The theme is historical research and Christian belief, which requires me first to offer an important disclaimer, which I explained to Drs Baar and Popich when discussing possible topics. I am a historian, not a theologian, and I cannot make any constructive theological proposals (what Christians should believe), but I can analyse how different descriptions of Jesus relate to the theologies of the people who offer them. Or, in other terms, I can describe, but not prescribe. You might think that this inability to prescribe what Xns ought to believe derives from humility, which in turn is based on the knowledge that I am not smart enough to know what someone else should believe. That is partially but not entirely correct. The problem is that I know enough of Xn history to know that beliefs have changed remarkably from time to time, and also that there have always been deep theological disagreements among Xns. Paul's letter to the Galatians, which is my very favorite piece of literature, describes deep divisions between the Christian leaders of the first generation with regard to how much of the Jewish law Gentile Xns had to accept. Origen of Alexandria, possibly the greatest Xn thinker between the author of the gospel of John and St. Augustine of Hippo, was eventually declared a heretic. Serbs and Croatians have been known to disagree profoundly about true Xnty. I would not wish to recommend to either what to think.

So I shall merely describe. The general theme of the lecture is that, for the most part, Christian beliefs determine views of the historical Jesus, rather than the other way around. People with formed theological opinions turn to the study of Jesus and, remarkably, discover that he agreed with them. As one scholar wrote about the efforts of 19'h century scholars to discover the true historical Jesus, they looked into the well of history for Jesus and saw their
own reflections. There are a few notable exceptions to this rule, as those who are patient will discover.

I start with a period of time that usually does not figure in discussions of the historical Jesus, the 18's century, and with someone of whom probably very few people here have heard, one William Paley. But in his day he was a very notable man. His books sold widely in the 18th century and were still being issued several decades after his death. Born in 1743 at Peterborough, near Cambridge, he was educated in Cambridge and for a while taught there. He preferred the pastoral ministry, however, and he spent most of his life serving churches in the country and in small towns. He loved nature, and he turned his knowledge of it to good use. Paley, like most educated people of his day, was a child of the Enlightenment, and thus a follower of such men as John Locke and Isaac Newton. Locke and others believed in the superiority of human reason, and they took human reason as the best guide in all matters, including religion. This was an optimistic, progressive creed, which was generally beneficial; but it was always potentially anti-religious and occasionally it actually was anti-religious. If the supreme guide is human reason, what happens to belief in revelation? Today, we are all children of the Enlightenment to some degree or other. It drew Europe once and for all out of the middle ages and into the modern world — which is in large part its creation. The United States was founded on the basis of the political philosophy of the Enlightenment — as we shall see more fully in a few minutes.

Paley, of course, was not anti-religious. Most of his theology was, however, founded on human reason. He wrote on moral philosophy, political philosophy, Acts and Paul, and especially a great work called Natural Theology. Deducing theology — ideas about God — from the study of nature was not first invented by Enlightenment thinkers, though they developed it to a high art. The idea was much older, going back to the classical periods of Greece and Rome — which were one of the main subjects of study in 18" C. universities. According to Xenophon (c. 435-354), Socrates (469-399 BCE) observed that humans have been provided with eyes, ears, etc., all of which fit their purpose perfectly, and argued that this proves the existence of a wise and beneficent creator. It cannot be the result of chance. A few centuries later, Cicero (106-43 BCE) proposed that it is evident, when one observes the heavens, that they are guided by a
supreme intelligence. And this view was known to Jewish thinkers of the same period. The author of the Wisdom of Solomon, written in Egypt in the 2nd or 1st century BCE, thought that pagans ought to be able to infer the Jewish idea of a creator God from examination of the heavens (e.g. 13.1-5), and Paul wrote approximately the same thing in the first century (Rom. 1.19-20). This argument for the existence of a creator God is called `the argument from design': from the perfection of what exists one infers the existence and the grandeur of a creator who designed it.

Paley's natural theology was in this same vein. He pointed to the perfection and organization of the eye as proving the existence of a powerful and good creator. And he introduced the famous example of the watch: if you find a stone in the field, you will think nothing of it; it could have been there forever. But if you find a watch, you should infer that there is a human agent who placed or dropped it there. And when you examine the watch more closely, you infer the existence of a watchmaker. So it is with nature and God. The creation proves the existence of a creator.

The ancient Jews, such as Paul and the author of the Wisd. Sol., of course, believed in revelation as well as in natural theology, and so did William Paley. He thought that most things can be known by human reason applied to the study of nature, but also that God revealed himself in the person of Jesus, and that the truth of the revelation is proved by Jesus’ miracles. Paley argued against David Hume, who was not inclined to credit the reports of miracles in the gospels. Paley wrote this: If 12 men, whose probity and good sense I had long known, should seriously and circumstantially relate to me an account of a miracle wrought before their eyes ...; if the governor of the country, hearing a rumour of this account, should call these men into his presence and offer them a short proposal, either to confess the imposture, or submit to be tied up to a gibbet; if they should refuse with one voice to acknowledge that there existed any falsehood; if they said the same when questioned separately; if the threat was at last executed; if I myself saw them, one after another, consenting to be racked, burnt, or strangled, rather than give up the truth of their account; still, if Mr Hume's rule be my guide, I am not to believe them. Now I undertake to say that there exists not a sceptic in the world who would not believe them.... This is pretty powerful stuff, but I need to rush on, conveying to you only two of Paley's main
views about Jesus. The first is a topic for which I have not prepared you, but which will not be too surprising. Jesus was a teacher of morals. Paley thought that Jesus was a great moralist, but that his teaching is not beyond what the human mind can deduce if it is properly applied to the study of the world. Revealed morality, in Paley's system, supports natural morality, which is achieved by human wisdom alone (Clarke, p. 61). Second, as we have noted, Jesus was a miracle worker, and especially a healer. In Paley's view, he was the only such; other reported miracles, done by saints etc., Paley dismissed. The evidence for them was never as good as that of the witnesses who died rather than renounce their faith in the healing power of Jesus. So Paley was a natural theologian who made one exception: against all other evidence of his studies of nature, which might seem to rule out miracles, he accepted the miracles of Jesus and thus believed that revelation could supplement reason in an important way. Paley, that is, was not a Deist. It is simplest to think of Deists as an important sub-group of Enlightenment thinkers. They were of the view that nature proves the existence of a creator, but they held that God does not subsequently intervene in the world. The creation is the last supernatural incursion. Thus, Deists would reject miracles.

Now I turn to another great Enlightenment thinker, Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826). Jefferson believed entirely in natural theology, and he dismissed the possibility of miracles, including those attributed to Jesus; that is, Jefferson was a deist. Jefferson was regarded by many people in his own day as anti-religious, and he was publically vilified for this and his other supposed errors. He would not answer the critics of his own religion, or lack of it, in public. He said not a word about religion, except in official documents, such as the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, which he wrote, and which is one of the three things for which he wished to be remembered (the other two were that he was author of the Declaration of Independence and the Father of the University of Virginia). This statute provided for the separation of church and state and removed private religious belief from control by public law. Similar guarantees of religious freedom found their way into the 1st amendment to the Constitution. Jefferson believed in the right of privacy in religion with all his heart, and thus he would not discuss his own religion in public, even to defend himself against those who defamed him.

But, in letters from the last decades of his life, he wrote about it. He invented a dual pen
that automatically made copies of his letters, which he carefully kept. He cannot have been entirely opposed to our knowledge today of what he believed. Moreover, he made a New Testament, which was published after his death. He went through a Bible, carefully cutting out the parts of the four gospels that were in his own opinion true. We know that he had created a first draft of this New Testament by 1813, because he mentioned it in a letter to John Adams in October 1813. Jefferson was not satisfied with this effort, and later he improved upon it. This time he obtained copies of the New Testament in Greek, Latin, French, and English, and he went through all four versions and cut out the parts that were true in order to paste them in the right order, and in four parallel columns, in a book. He accomplished this in 1819 or 1820, when he was about 77. In a letter of 4 August, 1820, he wrote this: We find in the writings of [Jesus’] biographers matter of two distinct descriptions. First, a groundwork of vulgar ignorance, of things impossible, of superstitions, fanaticisms and fabrications. Intermixed with these ... are sublime ideas of the Supreme Being, aphorisms, and precepts of the purist morality and benevolence, sanctioned by a life of humility, innocence, and simplicity of manners, neglect of riches, absence of worldly ambition and honors, with an eloquence and persuasiveness which have not been surpassed. These could not be the intentions of the groveling authors who related them.... Can we be at a loss in separating such materials and ascribing each to its original author? The difference is obvious to the eye and to the understanding.... I will venture to affirm that he who, as I have done, will undertake to winnow this grain from the chaff, will find it not to require a moment's consideration. The parts fall asunder of themselves...

Since, in Jefferson's view, God had created the world, but had not interfered with it since, his NT has no virgin birth, no resurrection, and no miracles. He did, of course, keep Matt. 13.55-56, which has a list of Jesus' brothers and sisters. I take only one other example from this fascinating work. John ch. 9 is based on a miracle story. Jefferson keeps only vv. 1-3: `As he [Jesus] went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'neither this man nor his parents, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in this life.' And, of course, in John 9 Jesus then heals the man. But Jefferson's snippit ends before the healing. In his Table of Contents he indicates that this passage shows that `to be born blind [is] no proof of sin'.
That is an observation worthy of Jefferson's Jesus, who corrected the moral views of his contemporaries.

Jefferson's Enlightenment philosophy entirely controlled his view of theology and of Jesus. He praised Jesus' moral teaching in numerous letters, but he did not do so uncritically. On the contrary, in one letter (to Benjamin Rush, April 1803), he wrote that Jesus' teaching had been `disfigured by the corruptions of ...followers.... Notwithstanding [this and other] disadvantages, a system of morals is presented to us, which, if filled up in the style and spirit of the rich fragments he left us, would be the most perfect and sublime that has ever been taught by man'. In the same letter he noted that, when Jesus died, at about the age of 33, his reason had `not yet attained the maximum, of its energy' and that his ministry of no more than three years had not presented adequate occasion for `developing a complete system of morals'. Thus Jefferson took account of and excused any imperfections that might be found in Jesus' moral teaching.

Well, some will say, he regarded Jesus as a mere man, though a very good one, and thus he was not a Christian. Jefferson wrote that his study produced results that were very different from that anti-Christian system imputed to me by those who know nothing of my opinions. To the corruptions of Christianity I am, indeed, opposed; but not to the genuine precepts of Jesus himself. I am a Christian, in the only sense in which he wished any one to be; sincerely attached to his doctrines, in preference to all others; ascribing to himself every human excellence; and believing he never claimed any other.

Now you have a glimpse of the reason for my refusal to say what Xns should believe. I would not like to say, in this life, that Jefferson was not a Xn, and then face him in the world to come. I respect his form of Christianity. I am, in fact, quite glad that he and Paley, and many others like them, did not live to see the complete destruction of one part of Enlightenment philosophy, namely, natural theology. It would be destroyed by Charles Darwin (1809-1882). Paley had heard of Natural Selection, because he had read the works of Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802). Paley replied to Erasmus Darwin that there is no known example of the adaptation of species to fit the environment. As Paley saw it, each species had been created in order to fit perfectly into its environment. But the theory that species originate, evolve, and end because of changes in the environment eventually destroyed natural theology. Just to
conclude this story, I note that Charles Darwin read and admired Paley's books when he himself studied at Cambridge, and regarded them as correct until he came back from the Galapagos islands with examples of adaptation to fit different environments.

Now we fast-forward about 80 years, from Jefferson, who died in 1826, to our third author, Albert Schweitzer, who published the book that I shall discuss in 1906. While we fast-forward, the philosophy of the English deists finds its way into Germany, and German theologians also learn, from various scholars, how to apply the critical analysis of ancient texts to the Bible. In the 19th century, even if reason no longer establishes natural theology, it does at least analyze the Bible. When scholars combined reliance on reason with historical and critical study of the Bible, the result was an amazingly fertile period of NT scholarship. Looking back on the 19th century, which had just ended, Schweitzer wrote that when, at some future day, our period of civilisation shall lie, closed and completed, before the eyes of later generations, German theology will stand out as a great, a unique phenomenon in the mental and spiritual life of our time. For nowhere save in the German temperament can there be found in the same perfection the living complex of conditions and factors — of philosophic thought, critical acumen, historical insight, and religious feeling — without which no deep theology is possible. And, during this great period of German scholarship, scholar after scholar wrote the 'true' history of Jesus.

Albert Schweitzer of Switzerland (1875-1965), who wrote the story of this pursuit, and who added his own account of the truth about Jesus, was unquestionably the greatest man ever to be a NT scholar. Schweitzer earned three doctoral degrees: theology, music and medicine. He gave himself to cultural and academic work until he was 30, and then turned to the service of humanity. He is now remembered as the saintly missionary who spent his extraordinary talents ministering to the ill in French equatorial Africa. But first, he was a scintillating NT scholar. Lots of different Jesuses had emerged in the 19's century. As Schweitzer turned the pages of these lives of Jesus, and compared them to the NT, he found one very important incongruity. A good 19th C. Jesus was a moralist and a spiritual reformer who sought to improve the ideas of his native Judaism. Progress and improvement were key words. Schweitzer, guided in part by the work of Johannes Weiss, found a more mysterious and disturbing Jesus, a man who thought that
the kingdom of God would actually arrive in the near future, while he himself was still alive. Schweitzer found no social or moral progress, but rather the burning declaration that the judgment was at hand and that he, Jesus, was the key figure in bringing in the kingdom. This expectation is called `eschatology'. In Greek, the eschaton is `the last thing'. Eschatology, then, is thought about or discussion of THE END. The word is still in use, and I shall follow general custom by using it, but let me point out that it is not entirely appropriate. Jews who thought that God would intervene in human history did not think that the universe was about to disintegrate. They thought that God would change the world miraculously and make it better. God had previously brought Israel out of bondage, and had parted the Red Sea in doing so, but this miraculous liberation proved not to be permanent. In Jesus' day, Jews were subject to Rome. And so, some thought, God would intervene again, this time decisively, and produce permanent change.

Schweitzer, surveying 19' century lives of Jesus, found that scholar after scholar missed eschatology or did not take it seriously. Following Weiss, however, Schweitzer found a lot of eschatology in the NT, and there it still is. This is part of Matt. 24: As the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. (24.37-42) In the earliest surviving Xn document, 1 Thessalonians, Paul attributes this saying to `the Lord': For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. (1 Thess. 4.15-17)

Since there is so much eschatology in the New Testament, and since it is so important in the gospels and in the letters of Paul, how is it that people missed it? Part of the answer is that
people can see only what they are prepared to understand. In my undergraduate classes, about 80% of the students miss the passage that I just read when I asked them to make a list of the main topics of 1 Thessalonians. A second part of the answer is that prior to Weiss and Schweitzer, people who noticed eschatology interpreted it so that it did not seriously represent what Jesus (and Paul) thought was about to happen in the very near future. In Jefferson's Bible, for example, there is a lot of Matt. 24: he retained 27 of the 51 verses that are in the Bible. Jefferson did delete the verse that says that `this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place' (24.34), presumably because it was plainly wrong, which meant that Jesus could not have said it, but he had no objection to the threats of eschatological judgment and punishment. On the contrary, Jefferson viewed these as beneficial, since the threats provided sanctions that supported Jesus' moral teaching. Eschatology worked (in his view) the way threats to punish children do (the bogeyman will get you). In the next 100 years, or thereabout, NT scholars did various things with eschatology — including ignoring it. Finally Weiss and, especially, Schweitzer got them to take it seriously, as representing something that Jesus thought was about to happen.

Schweitzer had an extremely detailed view of Jesus' view, and he thought that Jesus himself had a detailed view of the final events of normal history. I shall leave out a lot of steps but try to give you a general idea of Schweitzer's opinion. Scholars had long focused on the parables of planting and sowing as indicating Jesus' belief that the kingdom of God would slowly grow and progress — as it seemed to be doing, prior to the first world war. Schweitzer said that the point of the parables was not slow growth, but the inevitability of the consequences of sowing. John the Baptist and Jesus had sown, and the kingdom would arrive, inevitably. Moreover, Schweitzer held, Jesus thought that the kingdom would coincide temporally with the harvest. `The harvest ripening upon earth is the last! With it comes also the Kingdom of God which brings in the new age. When the reapers are sent into the fields, the Lord in Heaven will cause his harvest to be reaped by the holy angels' (p. 357). In view of the proximity of the kingdom Jesus sent out the disciples, saying to them, `You will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of man comes' (Matt. 10.17, p. 358). He expected his disciples to suffer, and he forewarned them: `I send you out like sheep into the midst of wolves... Beware of
them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues...' etc. (Matt. 10.16-18). Jesus expected suffering, in Schweitzer's view, because of what Schweitzer regarded as a standard Jewish messianic conception: that woes would precede the arrival of the kingdom. Jesus accepted that woes were necessary, and so sent the disciples out to suffer. The disciples carried out their mission and returned to Jesus unscathed; the kingdom did not come. Jesus, therefore, decided that he could force God's hand. He formed the view that if he himself, God's best and last agent on earth, went to Jerusalem, and suffered and died, then God would be forced to bring in the kingdom. Again I quote Schweitzer There is silence all around. The Baptist appears, and cries: 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' Soon after that comes Jesus, and in the knowledge that He is the coming Son of Man lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution which is to bring all ordinary history to a close. It refuses to turn, and He throws Himself upon it. Then it does turn; and crushes Him.... The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great

Man, who was strong enough to think of Himself as the spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to His purpose, is hanging upon it still. That is His victory and His reign. (370f.) He continues by repeating that 'the sending forth of the disciples [Matt. 10] and the discourse which Jesus uttered on that occasion' reveal his purpose 'to set in motion the eschatological development of history, to let loose the final woes, the confusion and strife, from which shall issue the Parousia' (the appearance of the Son of Man) (p. 371). But things still did not work out. On the cross Jesus realized that even his final suffering would not force God to bring the kingdom, and he died disappointed, crying out, 'My God, my God, Why have you forsaken me?'

Thus Schweitzer's Jesus was a noble but deluded visionary. His Jesus fully accepted the Jewish eschatology of his period and put himself in the middle of it. Quite clearly he was wrong. Thus Jesus did not serve Schweitzer as a teacher of eternal moral truths, nor as a prophet of slow but steady social and human progress, nor as an idealistic prescriber of a better way of life. But somehow this Jesus suited Schweitzer very well. I think that he liked having a really foreign Jesus, a man with odd, now irrelevant Jewish views. As Schweitzer put it, the real Jesus is not one to whom the religion of the present [1906] can ascribe, according to its long-cherished custom, its own thoughts and ideas.... Nor will he be a figure which can be made by a popular
historical treatment so sympathetic and universally intelligible to the multitude. The historical Jesus will be to our time a stranger and an enigma. (398f.)

In Schweitzer's view, modern Xn theology can make no use of the historical Jesus, but still to him Jesus remained a mysteriously powerful figure. He `means something to our world because a mighty spiritual force streams forth from Him and flows through our time also. This fact can neither be shaken nor confirmed by any historical discovery. It is the solid foundation of Christianity' (399). `The truth is, it is not Jesus as historically known, but Jesus as spiritually arisen within men, who is significant for our time and can help it'. `In proportion as we have the Spirit of Jesus we have the true knowledge of Jesus'. Schweitzer, as one of the millions of recipients of the Spirit of this man who remains a stranger, then took up the study of medicine to equip himself to follow the Spirit of Jesus — not the historical Jesus — into the disease-ridden heart of equitorial Africa.

I suppose that Schwetizer's view of the historical Jesus — he was incomparably great, but nevertheless a deluded visionary — would lead some people to suppose that he was not Xn, since surely Xns must think that Jesus never made a mistake. That is not in fact what Christendom's great creeds require, but in any case I would suggest that Schweitzer's lifelong devotion to serving humanity, which is what he thought that the Spirit of Jesus required of him, makes him extraordinarily deserving of the title, Xn.

Schweitzer, as I said above, was a great man — not least because he rose above the temptation to describe the historical Jesus so that the two of them agreed. He saw into the heart of the dilemma of Christianity: it rests on Jesus and others who lived in certain circumstances in a certain period and who shared the notions of their world; yet it is a world-wide religion that must in some way or other become relevant in numerous centuries and in numerous geographical areas. It is self-deception to think that the historical Jesus shared the ideas of people of every succeeding time and place, that he addressed the problems of every possible society, and that his words, in their first-century Jewish meaning, apply equally to all times and places. Xnty is enormous and multiform, the historical Jesus was a single man. This is sometimes called `the scandal of particularity': Xnty gives universal significance to a very particular person who lived in a remote time and place.
Schweitzer's book stunned European and eventually American scholarship. For a long time, people gave up the favorite pre-Schweitzer activity of writing books about Jesus. In fact, when I was in Divinity School, in the early sixties, I was taught that Schweitzer had proved that it is impossible to write a life of Jesus. This was not his view at all: he thought that he had written the one and only true book about Jesus. After Schweitzer, the vast majority of scholars accepted eschatology --- and then began to explain it away.

According to Rudolf Bultmann, who published his main works between 1919 and 1950, eschatology should be translated into the language of existentialist philosophy: every hour is equally the final hour; one must at every hour decide for the better or the worse; the judgment takes place all the time, at each moment. We should live as if each hour is the last hour. And this is what Jesus really meant and would have said, if he had known the language of existentialism, and in particular the language of Martin Heidegger: so Bultmann. But I cannot linger over the amusing demonstration of how people who accepted the eschatological passages as genuine and important nevertheless got rid of their content. I wish to turn to a group of Jefferson reborn, who simply eliminate the passages. I refer to the group known collectively as the 'Jesus seminar'. This is the name of a small circle of scholars in the United States who, over a period of years, met to discuss and vote on the authenticity of each saying of Jesus. For the last 150 years or so, NT scholars have agreed that some sayings are closer to being authentic than others. The members of the Jesus seminar disagree with the vast majority only in two ways: (1) They all agreed from the outset that Jesus could not have taught any form of eschatology. (2) They grade sayings into categories (authentic, inauthentic, etc.) on the basis of a vote which may or may not be supported by scholarly analysis. The voters, one suspects, frequently just voted their preferences. When or shortly before they finished their voting, some of the members began to write books about Jesus. They all the large negative with which they began: he was not an eschatological prophet. Moreover, the content of his teaching, besides lacking Jewish eschatology, lacked other Jewish features as well. Galilee, they assure us, was Hellenized (that is, had become Greek in culture; the Greeks called themselves Hellenes, and thus we call the Grecizing of culture "Hellenization"). In the view of these scholars, the people of Galilee spoke Greek, Greek-speaking philosophers were common on the street corners, etc. Jesus was a Cynic or Cynic-like philosopher. He uttered
wise sayings, designed to help people cope with a difficult life. Moreover, he was a social, political, and especially economic reformer. He wanted to do away with Jewish Patriarchalism (they seem to forget that the Greeks were patriarchal as well), he wanted equal distribution of land, and he favoured democracy.

The best and the brightest of these scholars is Dominic Crossan, who wrote a book called The Historical Jesus. The life of a Mediterranean Jewish peasant (1991). I do see the word 'Jewish' in the title, but that only takes into account Jesus' parents. One finds very little Jewish content in what follows: the Jews, after all, had become Greek in culture. According to Crossan, Jesus was a 'Jewish Cynic', but the difference between a Jewish Cynic and a non-Jewish Cynic is imperceptible. A Cynic, as Crossan defines this somewhat amorphous school of Greek philosophy, involved speaking and acting against `the cultural heart of Mediterranean civilization, a way of looking and dressing, of eating, living, and relating that announced its contempt for honor and shame, for patronage and clientage. They were hippies in a world of Augustan yuppies' (p. 421). Jesus acquired his Cynic world view and counter-cultural activities by traveling the few miles from Nazareth, where he lived, to Sepphoris, which Crossan, like the other members of his school, calls a `Greco-Roman city' (421). Jesus' strategy ... was the combination of free healings and common eating, a religious and economic egalitarianism that negated alike and at once the hierarchical and patronal normalcies of Jewish religion and Roman power' (422).

Lots of things are notably absent from Crossan's Jesus. I shall mention only two. In the first place, his Jesus did not really have a plan, a program, except showing that he was in favor of healing and eating with anyone who was available, whether these were socially prestigious people or not. Jesus' principal aim, in Crossan's view, was to subvert social values, and especially hierarchy, in a rather mild and quiet manner. This subversion was not forceful enough actually to change anything, but at least Jesus registered a quiet social protest. Most scholars, on the other hand, have thought that Jesus soul!, t the eschatological renewal of Israel, that for this reason he called 12 disciples, who symbolized the 12 tribes of Israel, which he thought that God would restore — and very Jewish, unCynic idea —, and that he wanted people to prepare for the kingdom that would soon arrive, rather than just to grumble quietly about the present one. Of
course, most scholars have agreed that Jesus directed his energies to the downtrodden and did not cultivate high-ranking members of the court of Herod Antipas (who governed Galilee). This, most of us have thought, symbolizes Jesus' view that God would endlessly seek to save the lost, the meek, and the helpless, and that in the coming kingdom the last would be first and the first last. That is, the rest of us see theology and eschatology where Crossan sees social protest.

Let us now consider the evidence that Crossan uses and especially what he does with eschatology. In his introduction, he describes an ideal way of studying the ancient sources, and when I read this intro., I thought that he was proceeding in the right direction. Later I spent some time with his appendix, in which he catalogues all the sources and passages that he regards as relevant. The main sources, one immediately discovers, are not the synoptic gospels (Matt., Mark and Luke), which scholars have regarded as the best sources for the last 150 years, but (a) the Gospel of Thomas, which he dates to the period of 30-60 CE, but which everyone else puts no earlier than the 2nd Xn century; we actually have it in a fourth century form. In Crossan's appendix of sources the gospel of Thomas is joined by a bunch of hypothetical sources that Crossan has constructed by excerpting bits of much later material. This supposed early stratum also contains a supposed document called Q, and in fact a supposed earliest layer of Q. Q itself, I should explain, is a completely hypothetical entity. Crossan first supposes that it was once a document, while most people think of it as a convenient abbreviation for various traditions — some written, some oral — that are common to Matthew and Luke. Next, he accepts an entirely speculative text of Q, and then he subdivides this text into three layers, of which he employs only one, the first. Thus we have an arbitrarily chosen layer of a speculative text of a hypothetical document. I shall not lead you through the other layers of his stratification of sources, but simply remark that all of his earliest sources, except for Thomas, require the inventive discovery of them in later material, where (he thinks) they are buried, while Thomas he simply dates more than 100 years earlier than any of the great Coptic scholars who have worked on it. This degree of idiosyncracy and arbitrariness in evaluating the sources is virtually unparalleled. With techniques like these, we could prove that as a child Jesus struck down his playmates and then brought them back to life and that he used to cause the day birds that he made in play to fly away.
Despite Crossan's remarkable choice of sources, his inventory of firmly attested material nevertheless includes what he calls Jesus' apocalyptic return', by which he refers to the eschatological passages that I cited above: a heavenly figure descends on the clouds, there is the sound of a trumpet, and the angels gather the elect. There this material is, in his Appendix 1. But, beside it, he puts a minus mark, which means that he will not treat it as coming from Jesus. And he does not do so. Eschatology vanishes from Crossan's depiction of Jesus as completely as it does from all the other books written by the members of the Jesus seminar, and as completely as did miracles from Jefferson's Bible. Jefferson, at least, explained why he got rid of them: miracles cannot happen, and so the passages cannot be authentic. Crossan just lists the eschatological passages in an appendix, and deletes them from the evidence by putting a minus sign in front of them.

I suppose that theological and social or cultural preferences explain why the scholars who make up the Jesus seminar eliminate eschatology. All their work has common themes: Jesus was Hellenistic, not Jewish in culture; his only aim was to discuss the difficulties of life and make social and economic protests; he had nothing to do with eschatology. I suppose that these people do not like Judaism; do like Greek philosophy (what they have read of it); dislike Christology (since they wish to conform Jesus to a rather commonplace type of popular philosophy); and favor social and economic reform. These are not all bad preferences, in and of themselves. I personally would like to see some social and economic reform. The question is whether or not these attributes have anything to do with Jesus. I have been present with Dominic Crossan at enough discussions of the historical Jesus, that I can tell you that his deep-seated view is that the Roman empire in Galilee was like the British empire in Ireland, from which he comes. His analogy of the British empire and the Roman empire is not a good one, historically. All of the views of this school about Greeks and Jews in Galilee in general and Sepphoris in particular are completely in error; and in any case to find Romans acting like British imperialists one has to look at Roman Britain and Gaul, which they did colonize. Rome did not colonize Palestine at all, and Romans did not treat Galilee the way the hated English treated Ireland. During Jesus' lifetime, there was probably a Roman population of 0 in Galilee — though Antipas, when he was building his new capital, may have had the services of a Roman-trained
So, in short, I find the work of the Jesus seminar, including Dominic Crossan's ingenious and clever book, to be sadly lacking in historical knowledge and in objective analysis. I suppose that their Greek Cynic Jesus corresponds to their own worldview, and in one case I have good evidence of this.

Now, finally, what in my own opinion can we know for sure about Jesus, and do my opinions about Jesus conform to my own theology? You will notice that I have not left time for this discussion. There are three reasons for this. One is that the subject on which I was asked to speak does not lend itself to my summarizing the main results of my books and articles on Jesus. The second is that I get a little tired of summarizing myself. The third is that I am not at all interesting theologically. But if you can stand it, which you will prove by not walking out, I shall try to squeeze in two pages on myself.

I think that it is clear from my review that my sympathies are with Schweitzer — not in details, but in the main thrust. Jesus was, I have zero doubt, an eschatological prophet; that is, he foresaw the arrival of the kingdom of God in the near future and called on Israel to prepare for it by following him. This is one of the main aspects of Matthew and Mark, and it also appears in Luke. Moreover, it is supported by lines of argument that are far superior to Crossan's revision of what the early evidence is. I shall mention only two of the lines of argument on which I rely. We know with virtual certainty that Jesus got his start after a period of following John the Baptist. Jesus went to the Jordan to be baptized by John. How can we be sure of this? After Jesus' death and resurrection the early Christians felt that this apparent subordination of Jesus to the Baptist was a little embarrassing. Therefore it is probably true,. We assume that the Church would not make up a relationship that it found embarrassing. Therefore Jesus really did submit to the baptism of John. John was a fiery eschatological preacher: repent, the Day of Judgment is at hand. So Jesus started his public life by signaling his agreement with Jewish eschatology. Now we skip a few years to the period after Jesus' death and resurrection. We come to his greatest apostle, Paul, whose surviving letters were written from about 50 CE to about 60 CE — about twenty to thirty years after Jesus' death. Paul expected the return of Jesus within his own lifetime and that of most of his converts. Did he make this idea up? Certainly not. Various
disputes with the other apostles are recorded in his letters, but the apostles seem never to have disagreed over the expectation that Jesus would soon return. Thus: before and after Jesus, within the movement of which he was a part, from John the Baptist to Paul and the other apostles, the dominant view was that the kingdom of God would arrive in the near future. It is highly likely that this expectation was in accord with Jesus' own teaching. He agreed with John, and his apostles agreed with him.

We can see the Christians backing away from this eschatological expectation as the century wears on. Paul at first thought that the Lord would return while all his converts were alive, then while he and most of his converts were alive. Near the end of his career he thought that perhaps he himself would die before the return of the Lord, but he continued to assert that the time was perceptibly nearer than when his converts began to believe. In the span of about 10 or 12 years, his confidence began to waver just a bit, but he nevertheless retained his expectation that the Lord would soon arrive.

In the earliest form of Jesus' saying in the gospels about the coming of the Son of Man, we read that he said that `some standing here will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power' (Mark 9.1). But by the time we get to bike — which is certainly later than Mark and is possibly the latest of the gospels — we find that some will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God (Luke 9.27), which is a good deal weaker than `see that it has come'. Luke here and elsewhere reduces eschatological expectation. By the time we hit the appendix to the gospel of John On 21), we find Peter asking about the beloved disciple, `what about him?' Jesus answers, `If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?' The author then comments, Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?" Thus the earliest known Christian view, that more-or-less everyone would still be alive when the Lord returned, weakened as the decades passed: even the last disciple finally died, and Jesus' words were interpreted to permit that possibility. It is unlikely that the early Xns made up an expectation that they did not learn from Jesus, only to have to start modifying and weakening it almost immediately. Why did they refuse to retract it entirely when they saw that it would not come true? Our gospels were published after it was clear that the first generation would not still be alive (Matt. 24.34//Mark 13.30; Luke 21.32
omits ‘all these’, thus disposing of the error in Matt. and Mark). Why not just eliminate the saying? Probably because Jesus had actually thought that the Son of Man would arrive from heaven while his own generation was still alive (Matt. 24.34, quoted above), and this was part of the bedrock of the Xn movement.

We should, therefore, admit that the earliest Christian leaders learned from Jesus that the great divine intervention in the world would happen in the very near future. Where does that leave theology? Xn theology, it seems to me, should be based on views of God: what God accomplished by sending Jesus, not directly on everything that Jesus taught. Paul, Augustine, Luther, Calvin — none of the great theologians of the church — tied their theological views about God to a reconstruction of the life of the historical Jesus and his teaching. Some parts of his teaching have, across the centuries and millennia, proved to be more useful than others. It has obviously been impossible for each Xn generation since Jesus to maintain the view that the kingdom would come within Jesus's own lifetime or shortly thereafter. One may revise eschatology to make it at least partially relevant, but, as Schweitzer saw, it is either very hard or completely impossible to make first-century eschatology relevant to our world. I think that this should be faced rather than avoided by trying to get rid of one of Jesus' main views. I do not see how the truth can impede Christianity, much less damage it, and facing the truth is surely better than trying to hide it. So, while I am not a theologian and have few if any constructive views about the creation of Xn theology for our day, I do have some negative views: we should not start by changing the historical Jesus to agree with our preconcieved notions of what he could or could not have said and done. Permit him to remain what he was — a 1" C Jewish eschatological prophet.

Let me close with just one observation about the history of Xn theology. Today not all Xns are loyal to the great creeds of the 4'b and 5's centuries, though most still are. But for the record I shall note that in the capstone statement on Jesus Christ in the Chalcedonian formulation (451 CE), the key phrase is that, with regard to his humanity, he was a true human, like us in every respect, except without sin. It does not say, except that he never made a mistake about times and seasons.