is well illustrated in the opening chapters of the Acts where, in Chapter 2 the subject is the fact that Christ has already come whilst Acts 3 deals with the hope that Jesus will come again in the future.

We return now to the place of the Transfiguration in all of this. The account of the glorification of Jesus was recounted in a society which needed fervent reminders of Jesus' divine authority. As we can glean from several of the New Testament Epistles, (Eg. Colossians, Galatians etc.) the failure of God to come and redeem his people in one mighty and universal act meant that criticism and questioning of Jesus, and his promises, became a major preoccupation of many of the Early Christians. It was obvious that many grew sceptical and some even began to doubt Jesus' 'imminent' return. That the Early Church expected the Parousia to take place very soon can hardly be doubted (Eg. 1.Thess.4:15ff, Rom. 13:12; Phil.3:20) even if the delay of the Parousia is not given great emphasis in the Epistles. This can be explained simply by the need of the Early Church to sort out its immediate problems and to establish

1. J.A.T. Robinson. In the End.....God (1950).
 Moore. op.cit. p.51f

itself truly as the $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha \tau\omicron\upsilon \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$. 2 Peter is, however, one Epistle which is almost totally concerned with the delay of the Parousia and, as we have already stressed, it uses the Transfiguration in this very context. The relationship between the expected Parousia and Transfiguration reveals something to us of the theological significance of the Transfiguration both in the Early Church and in the Synoptic Gospels.

At the time of the writing of 2 Peter it would seem likely then that the Christian Church was confused about the delay of the Parousia. Some questioned the role of Christ in the events leading up to the final judgment, while others suggested that the interpretation given by the apostles was incorrect. As we have already essayed to establish ¹, it seems likely that whilst the fictive occasion for the writing of 2 Peter would seem to have been the imminent death of the apostle Peter, the real occasion would seem to be as "an apology for the community's eschatological traditions"² which had possibly suggested an imminent return of Jesus, in glory.

The use then, of the Transfiguration story in 2 Peter 1:16-18 is almost certainly in the context of an apology for the delay of the Parousia. It seems that we must accept that in the period of the Early Church the Transfiguration was inextricably linked to the expectation of the Parousia. 2 Peter is only one example. We have already underlined the context of the Transfiguration reference in the Apocalypse of Peter, where the narrative is placed in such a way as to link it directly with the expectation of Christ's Second Coming. Furthermore, it would seem that the ideas expressed in Mark 9:1 were also prevalent in the Early Church even though such words are not attributed to Jesus directly in the Epistles: Neyrey ³ suggests that this is because the Parousia has not in fact arrived and

1. In Chapter III.

2. Neyrey. art. cit. p.506.

3. Neyrey. art. cit. p.514.

the Transfiguration is only a forecast of what is to take place. To that extent we can conclude that the Evangelists, in using Mark 9:1 (and parallels) somehow saw the Transfiguration as a fulfilment of this verse, but that the Transfiguration itself pointed forward to yet another and even greater event. Clement of Alexandria suggests that Christ was proclaimed dunamis at his Transfiguration because it was necessary that Mark 9:1 be fulfilled and that the tradition lying behind this verse may well have influenced the author of 2 Peter.¹ Whatever the complexities involved in establishing coherent argument concerning the various sources and narratives available to us, we will proceed on the assumption that the Early Church envisaged the Transfiguration of Jesus as an event exclusively associated with some future manifestation of the glory of God. The Transfiguration in the Early Church seems to bear little relevance to the resurrection of Jesus. Neither does it seem to have been interpreted in the light of purely Old Testament imagery and expectations, even though some of the imagery is obviously reminiscent of theophanic episodes from the past.

This, therefore, brings us back to the theory of G.H. Boobyer which was expounded in the first half of this century and which remains important today. Its chief importance lies in its affirmation of the Transfiguration as an important event in the terrestrial life of Christ and in his suggestion that Bultmann was incorrect to suggest that the Transfiguration was a mis-placed resurrection account. Boobyer's alternative argument has commanded great respect amongst scholars right up to the present day.²

1. Clement of Alexandria. Excerpta ex Theodoto 4.2-3. (1934) p.42.
We return to this argument shortly.

2. In a private conversation with Bishop Michael Ramsey in Durham, 1983 the Bishop stated that "I think Boobyer has stood up to the scholars who express an interest in the significance of the Transfiguration of Jesus rather well; his theory places a great emphasis upon glory, both now and then and overall, I think it is the most credible explanation available to us".

As we investigated in Chapter II, Boobyer argues that we must interpret the christology of the Gospels through the eyes of the Early Church and therefore through the Epistles. As we have already outlined, his scheme of revelation would seem to be a plausible, if not entirely encompassing, summary of the understanding of the Early Christians. His suggestion that a more satisfactory explanation of the Transfiguration might lie in an examination of the apostolic understanding of Christ is extremely important in the light of more recent studies, especially of the Second Epistle of Peter. Boobyer's own conclusion is quite straightforward; pointing to the structure of the Gospel of Mark, the context of the Transfiguration within the Gospel, the actual narrative itself and the imagery involved within it, and bearing in mind throughout the apostolic influence and understanding, Boobyer suggests that "the transfiguration prophecies the parousia in the sense that it is the portrayal of what Christ will be at that day, and is in some degree a miniature portrait of the whole second advent scene".¹ The connection between the Transfiguration and the Parousia would seem to be well founded and almost taken for granted by the Early Church. The question, therefore, remains concerning the light this throws on the synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration and, in particular, the theological significance of the Transfiguration of Jesus on the Gospels as a whole.

Before returning to the synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration let us summarise our arguments in this Chapter so far:

- (1) It is very clear that a great amount of confusion was in evidence within the Early Church as to the role of Jesus both in the past and in the future. The Jewish tradition spoke of one Messiah or expected figure who would come into the world to save his people. A coming on two levels (firstly as a man, and then at some unspecified time in the future) was not expected. The Parousia was a relatively new idea.

1. Boobyer. op.cit. p.87.

- (2) The Gospel writers were influenced by the apostolic understanding of the nature of the Transfiguration of Jesus which suggested a direct relationship between Transfiguration and Parousia.

Evidence of this is particularly strong in 2 Peter.

Bearing these important points in mind we must return now to the Transfiguration of the Synoptic Gospels and attempt to highlight several important themes that are consistent with our understanding of the Transfiguration as we have just explained it, as well as seeking to suggest reasons for redaction on the part of the Evangelists.

(a) The Gospel of Mark

We have already devoted much of this thesis to a consideration of the Transfiguration narrative in the Gospel of Mark and this section is simply aimed at summarising some of our earlier arguments. As the first Evangelist to record the Transfiguration, we have seen that the Marcan account is a combination both of the various motifs of the 2 Peter narrative along with certain ideas and additions which would seem to be the Evangelist's own. The question of historicity need not detain us, since whether the event actually happened as it is recorded, or whether the event was a vision of the disciples ¹ given to them by God, is relatively unimportant for our purposes. What is clear is that Mark sees the need to place the Transfiguration of Jesus firmly into the life of Jesus as he portrays it. Throughout our exegesis, we have attempted to underline those elements within the narrative that are obviously a part of the original tradition (Peter) and those which he has added for his own historical or theological purposes:

Of greatest importance in the Gospel of Mark would seem to be the Evangelist's redactional activity in portraying both the Baptism of Christ and the Transfiguration of Christ as events of similar significance and importance. Throughout both stories there is a suggestion of the theme of Jesus as the chosen one, the Messiah, the one appointed by God.

1. C. Rowland. op.cit. p.366.

Jesus is affirmed Son of God in both episodes and the implications of this lie beyond this christological title. We must agree with Cullmann¹ who states that the synoptics use the titles Son of God and Messiah separately but it is also important to see how the vindication of Jesus as Son of God in both Mark 1:9f and Mark 9:2f enhances our understanding as to the significance of Jesus' coming. Cullmann agrees here,² stating that in all three synoptic passages where Jesus is referred to as the Son of God the following two aspects of his Sonship are always apparent: "first, the obedience of the Son in fulfilment of the divine plan; second, the profound secret that Jesus had been aware of since his Baptism and constantly experiences in executing his obedience, the secret that he is related to God as no other man is".

In his use of the Transfiguration source, which we would maintain was very similar to that preserved wholly in 2 Peter 1:16-18, Mark has been keen to stress the nature of Jesus as the Son of God. There is a close relationship between Sonship and Servanthood and the suggestion that the 'Servant of the Lord' title lies behind Mark's portrayal of Jesus must be seriously considered.³ Whatever background we may wish to apply to the two events in Jesus' life where he is emphatically designated Son of God, it would seem clear that the Baptism and Transfiguration narratives have been woven together by the redactional activity of the Evangelists. The Baptism "provides the introduction to an understanding of the whole life of Jesus - and of all Christology. Who is Jesus?"⁴ and his unique role in the history of salvation is revealed. Cullmann then adds: "It is certainly no accident that the words from heaven at

1. Cullmann. op.cit. p.278f.

2. Cullmann. op.cit. p.283.

3. Cf. Is42:1 and earlier in this Chapter.

4. Cullmann. op.cit. p.284.

the transfiguration partially repeat those of the heavenly voice at the baptism". In both pericopes Jesus is designated Son of God and we are meant to see the parallelism.

There is, however, an important progression in our understanding of Jesus which has taken place in the Gospel of Mark between Jesus being designated Son of God in Mark 1:11 and the Transfiguration scene. Using the same imagery and similar wording, T.A.Burkill suggests ¹ that the Transfiguration emphasises temporarily the glory that will be the Son of God's completely in the future because of his role as Messiah: "Thus the Transfiguration story may be said to offer a dramatic demonstration of the glory of Jesus' Messianic status". J.B.Bernadin went further than this in 1933 when he stated that ² "The Baptism is the beginning of His Messianic activity, rather than of His Messiahship, and to St.Mark represents the first of the divine acknowledgements of this fact". Bernadin then went on to show how the Transfiguration is to be understood as a transitory manifestation of the pre-existent glory of the Messiah which is concealed for the majority of Jesus' time on earth.

Mark then has not lost sight of the context of the Transfiguration as it was understood within the Early Church. His aim would seem to have been to fit the Transfiguration tradition into the earthly life of Christ in which he establishes him as both Son of God and vindicated by God, without losing sight of his identity of Messiah. In his use of the Baptism and Transfiguration narratives Mark establishes Jesus' uniqueness with God. He also emphasises a much more important role for Jesus as Messiah both in his placing of the Transfiguration shortly after the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi and also by setting Mark 9:1 immediately before the Transfiguration narrative.

1. T.A.Burkill. op.cit. p.158.

2. Bernadin. art.cit. p.185.

Cf. also A.A.Trites "The Transfiguration of Jesus" Ev.Q 51 (1979) p.67-79.

The connection between Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration has been a source of great debate amongst commentators. Burkill's suggestion ¹ that the Transfiguration "provides a dramatic demonstration of the glorious nature which properly belongs to Jesus as Messiah, the Son of God" suggests that this "affixes the seal of divine confirmation to Peter's recognition of the Messianic secret in 8:29 and to the Master's interpretation in 8:31". Carlston affirms that the Transfiguration is ² "clearly a confirmation of Peter's confession and Jesus' prediction of his own suffering and death", whilst Bernadin ³ agrees that the event is "a divinely miraculous testimonial not only to the fact of Jesus' Messiahship but also to the truth of his startling statement that the Messiah must suffer and die". Clearly, Mark intended us to see Jesus as the Son of God but also, the connection between Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration suggests that it is Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, who is also implied. Peter's role in the Transfiguration (Mark 9:5) reflects his earlier confession of Jesus as Messiah (Mark 8:29); the reference to "after six days" is frequently seen as connecting the two narratives; Mark 9:9 and Mark 8:30 both preserve the essentiality of the secrecy concerning Jesus' true identity and also suggest a relationship between the two narratives, despite the fact that the secrecy element runs throughout the whole Gospel. The connection between Caesarea and the Transfiguration, therefore, emphasises the Messiaship of Jesus in a direct and powerful way, based mainly on Peter's direct and unequivocal confirmation as to Jesus' true identity.

It is obvious from the narratives in the Gospels which report the events at Caesarea Philippi that Jesus accepted Peter's designation of

1. Burkill. op.cit. p.163.

2. Carlston. art.cit. p.233.

3. Bernadin. art.cit. p.118.

himself as the Messiah. Peter's confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi identifies Jesus directly with the figure expected by the Jews¹ and uses the occasion to identify the transfigured Jesus with the glorious figure expected by the Early Church at the Parousia. That Mark used the Transfiguration in its proper context here is very obvious; the Evangelist "obviously feels that the situation calls for some convincing demonstration of the reality of the Messiahship"². Hooker believes that the Transfiguration points beyond the suffering predicted by Jesus (Mark 8:31) and, by the Jewish thought appropriate to the Suffering Servant (Is.53) to a glory that was expected at the End Time; "they see him for a moment in the glory which he will wear when he passes through suffering"³. To this extent, we must regard Caesarea Philippi as extremely important in that Jesus is expressly revealed as the person identified by Peter only days before, and E.J.Martin suggests⁴ that the Transfiguration is actually "the symbolic vision" of the events at Caesarea. That Jesus is to be regarded as the Messiah in the Transfiguration (as he is identified by Peter in Mark 8:29) would seem to be very much implied by the Evangelist. As the Son of God, Jesus is also the expected Messiah whose eschatological role was both accepted and anticipated within Judaism. Mark does not ignore the present relevance of the Transfiguration event (Jesus as the Son of God, as at his Baptism); neither does he prevent us from arriving at a conclusion which would enable us to see the Transfiguration in the same way that it was obviously regarded in the Early Church - that Jesus was the Messiah who was expected to return in glory.

1. Ps.89:3f; Ps. of Sol. 17:21f.

2. Burkill. op.cit. p.156.

3. Hooker. op.cit. p.125.

4. E.J.Martin. "The Transfiguration". ExT. 38 (1926-27) p.189.

This is further emphasised by the placing of Mark 9:1 directly before the Transfiguration story. A summary concerning the arguments put forward by scholars as to Mark's intention in his use of this verse is contained in the previous Chapter ¹. Mark obviously intended us to see this verse in its natural context; the coming of the Kingdom of God was also to be a part of the eschatological events of the End Time. The parallels between this verse and 2 Peter 1:16 are also obvious:

MARK 9:1

καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς, Ἀρμή λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰσὶν τινες ὧς τῶν ἐστηκότων οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου ἕως ἂν ἴδωσιν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει.

2 PETER 1:16

οὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις ρύθοις ἑξακολουθήσαντες ἐξηνείσαμεν ὑμῖν τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν ἄλλ' ἐπὶ ὀπταί γενηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος.

Whilst the author of 2 Peter uses the direct Greek word Parousia, the Evangelist talks about the Kingdom ἐληλυθυῖαν in power. The most striking parallel, however, is the use of the word dunamis in both the apostolic account of the Transfiguration and here in Mark 9:1. The word is best translated as 'power' and is usually designated as belonging totally to God (Mt. 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 18:27; Mark 14:35). Most frequently, in the ministry of Jesus, the power of God is manifested through the miracles of Jesus (Mark 5:30 is a good example), and the miracles are usually regarded as further evidence of Jesus' messianic status. The sign of the power of God with Jesus is also a sign of his Messiahship. It is here that the notion of the Kingdom coming "in power" seems to have been introduced. When the power of God is manifested in

1. See Chapter IV. Context of the Narrative in Mark.

Christ totally, once for all, Christ will return in glory (Cf. Mt. 24:32; Mark 13:28; Luke 21:29). It is to this final manifestation of the power of God that Mark 9:1 seems to refer, with the Kingdom as the bearer of the power which establishes Christ as Messiah. In 2 Peter the dunamis is equated directly with the Parousia and such a notion obviously current amongst those in the Early Church cannot have been unnoticed by the Evangelist Mark in the writing of his Gospel.

In the case of the Gospel of Mark, therefore, the Evangelist can clearly be seen to be moulding his material to fit both into a present christological context (Jesus, Son of God preaching the Kingdom) as well as a future expectation which had sprung up in the Early Church, and which is also represented in 2 Peter (Jesus, the Messiah, who would return). Mark was probably presented with an account of the Transfiguration from the apostle Peter which was very similar to that now recorded in 2 Peter. The reasons for the introduction of additional details (Eg. Moses and Elijah, the tabernacles, the cloud) have been investigated in the previous Chapter and should not detain us here, since they are of secondary importance to the overall, theological interest of Mark. In his formation of a relationship between the Baptism, the Transfiguration, the events at Caesarea Philippi and Mark 9:1, as well as the use of the various motifs already analysed within his narrative in the previous Chapter, there seems little doubt that Mark shared the conviction of the Early Church that the Transfiguration was an attempt to portray Jesus as the Messiah and as he could be expected to return at some time in the future.

(b) The Gospel of Luke

Bishop Ramsey believes ¹ that the most reliable historical account of the Transfiguration of Jesus is preserved in Mark, and that in the Gospel of Luke we are presented with a theological assessment of

1. Ramsey. op.cit. p.123.

the Transfiguration in Luke's relating of the event "to the inner life of Jesus". In the Lucan account, much obviously rests on our interpretation of the Greek word exodus which we examined briefly in our Introduction ¹, but most important of all is Luke's emphasis on the word doxa, and the overall emphasis in his narrative that the Son of Man will be glorified. Feuillet points to similarities between the context and use of doxa in Luke 9:32 with the passage in John 12:27-28:

"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father save them from this hour? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify thy name." Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it and I will glorify it again'."

Feuillet suggests that this is the nearest the Johannine corpus of literature comes to including a Transfiguration narrative.² In both Luke 9:28f and John 12:27f, the reference to glory and to divine vindication is obvious, with the emphasis on Jesus' glory being equated with his imminent suffering in Jerusalem. Luke seems keen both to stress the context in which Jesus manifested himself in glory during his terrestrial ministry (suffering, death and resurrection), whilst at the same time suggesting a vindication of Jesus that was already present in the post-resurrection community in which he was writing (ascension, spirit, future glory).

We must presume that Luke knew of the Marcan account as well as the source that had been used by Mark. If we are correct in our suggestion that Mark used a very similar if not identical source to that preserved in 2 Peter, we can surmise that Luke was more careful in his use of words to describe Jesus' appearance than was Mark. In our Introduction we have suggested that Luke did not use the verb μεταμορφῶω because of the

1. See Chapter I (Introduction)

2. A. Feuillet. "Les Perspectives"... art. cit. p. 290.

possible pagan overtones known to have been associated with it; it is, however, just as likely that Luke used the word doxa, as does the source quoted in 2 Peter 1:17, because it was a more accurate description of that which was manifested to the disciples on the mountain.¹ The context of the Lucan narrative is much the same as that in the Gospel of Mark; 9:18-26 contains the confession of faith, though Caesarea Philippi as a venue is not actually named; 9:27 is the equivalent of Mark 9:1; there is, however, no questioning of Jesus about the coming of Elijah directly after the Transfiguration.

It is in his emphasis on the revelation of the divine glory in Christ that Luke differs most from Mark. The theological relevance of the glory manifested in the transfigured Christ is what concerns us here. Certainly, in Old Testament expectation, a full manifestation of the glory (kabod) of God was expected to restore salvation to Israel. (Eg. Ps.96:3-9; Zech. 2:5-11) and it would seem that an association between doxa and eschatological events had become a major feature of the intertestamental period (Eg. in Qumran I.Q.H. 17:15f; CD 3.20) and later in the Early Christian Church. In the Fourth Gospel, doxa always has a futuristic meaning which is either obvious or implied (Eg. John 1:14, 2:11, 7:18, 11:4, 11:40, 12:28, 17:4); in the Gospel of John "It marks a vital stage in the revelation of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God".² By the time of the Early Church it was obvious that a debate was under way concerning the significance of the glory of Christ who had now been raised from the dead. Paul actually uses the verb 'transfigured' in the following statement:

"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the spirit". (2.Cor.3:18).

1. See Chapter I. p. 7.

2. A.A.Trites. "The Transfiguration of Jesus". Ev 51 (1979). p.67-79 (p.78).

suggests that during the period of Jesus' earthly ministry, his messianic glory was temporarily concealed: "When the Messiah comes to earth to prepare for the coming of God's Kingdom, His glory was concealed for the time being beneath the human flesh which he assumed". It is at the moment of his Transfiguration that Jesus reveals the glory which was expected in the last days of the Messiah:¹ "The changed appearance of Jesus has clear affinity to the apocalyptic ideas of the glory of the Messiah and the saints in heaven and to Jesus' own predictions of the coming of the Son of Man in His glory". It is the glory of the Messiah, expected by the community into which Jesus was born, which Jesus manifests on the mountain of the Transfiguration in order to confirm Peter's recognition of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. F.J.Badcock has commented that the disciples "see him (Jesus) totally engrossed with the future"².

In the case of Luke we have little difficulty in establishing a Sitz im Leben for the Transfiguration story which enables us to connect the Transfiguration directly with the Parousia. The context of the story is very similar to that of Mark. The Transfiguration would seem to act as a confirmation of Peter's confession of faith as to Jesus' identity as well as being described as having taken place shortly after Jesus' pronouncement that some will not taste death before they see the Kingdom of God come in power. This would suggest that Luke treated the story as it had been regarded by the Early Church - as a vision illustrating something of the Messiah in his Parousia glory. To this extent, Luke lays great emphasis on the doxa that was revealed and on the exodus which combines notions of suffering and death with themes of future resurrection and glory. The theme of doxa which runs throughout the Gospel of Luke suggests not only that it is always present with the earthly Jesus as the Son of God, but that it will be more perfectly

1. Ramsey, op.cit. p.109.

2. F.J.Badcock, "The Transfiguration". JTS 22 (1921) p.325.

The glory is established by Christ but is to become something in which the community might share as it is suggested in Rom. 6:4:

"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in the newness of life".

Glory in the context of the Epistles was a characteristic facet of Christ which related him directly to God, which was seen on earth, which will be in the world forever, (Eg. Rom.11:36; Gal.1:5) and in which Christians can also hope to share. It has an eschatological flavour throughout the New Testament.

Luke would seem to have used the word doxa throughout his Gospel with such an understanding in mind and his usage would certainly seem to be coherent with views expressed both in 2 Peter 1 and elsewhere in the New Testament. The concept of glory is very important to Luke's theology as a whole and some examples in the early chapters of his Gospel include:

"And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were filled with fear". 2:9

"Glory to God in the Highest". 2:14

"a light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel". 2:32

Such references appear frequently in Luke, where there is a continuous emphasis on the presence of the glory of God in Christ. Bearing this in mind, we must now consider whether the glory in the Transfiguration narrative helps us to see the significance of Jesus' ministry not only in its present situation but also in the light of the Parousia expectations of the Early Church.

The glory is once more connected with Messiahship in Luke, as we suggested it was to a more limited extent in Mark. J.B. Bernadin ¹

1. Bernadin. art.cit. p.184.

revealed when he is recognised, once for all, as the Messiah in glory. In many ways, the redactional interests of Luke would seem to be more intent on emphasising the understanding of the Transfiguration in the Early Church, and its connection with the Parousia, than those of Mark. In its theological emphasis, the Lucan account is most like that of 2 Peter in its emphasis upon the doxa, and its significance for those who received the divine revelation. Luke would seem to have intentionally fashioned the Marcan story back to the theological emphasis of his source; a close connection between the glory of Jesus now at his Transfiguration and the glory that will be revealed at the Parousia.

(c) The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew's account is more like the Marcan story than that described by Luke and much of what we have already stated concerning Mark's portrait of Jesus' glorification can be applied here. The context of the story is much the same as that of Mark:

- 16.13 f. Caesarea Philippi
- Peter's confession of faith
- 21 f. Prophecy of his sufferings in Jerusalem
- 24 f. Path of true discipleship
- 17. 1 f. The Transfiguration of Jesus
- 9 f. Questions concerning the coming of Elijah.

Matthew would seem to have redacted very little of Mark's material in the actual account of the Transfiguration. There are, however, some additional descriptions of Jesus' transfigured state which are of interest. Matthew suggests that Jesus' face shone ὥς ὁ ἥλιος and this image is not rare in the New Testament for the description of some glorious appearance. (Eg. Rev. 1:16, 10:1, 19:17; Acts 26:13). In nearly all cases, the sun represents the glory and splendour of God and the revelation of God to his people, as well as an eschatological role which evolved through the influence of Old Testament imagery.¹ Matthew also

1. Cf. Joel 2:10, 3:15; Job 9:7; Is. 30:26.

adds that Jesus' garments became as white $\omega\varsigma \tau\omicron \phi\omega\varsigma$, and this direct reference to a light also reinforces the eschatological imagery within the narrative. This word has a detailed history in both the Old Testament and Greek world which cannot detain us here. Certainly the continuous contrast underlined in the Fourth Gospel between darkness and light (Eg. 8:12, 9:5, 12:46) is based very much on a Greek understanding of light (Cf. Philo. Spec. Leg. 1.288). That the imagery of light had an eschatological understanding within the Early Church can hardly be doubted (Eg. 2 Cor. 6:14) and there is an interesting reference to those who believe as children of the light in Eph. 5:8. Matthew adopted this word probably to underline the eschatological connections between the transfigured appearance of Jesus and the future glory that would be revealed. It is also possible that he was influenced by 2 Peter 1:19:

2 PETER 1:19

καὶ ἔχορεν βεβαιοτέρον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον, ᾧ
καλῶς ποιεῖτε προσέχοντες ὡς λύχνῳ φαίνοντι ἐν
δύχημῳ τότῳ, ἕως οὗ ἡμέρα διαυγασμὶ καὶ φωσφόρος
ἐντεῖλῃ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν.

phosphorus is usually translated "morning star" where phos is obviously a derivative of the Greek word light. In Classical Greek the term usually meant Venus, the morning star which precedes the dawn. In the later period of the Rabbinic writings, a star was clearly an eschatological symbol probably because of the influence of passages such as Num. 24:17 (There shall come a star out of Jacob). In various passages (Eg. Test. Lev. 18:3, Test. Jud. 24:1-5; 1 QM 11:6f) the expectation and symbolism of the star in Jewish eschatological writings was apparent. The coming of Christ is to be a time of great light and 2 Peter 1:19 "gives a pictorial description of the way in which, at His coming, Christ will dissipate the doubt and uncertainty by which their hearts are meanwhile beclouded and will fill them with a marvellous illumination".¹

1. Kelly. op.cit. p.323.

The addition of the adjective bright (φωτεινῇ) to describe the appearance of the cloud further suggests that Matthew was well acquainted with imagery concerning the Parousia.

Scholars remain divided as to the purpose of the Transfiguration within the Gospel of Matthew. Nevertheless, it seems undeniable that Matthew's basic understanding of the event he narrates is very similar to that of Luke and Mark: "The meaning of the story for the evangelists lies in the revelation of the glory of Jesus Messiah. Matthew has made a number of changes to embroider Mark's account....".¹ but these changes do not detract from the centrality of the revelation of the glory of God in Jesus. Dr. Hill has highlighted a progression which may have taken place in the thought of the Early Church concerning the divine function of Jesus which helps us to understand how their concept of Jesus had evolved. He points to three epochs which are essential to our understanding of who Jesus is. First, the historical ministry of Jesus reported in all three Gospels where Jesus appears "in lowliness and humiliation as the obedient servant of God, acting with God's full authority, ministering in humility, and interpreting the Law according to the will of God"². Here, it would seem that the Transfiguration was already associated with Peter's recognition of Jesus as Messiah and his future role in that capacity. The second epoch concerns the post-Easter period in which the Church (of which Jesus is the exalted Lord) "lives as a community organised under the new righteousness" in which it prepares itself for the substance of the third period. It was at this stage that the 2 Peter account would have been recorded which suggests that a Parousia-Transfiguration connection was reinforced in this period. The final epoch

1. Hill. op.cit. p.267.

2. Hill. op.cit. p.65 (and other quotes from this page)

is designated by Hill as that of the "End Time" when "by judgement, the Kingdom will be established". Because of Matthew's Jewish background it is interesting that final judgement is not to be passed on the Jewish people, but on those who have become a part of the body of Christ:¹

"In presenting Jesus as the Lord of the Church - which is in the world to stay for some time and must therefore settle to organise its life - Matthew is struggling towards a conception of Jesus as the inaugurator of a new (and continuing) phase of redemptive history. To the period of promise and fulfilment (i.e. the Old Testament prophecy and the actual ministry of Jesus), and before the end-time, there is added the period of the Church's life and mission, over which Christ is Lord". The Transfiguration was therefore written down in a period of tension between epochs two and three. The Church was affirming Jesus as Lord and expected the vindication of their faith in the shape of Jesus' imminent return. His delay in coming meant that some became concerned and even began to question the relevance of the existence of the Church by the time of the writing of 2 Peter. The author is obviously defending those who failed to see the importance of the work of the Church in the period before Christ comes again.

In the previous Chapter, our brief exegesis of the Marcan account of the Transfiguration suggested that both the context of the narrative and the story itself were generally best explained in the light of the expectations of the Early Christians concerning the Parousia. The connection between the various strands of eschatological imagery and the motifs of the Transfiguration narrative would seem to be almost undeniable. Even without the reference to the Transfiguration in 2 Peter 1:16-18, it would be sensible to suggest a connection between the expectations of the Early Church concerning the Parousia and the Transfiguration

1. Hill. op.cit. p.66.

of Jesus. It is, however, the importance of the three verses in 2 Peter which confirm many of the strands of our argument that we have suggested so far. Each of the Evangelists would seemingly have been aware of one, central argument: that the Transfiguration was a historical event in the earthly life of Jesus and that it pointed forward in some way to the Parousia of Christ, which the Early Church expected soon after the ascension of Jesus. In Mark, the narrative is placed after Caesarea Philippi and Mark 9:1; the question of the coming of Elijah is introduced immediately afterwards. In Luke, an even greater emphasis is placed upon the doxa of Christ, whilst in Matthew Jesus' Messiahship and the interpretation of this role within the Early Church, would seem to be an important part of the Evangelist's way of thinking. In all three accounts, regardless of peripheral details in each of the accounts, the redactional intention of the three Evangelists would seem to be that of a connection between the Transfiguration and the Parousia in their descriptions of Jesus in glory on the mountain. Each has redacted and built upon a Petrine source, similar to that used in 2 Peter 1:16-18, to produce three different accounts of Jesus' Transfiguration; at the root of them all, however, is the fact of Jesus' future glorification to which the Church now looks as it affirms Christ as Lord.

In Chapter IV, we concluded that the Transfiguration narrative, and the context of the story in the Gospel of Mark as a whole, were best explained in light of the expectations aroused within the Early Church concerning the Parousia of Jesus. The connection between the theological motifs of the Transfiguration (Eg. glory, cloud, voice etc.) and various strands of eschatological imagery evident in the period just before and immediately after the Incarnation, leads us to conclude that the Transfiguration, in the mind of the Early Church, was directly associated with some form of eschatological expectation. The evidence of 2 Peter 1:16-18, coming as it does in the context of an apologia for the delay

in Christ's Parousia, leads us to suggest that the Transfiguration was interpreted as revealing something to the disciples present of the glory of God as it will be revealed more completely and finally at some time in the future. As we have seen, the context of the narrative in each of the Synoptic Gospels, as well as the detail used in each individual account of the Transfiguration, emphasises the connection between Transfiguration and Parousia.

The emphasis in all three synoptic accounts is, therefore, a combination of a present emphasis on Jesus, Son of God, along with a future emphasis on the divine glory as it will be revealed when the Kingdom of God comes finally in power. The narrative thus has a dual role within the Gospels. On the one hand, it suggests to us something of the person of Christ and of the intention of God in the ministry, teaching and miracles of Jesus. In the Transfiguration, Jesus is revealed as Son of God with an earthly and relevant message (τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) which he is obliged to proclaim. On the other hand, however, the Transfiguration has a significance at a much higher theological level - as a prefiguration of Jesus' heavenly state when he returns at his Parousia.

It is now important that we begin to draw together the various theories and ideas we have promulgated throughout this thesis, having established that, in our view, there is a definite connection between the Transfiguration and Parousia in the Early Church. The Parousia was a reworking of various, and often confused, eschatological expectations which were to be found amongst the early Christians. Jesus' Passion meant that they must look for another and yet more splendid coming than that which Jesus experienced from Bethlehem to the Cross. The Transfiguration of Jesus, in the Early Church, was almost certainly referred to as an event in the terrestrial life of Jesus, which pointed forward, in some dynamic and wonderful way, to the Parousia glory which Jesus

had yet to reveal, at a time as yet unknown to the Christian community that awaited his return. We now turn to a summary of our conclusions reached in the various Chapters of this work and a general statement as to, what is in our opinion, the theological significance of the Transfiguration within the New Testament.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A brief summary of our debate so far is now called for. In Chapter I we introduced the synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration by underlining the major differences in detail and emphasis between the three accounts. We suggested that this was basically due to the redactional interests of each of the Evangelists (Mark = discipleship; Luke = glory; Matthew = New Moses). We also introduced the reference to the Transfiguration in 2 Peter 1:16-18 and emphasised the relative lack of interest shown in this account by commentators on the Transfiguration. Bearing in mind these four references to the Transfiguration within the New Testament, we then proceeded to outline the four main interpretations given to the Transfiguration so far this century (Bultmann = mis-placed resurrection account; Boobyer = prefiguration of the Parousia; Riesenfeld = Old Testament Enthronement Festival; Rowland = a visionary experience of the disciples). In order to pursue our own inquiry into the theological significance of the Transfiguration, it was decided that we should assume Marcan priority and examine the Marcan account in some detail.

Chapter II was therefore concerned with the question of the sources used by Mark, and the various influences upon the Evangelist in the Sitz im Leben in which he found himself. The nature of any apostolic influence (mainly in the form of the apostle Peter) was examined, especially in view of Boobyer's claim that Mark was influenced by the apostolic scheme of revelation. Our consideration of Boobyer's arguments led us to conclude that we must interpret the Gospels with regard to the thought and experience of the Early Church, which is most clearly represented in the Epistles. Boobyer's suggestion that we should interpret the Gospels via the Epistles, rather than vice-versa, was accepted as plausible and this brought the Transfiguration reference in 2 Peter 1:16-18 into a new perspective. The

context of the 2 Peter reference to the Transfiguration is obviously that of an apology for the delay in the Parousia. This was then explored further in Chapter III.

An examination of the reference to the Transfiguration in 2 Peter demanded a brief consideration of the problems surrounding 2 Peter as a document within the New Testament Canon. We decided that, although a late document, which obviously meant that it was the work of someone other than the apostle, the Epistle did contain elements of tradition which were authentically derived from the teaching of the apostle Peter. The author, in a real attempt to appear to his readers to be the apostle Peter, uses references such as the Transfiguration to suggest his authenticity, and to convince his readers of his Apostolic Testimony and authority. Two conclusions followed as a direct result of our exegesis of 2 Peter 1:16-18. First, it is likely that the pseudonymous author of 2 Peter used the authentic, primitive, Petrine account of the events on the Transfiguration mountain to convince his readers that he was, in fact, Peter. In other words he told the story Peter told to the community of the Early Church. And, secondly, his use of the Transfiguration narrative in the context of an apology for the delay of the Parousia, seems to be perfectly plausible and realistic. In the context of the Early Church, the Transfiguration would seem to be best interpreted as in some way explaining the theological significance and the expectations surrounding the event of the Parousia which was obviously seen to be imminent within the community of the Early Church. This was further emphasised in a brief consideration of the Apocalypse of Peter where the Transfiguration was also directly associated with expectations in the Early Church concerning the Parousia. If 2 Peter therefore provides us with the Apostolic Testimony of Peter concerning the Transfiguration of Jesus, and if we are correct to approach the Synoptic Gospels via an understanding of the Epistles, it

is plausible to suggest that the synoptic writers received a similar, if not identical, account of Jesus' Transfiguration to that which is recorded in 2 Peter 1:16-18. Bearing in mind the connection between the Transfiguration and the Parousia in the community addressed by the author of 2 Peter, as well as the context of the Transfiguration in the Apocalypse of Peter, we were obliged to reconsider the synoptic accounts afresh, in view of the understanding of the Early Church.

The substance of Chapter IV was, therefore, a re-examination of the Marcan account. The context of the narrative in Mark proved interesting, and we concluded that the proximity of the Transfiguration to the events at Caesarea Philippi, Mark 9:1, and Mark 9:9-11 suggested that Mark may well have presumed that his readers would make a conscious and obvious association between the Transfiguration and the coming of the Kingdom in power. It is clear that Mark's mind was on events spanning much further into the future than Gethsemane, Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. An examination of the narrative itself illustrated the point that Mark contains all of the elements of the 2 Peter Transfiguration account, with an obvious element of redactional material and detail added to emphasise particular aspects of Jesus' ministry alluded to elsewhere. The details common to both the 2 Peter and Marcan accounts, we must presume, are from the apostle Peter. The additional details (Eg. descriptions of glory, tabernacles etc.) can be explained as redactional activity on the part of Mark. This is particularly apparent in the parallelism between, for example, the Baptism and Transfiguration accounts. A re-examination of the Marcan account readily underlined the common detail and framework, provided for the Evangelist's use by the apostle Peter, and many of these details could easily be interpreted as eschatological symbols (Eg. mountain, voice, glory), associated with the coming of Christ at his Parousia. It also underlined, however, a watering down of the emphasis on the Transfiguration-

Parousia relationship in the Gospel of Mark, because of Mark's obvious desire to fit the Transfiguration story into his Gospel, as a whole.

So what is the connection between the Parousia and the Transfiguration? That is the question we essayed to answer in our previous Chapter and, it must be stressed, the response to this question is neither obvious or clearly definable. The Parousia emerged in the Christian era as an event which was a response to those who denied the status of Jesus as Messiah, Son of God. The expectation of the intertestamental period relied on the prediction that God would send an intermediary (the Servant of God, the Son of Man, the Messiah etc.), who would redeem the people of God, once for all. The Epistle of 2 Peter provides us with an example of a Christian community who had begun to question the authenticity of Jesus' message and status. The Parousia was envisaged as the return of Jesus at sometime in the future when, as the author of 2 Peter suggests, the glory of God as it is revealed in Christ at the Transfiguration, would be manifested finally and completely. The problem was that the Parousia was a relatively new event which originated from Jesus' teachings (Eg. Mark 9:1, Mark Ch.13), and the interpretation of them in the Early Church, but it also grew out of the general confusion, prevalent at the time of Jesus, as to how God would act at the End Time. The Incarnation, ministry, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus failed to answer, in themselves, the eschatological expectations of his day. Rather they pointed forward to a yet more significant event which would take place, when God desired it, and this event became known as the Parousia. To this extent, the author of 2 Peter envisaged the Transfiguration as a prefiguration of the Parousia and as a dramatic demonstration of the glory of God manifested in the person of Jesus Christ.

We began this thesis with the statement that "The Transfiguration is one of the most profound theological mysteries of the New Testament" and

our consideration of the role of the narrative within the New Testament confirms this view. It has confused critics because of the wealth of imagery contained within the narrative, as well as the variations which are characteristic of each of the synoptic accounts. As we have continually stressed throughout our discussion, the Transfiguration of Jesus is not a mis-placed resurrection account, nor is it a fulfilment of purely Old Testament expectations, as suggested by Riesenfeld.¹ It is our view, as a result of our examination of the references to the Transfiguration in 2 Peter, as well as our reconsideration of the synoptic accounts, that the Transfiguration was definitely connected in the Early Church, to the expectations concerning the Parousia.

Our conclusion is therefore relatively simple even if its implications suggest that even more work needs to be done on the understanding of the Parousia in the Early Church. It is quite clear that the Parousia was already being misunderstood and questioned in the Early Church. The Transfiguration narratives, as they are recorded in all three Synoptic Gospels, are written from the same source (oral or written) as that which is recorded in 2 Peter 1:16-18. There is probably no direct relationship between the emergence of the four narratives (2 Peter 1:16-18; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36; Matthew 17:1-8) except that it was an authentic, apostolic witness which was responsible for the source used by them all. It is likely that the original source has been produced most reliably in 2 Peter. Each of the synoptic authors has then used this source and 'theologised' the person of Jesus adding to it their own particular and common details which we have essayed to underline throughout our discussion.

It is beyond reasonable doubt that the original source was grounded in neither an Old Testament fulfilment context, nor in the context of Jesus' resurrection, but that it was understood by the Early Church purely

1. Riesenfeld. op.cit.

in the context of explaining the significance of the glory of Jesus at his Second Coming. Even though, in the Gospels, the Transfiguration seems to have assumed a present emphasis (i.e. its relationship to the Baptism and Caesarea Philippi incidents in particular) within the Gospels, we must conclude that the Transfiguration was primarily understood by the Evangelists as an attempt of God, through Jesus, to demonstrate to the disciples present with Jesus on the holy mountain, what the Parousia was all about and how the glory of Jesus would be manifested to those who confess him as Messiah at his Second Coming. To this extent, the context of the Transfiguration in 2 Peter, where the Transfiguration is produced in its most primitive form, enables us to ascertain the theological significance of the Transfiguration in the Synoptic Gospels.

The Transfiguration is a prophecy of the Parousia of Jesus. It is an attempt by God to demonstrate to those present with Jesus, and to those who confess him as Messiah, that he is indeed the Son of God and Messiah. It looks forward beyond the Cross and beyond the resurrection. It is concerned with a universal event which lies beyond the ascension of Jesus. The Early Church, already impatient for Christ's return, appeal to the Transfiguration as a reminder of Jesus' embodiment of the glory of God which will once more be revealed at the time of his Parousia: "The radiance is a vision of Jesus as he would be when he returns in glory. The comment of St. Basil is true to the meaning: 'Peter and the sons of thunder saw his beauty on the mountain, outshining the brightness of the sun, and they were deemed worthy to receive the anticipation of his glorious parousia with their eyes'. Jesus is seen in glory in spite of the coming suffering and death. One day it would be known that the glory is not in spite of the suffering and death, but in its very midst. But that day had not yet come".¹

1. A.M. Ramsey. Be Still and Know. (1982).

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