

his *resurrection*, which Dr. Warschauer *does not believe to have taken place*; and that the testimony is avowedly that of a writer who himself had *not* believed in the resurrection when it was proclaimed by the alleged witnesses. Not content with this sleight-of-hand use of "evidence," Dr. Warschauer alleges mention of a "remarkable activity" to which there is *no testimony whatever* in the document cited. Needless to say, not a moment's notice is given to the view, now common among scholars, that the Pauline passage cited is one of two flagrant and cognate interpolations in the epistle. But these are small matters compared with the act of dialectic self-destruction in which the above-cited deliverance is the first step.

Passing from that idle parade of an argument which Dr. Warschauer must know is familiar to every student, and has been repeatedly rebutted, we proceed to page 305 of Dr. Warschauer's book. There he has to deal with the Pauline account of the establishment of the Sacrament, which he does *not* accept as historical; and thus he commits himself:—

"It is a remarkable circumstance that in introducing the account of what happened in the night in which Jesus was betrayed (I Cor. xi, 23) *Paul does not say that he learnt the facts from the other apostles, but makes use of the very striking formula, 'I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.'.....(Cp. Gal. i, 12).* That is to say that, so far from invoking, he repudiates human authority, both for his teaching in general and for his account of the institution of the Lord's Supper in particular, but declares that his knowledge has come to him through supernatural channels."

As Dr. Warschauer is good enough to admit by implication, this is valid only for the faithful; and he proceeds to suggest, guardedly of course, that the story is a fiction, and that the Sacrament really

came from the outside. It does not occur to him to suggest an interpolation : he leaves Paul saddled with the invention. Returning now to the exordium before cited, we realize that Dr. Warschauer has there founded himself, for his dismissal of the myth theory, on precisely the kind of evidence which, near his close, he admits to be valueless.

For the passage I Cor. xv, 6, which he puts foremost as "irrefragable.....testimony to the historical Jesus," is introduced by that same formula : "*For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received,*" which, as Dr. Warschauer later obliviously avows, "repudiates human authority" and idly claims knowledge through supernatural channels.

Thus the "biographer" has staked his "historical" case on a piece of testimony which he later admits to be, in respect of its avowed supernaturalism, of no validity for historical purposes. The comment on such a performance is not a mere retort of the writer's own blatant charge of "absurdity." Neither is it a suggestion that he is consciously playing fast and loose; for such conscious chicanery would be too dangerous on the part of any publicist open to criticism. The just verdict is that his brain does not properly function. He simply cannot "collect his thoughts." Regarding the Pauline story of the Last Supper as a wilful fabrication, he could not, if his mind worked properly, have cited *any* Pauline passage to prove a historical truth. But his mental processes are so utterly incoherent that he not only thus belies himself, but actually founds on a form of assertion which anon he avows to be, *by* its form, cancelled for all purposes of historical proof.

And such is the critical ignorance and ratioci-

native incompetence of the average pressman and the average cleric that an undertaking which is a mere collapse of dialectic, a stultification of its own thesis, passes with them as a sound contribution to a great debate; and the myth theory, which has but been subjected to a small dust-storm, is declared to have been once more "exploded."

But even Dr. Warschauer has been partially outdone. Lamentable as is his dialectic suicide, he is entitled to credit for his courage. He has at least advanced an argument. Those are hardly the comments suggested by the immediately preceding 'Life' by the Jewish scholar, Dr. Joseph Klausner of Jerusalem, whose 'Jesus of Nazareth'¹ has been acclaimed, with some betrayals of misgiving, by a number of traditionists glad of a Jewish support to the historicity of Jesus, albeit at the price of unpleasant criticism. They get from him this:—

"During the time (fifty years or less) which elapsed *between the death of Jesus* (at the date approximately recorded by the Canonical Gospels) and the age of Josephus and R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, or between Paul and Tacitus, it was quite impossible for a purely fabricated presentment of the *figure* of Jesus *so firmly* to have gripped people's imagination that historians *like Josephus* and Tacitus, and men like R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (who was so cautious in transmitting what he had heard from his teachers), should believe in his existence and all refer to him as one who had lived and worked quite recently and had made for himself friends and disciples; or that Paul should have had *such a complete belief* in him and *never doubt that James was the brother*,² and Peter and his fellows disciples of Jesus.

"That much is clear; and those who would utterly deny not simply the form which Jesus now assumes in the world or that which he assumes according to the Gospels, but even his very existence *and the great positive, or negative, impor-*

¹ Eng. trans., Macmillan Company, New York, 1925.

² On this head see the following section.

tance of his personality—such men *simply deny all historic reality.*"¹

The Jewish scholar has evidently learned his business from his Christian corrivals: "it will go hard but he will better the instruction." If they bluster, he will compete. He no doubt supposed he was putting a sequence of argument; unfortunately he shares the normal infirmity of the devotee, to the extent of inability to realize the difference between a *sequitur* and a *non-sequitur*. And he too turns his guns upon himself, to say nothing of his discussing the myth theory without knowing the positions.

1. Vacuously announcing that his opponents "deny all historic reality"—in which case he need hardly have troubled to discuss them—he argues that it was a belief in a *figure* of Jesus that had "gripped people's imagination" by the time of Josephus. As we have seen, the entire epistolary literature of the New Testament shows that no human "figure" of Jesus existed in the imagination of any.

2. Knowing that the "testimony" of Josephus is held by the great majority even of the biographical school to be a complete forgery; himself insisting that it *contains* a gross forgery; claiming only that he "believes, *however*, that there are *not sufficient grounds* for supposing the *whole* to be spurious," he puts Josephus as a *decisive* witness to the historicity of the gospel Jesus. It is difficult here to infer a mere collapse of logical perception; but if we abstain from any further charge, that must be put with particular emphasis.

3. The argument as to the length of time needed

¹ Work cited, p. 70.

to develop a belief in the gospel Jesus is either an avowal of almost entire ignorance of the myth theory, or another prodigy of dialectic miscarriage. The myth theory posits a *prior* (*i.e.*, "pre-Christian") currency of (*a*) a sacrosanct Jesus-name, and (*b*) a cult of a sacramental character. If Dr. Klausner does not know this, his attack on the myth theory is merely ignorant, in that he does not know what he is aspersing. If he does know it, the comment would seem to be, of necessity, that his attack is fraudulent.

4. And our doubts as to his good faith become somewhat acute when we note that, while actually appealing to late Rabbinical testimony (in the case of Eliezer) as proving the historic actuality of the gospel Jesus, he has previously (p. 23) noted that in the time of the said Eliezer the Jews talked of Jesus "Ben Panthera" or "Ben Pandera"; and, before that (p. 19), had thus delivered himself on the whole question:—

"The appearance of Jesus, during the period of disturbance and confusion which befell Judæa under the Herods and the Roman Procurators, *was so inconspicuous an event* that the contemporaries of Jesus and of his first disciples *hardly noticed it*; and *by the time that Christianity had become a great and powerful sect* the 'Sages of the Talmud' were already far removed from the time of Jesus, and *no longer remembered in their true shape* the historical events which had happened to the Christian Messiah: they *were satisfied with the popular stories* which were current concerning him and his life."

It would be difficult to match, in serious scholarly controversy, this employment of mutually destructive propositions to prove one and the same thesis. Dr. Warschauer is Dr. Klausner's only recent rival of outstanding importance; and *his* exploit seems so clearly a matter of cerebral hiatus that we dismiss, in his case, the hypothesis of critical jugglery.

If in the case of Dr. Klausner we are strongly tempted to frame it, that writer has at least no ground for complaint. A critic who alleges that his antagonists "deny all historic reality" can scarcely expect lenient judgment when he is caught thus playing fast and loose with historical testimony. And yet it may be that in the case of Dr. Klausner as in that of Dr. Warschauer we are merely witnessing once more the stupefying effects of fervid presupposition on average minds bent on finding semblances of reasons for beliefs unthinkingly adopted.

Long ago Renan remarked on the normal bad faith of theologians; proceeding at times, indeed, to exhibit a certain deficiency of scientific good faith in his own handling of his biographical problem. After his youth, however, Renan was never guilty of aggressive insolence; whereas the common run of our vindicators of the historicity of Jesus seem dependent on the stimulant of insolence in the ratio of their congenital incompetence for argument. It will perhaps, then, be for our own good to turn away for the present from these artists of the market-place to consider the considerate arguments of theological scholars who combine a high scholarly competence with a spirit of courtesy and candour, and who argue, if not convincingly, yet in the spirit of reason, and certainly in good faith.

One thing, indeed, Dr. Klausner has done for the warning of other supporters of the biographical view. It would seem unnecessary, henceforth, to reply to those who have argued, visibly in good faith, that if there were no historic basis for the general narrative as to Jesus in the gospels the Rabbis of the second century would have said so.

Dr. Klausner's avowal may suffice to dispose of that plea. But if haply such a bi-frontal reasoner should be regarded askance as untrustworthy, it is pertinent to note that in the Dialogue of Justin Martyr with Trypho¹ the Father ascribes to his Jewish opponent the very position which, we have been told, the Rabbis did not take up. "Christ," says his Trypho (c. 8), "if he has indeed been born, and exists anywhere, is unknown.....And you, having accepted a groundless report, invent a Christ for yourselves, and for his sake are heedlessly perishing."

The Father's reply is not a citation even of gospel testimony but a voluble resort to Old Testament prophecy, sufficiently indicative of the normal Christian attitude to evidence. And when the disputants proceed to discuss Justin's doctrine that Jesus was a pre-existent God, it becomes clear enough that "historicity" is a concept that had not then dawned on the Christian intelligence.

II.—CURRENT ARGUMENTS

§ 1. *"The Brothers of the Lord"*

Less than a century ago theologians in general, but the Catholics in particular, were much concerned to prove that the Jesus of the Gospels had no brothers, and no sisters. The inspiring presupposition was the Perpetual Virginity of the Virgin Mary—a dogma specially dear to Catholics, but important also to Protestants who set store by the notion of the Virgin Birth. To-day practically

¹ A rhetorical composition in dialogue form, but probably motivated by actual disputation with Jews.

all "progressive" theologians are concerned to prove that Jesus *had* brothers, that being one way of proving that he really existed. For that matter, the "cousins" of the old exegesis, if verifiable, would have been equally good evidence; but the fact that in antiquity cousins were often described as brothers or sisters is now never mentioned. "Brothers" must be found for Jesus, at any cost. The claim, then, must be investigated.

For every alert student, indeed, the strongest documentary grounds for inferring the existence of a historical Jesus are the text in First Corinthians, ix, 5, referring to "the brothers of the Lord and Cephas," and that in Galatians, i, 19: "I saw none save James, the brother of the Lord." The argument from these texts is little affected, *prima facie*, by the question of authenticity. Supposing them to be either interpolations or parts of a pseudepigraphic letter, they still seem to point to the currency, in the first or second century, of such a descriptive phrase. The gospel mention of "his brethren" has no historic weight: the epistolary allusion is documentarily on another footing.

At the very outset, however, it raises acute difficulties. Never in the gospels is any brother of Jesus alluded to as following him: the indications are all the other way. We have James the son of Alphæus and James the son of Zebedee, and possibly a third James who was either father or brother of Judas, not Iscariot. Nor are any uterine brothers of Jesus mentioned in the Acts. We have there (xii, 2) the mention of the killing by Herod of "James the brother of John," and, in the same chapter, mention of yet another James, without surname, with whom Peter acts; but no mention

of a James the brother of the Lord. The usual inference is that the second "James" is the son of Alphæus. If there was an eminent James, a brother of Jesus, how comes he to be ignored in the Acts?

We are there told, in a visibly interpolated clause (i, 14), that the apostles "continued stedfastly in prayer, *with the [or, certain] women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*" That Mary is only here mentioned in the Acts, passing out without a word of notice, is sufficient proof of the heedlessness of *that* insertion; but the brethren are in the same case. Two Jameses and Judas the son of James have just been mentioned; how could the "brethren" have been historically mentioned *without* names? The italicized words are visibly a wanton intercalation.

Professor Orello Cone, handling the problem in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, decides that "James, surnamed the Just, although sharing with the brothers, of whom he was probably the oldest, in their opposition to Jesus during his public ministry, appears to have been converted to his cause *soon after the resurrection.* According to I Cor. xv, 7, he was a witness to one of the manifestations of the risen Christ." But the James of that text is *not* called the brother of Jesus; and so to identify the name is to exclude the two apostles of that name. The wording: "to James; then to all the apostles," does not imply that James was not an apostle; for we have previously: "to Cephas; then to the twelve." Professor Cone is building with straws.

If we hold to the epistolary testimony as genuine, there is only one solution that will meet the case; and that is that "Brothers of the Lord" was a *group title*, analogous to the quasi-sect-titles "of Christ,"

“of Paul,” “of Apollos,” “of Cephas.” The phrase, be it noted, is not “brothers of Jesus,” but “brothers of the Lord.” That title could conceivably be used by men who made no pretensions to family kinship with the gospel Jesus. To argue, as does Professor Goguel, that the theory is barred because there is no other trace of such a group title is to point to the answer that there is no other mention of “brothers of the Lord” at all.

On the other hand, both epistolary passages are under suspicion, seeing that one uses the plural; and neither in the Acts nor anywhere else in the New Testament are any uterine brothers of Jesus spoken of as members of the Church. The Pauline expression is thus doubly enigmatic; and if we turn either to the hypothesis of interpolation or to that of non-genuineness of both epistles, there may be another solution there. For a late interpolator, or a Pauline pseudepigrapher, confused by gospel passages which could suggest brothers of Jesus—as Mark xv, 40—might jump to the conclusion that James and Joses were brothers of Jesus, and were among the “pillars” of the early cult. Either way, the Pauline texts cannot establish anything; and the more considerate defenders of the historicity of Jesus, in general, appear to recognize this by not pressing the point.

But the prudence of the Christian modernist does not recommend itself to the latest Jewish biographer of Jesus. It is from Dr. Klausner (p. 234) that we get this:—

“As is apparent from one passage in the Gospels [Lk. ii, 7 (and in a variant form Matt. i, 25)] and another in St. Paul [Romans viii, 29], Jesus was ‘the firstborn among many brethren.’ He had, furthermore, at least two sisters.....”

No Christian scholar, probably, has ever carried

evidence-mongering further than this. The passage in Romans runs :—

For whom he [God, or "the Spirit"] foreknew he also fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, *that he might be* the firstborn among many brethren; and whom he fore-ordained, them he also called.

The most orthodox and the most advanced of Christian commentators recognize that here there is no allusion to brothers-german but to the whole family of "the faith." Such a puerile misinterpretation, coming from one who accuses myth-theorists of denying "all historic reality," is a cue to mentality.

Those who claim to prove that "Brothers of the Lord" cannot have been a group-title are oblivious of the vital difficulty set up for themselves by the acceptance of the traditional view. It discredits not only the gospels but the Acts of the Apostles, which professes to relate the establishment and propagation of the cult without a hint that actual brothers of Jesus, as such, played any authoritative part in the process. In the Epistle they outclass the apostles in general. The one critical inference open, if we take the Pauline phrases as primordial, is that Paul faced a cult conducted not by Twelve Apostles but mainly by a group styled Brothers of the Lord, of whose cult history the gospels tell nothing, *their* record being wholly factitious.

§ 2. *Dr. Schmiedel's "Pillar Texts"*

Though Professor Maurice Goguel, as aforesaid, has conducted his criticism of the myth theory with temperance and courtesy, he can hardly be said to have made any special contribution to the defence, explicitly relying as he does on the

à priori plea—the “must.” The use of that plea is really an invalidation of all à posteriori argument in such a case, as it was in regard to the Copernican and the Darwinian hypotheses. It is fitting, therefore, to deal with the arguments of scholars who are either recognizant of the futility of the à priori argument or content to work without it.

Of these, the two most notable to a rationalist eye in the past twenty years have been Professor Schmiedel of Zurich and Professor F. C. Burkitt of Cambridge, scholars of the highest eminence, whom it is impossible to read without valuing their insight, liking their amenity, and esteeming their candour. It is only after having weighed the reasons of such disputants that the myth theorist can have the comfort of knowing that he has heard the best of what can so far be urged against his positions, and concluding that he is not dangerously buoyed-up by the spectacle of the incompetence of his other gainsayers.

Professor Schmiedel specially challenges our respectful attention by his well-known and scrupulously framed argument, in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, from what he has termed “pillar texts”—to wit, a selection of nine texts in the gospels which are claimed to be, in their very nature, inconceivable as inventions by Jesus-worshippers, and must therefore be regarded either as real utterances of the Founder, preserved by hearers, or veridical reports of episodes in which he figured. The Swiss Professor of course regards many other texts, reporting utterances or episodes, as quite reasonably credible; but for these nine he claims that they *cannot have been invented*, and therefore decisively prove the historicity of Jesus.

The series has been independently discussed

by Professor W. B. Smith¹ and by the present writer,² and what is now presented is a summary of rebuttals.

1. The first step may fitly be the searching denial by Professor Smith of Dr. Schmiedel's à priori claim that certain presentments of the God-Man as merely human would never have been invented by writers who, like "Matthew" and "Mark," regarded him as a supernatural being. As Dr. Smith justly insists, the variety of *possible* conceptions of the God-Man in the early Christian centuries was incalculable. A recent writer, in the most useful chapter of a curiously miscarrying book, has shown how the "five Christologies" of theological history are composed from an absolute medley of concepts in the New Testament.³

2. It may be added that Dr. Schmiedel is not on solid ground inasmuch as he here ignores the indisputable multitude of tamperings with the texts during the first three centuries, and the obvious possibility that things which the first evangelists would not have written may have been interpolated by later men leaning to views diverging from theirs. Incidentally, it may be noted that on his principles he is at least bound to admit, with Professor Burkitt, the authenticity of the old reading "Jesus Barabbas" in Matthew (xxvii, 16), seeing that, while there are obvious reasons why the Church should wish to drop the "Jesus," none can be suggested for the invention of such a name by Christians.

3. In particular, Dr. Schmiedel has founded on

¹ *Ecce Deus*, 1912, p. 177 sq.

² *Christianity and Mythology*, 2nd ed., 1910, p. 441 sq.

³ Dr. Vacher Burch, *Jesus Christ and His Revelation*, 1927, ch. iii.

one text—"Why callest thou me good?" (Mark x, 18; Lk. xviii, 19)—which is not only in itself a very unlikely utterance but is part of a Matthæan passage of which the MSS. give different readings. His argument is that, inasmuch as Jesus here says "None is good, save God only," he is denying his divinity; whereas "Mark" in general treats him as divine. Curiously, the Professor does not ask the question, How came Mark to regard Jesus as divine if he has to record that Jesus expressly denied it? That dilemma is fatal to Dr. Schmiedel's own position. But still more serious is the overlooking of the fact that the early Fathers in general, without misgiving, saw in the passage a claim by Jesus that he was divine. This, unnoticed by Professor Schmiedel, is decisively noted by Professor Smith. And the argument of the Fathers was perfectly natural. When Jesus says in effect: "Why callest thou me good, knowing that only God is good?" he is forensically saying, "By calling me good you admit my divinity." And "Mark" might conceivably take just that view.

The passage, further, has striking marks of invention. As an answer to the courteous—and surely common—accost of "Good Master," the challenge is a perversely disputatious procedure, very much like the forensic passage between Jesus and the Scribes as to the payment of tribute to Cæsar, where he is made to quibble very idly. When we note that in Matthew (xix, 16) the initial "Good" is absent from the best codices (the Sinaitic, the Vaticanus, and the Codex Bezae), and is accordingly dropped by Alford, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, B. Weiss, Westcott and Hort, and the Revised Version, the matter takes on a new aspect. There the questioner merely

asks what good thing he shall do, and is told either that "the Good is one"—a pagan formula—or that "there is but one that is good."

If now, suspending the common assumption (shared by Professor Smith) that Mark is the earliest of the synoptics, we regard the corrected Matthæan reading as the original, we get a simple solution. Matthew reproduces one of the current "*Logia* of the Lord." Mark, with both Matthew and Luke before him, takes the opportunity, by reading "Good Master," to make out (as the Fathers understood him) that Jesus turned the query into an admission of his divinity. That view becoming ultimately prevalent in the Church, the text of Matthew was at a late date tampered with by the insertion from Mark of a "Good" which in that case was nothing to the purpose. Thus a perfectly straightforward scrutiny cancels once for all this particular "pillar text." If there is any more reasonable solution of the whole matter, let the biographical school produce it.¹

4. Almost weaker still is Dr. Schmiedel's "pillar" text (Mark iii, 21) stating the opinion of "those with" Jesus that he was distraught. The passage, to begin with, is unintelligible as it stands in our versions; and, as Dr. Smith suggests, the variant in Codex Bezae, making "the scribes and the rest"

¹ The Marcan text raises a highly important question in connection with the recent theory that the Gospel according to Mark is really the partially redacted Gospel according to Markion or Marcion. Concerning Marcion, we are told by Hippolytus that he denied the perfect goodness of Christ, and in this connection quoted "Why call ye me good?"; while Epiphanius tells us that Marcion read "Call me not good." Marcion, we are told, claimed to select from the text of Luke. But if "Mark" then existed, why should he not have cited Mark also, in this as in many other connections? To discuss the problem at this point would confuse the issue. It is dealt with in the Appendix.

try to overpower Jesus, "for they said that he dements them," is much more plausible. But inasmuch as Dr. Schmiedel assumes that the idea of presenting the God as charged with madness could not be invented by believers in him, the whole case is nugatory. The presentment of a demigod as distraught is one of the prominent features of pagan mythology; and when the charge, as in Mark, is said to be made by the God-Man's associates, and nevertheless to be false, it is visibly a *likely* invention. Among other things, it disparages the Jews and the disciples, but not Jesus.

If this answer be repelled, let the antagonist apply Dr. Schmiedel's argument to the cult of Herakles, as exhibited to us in the *Hercules Œtaeus* of Seneca.¹ There the irresistible demigod, victor over all foes, including "death and hell," is made first to boast of his invincibility, and then, under torture, to shriek and weep. Is it to be argued, then, that those who worshipped him as the mightiest of demigods "could not have invented" a myth which shows him overthrown by the centaur's fraud, and reduced to grovel on the earth in his pain; and that therefore there *must* have been a Herakles who so suffered? And so with the story of his madness in the *Hercules Furens*? These would seem to be corollaries of Dr. Schmiedel's plea.

5. To found on the passage in Matthew xii, 31 *sq.*, declaring blasphemy against "the Son of Man" to be pardonable, seems an unfortunate step on Dr. Schmiedel's part. The passage is visibly part of the theological procedure to establish the super-sanctity of the Holy Ghost, formulated for clerical use in the Acts story of Ananias and Sapphira.

¹ See above, p. 71.

6. Hardly more plausible is the claim that the text (Mk. xiii, 32): "But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father," would not be invented by believers in the God-Man. That the Son was "a little lower than" the Father was the natural first position of the Christists. Before them, the Jewish Jesuists of the *Didaché*—echoed in Acts iii, 13, 26—made Jesus the "Servant" of the Father. But that he is "fulfilling the will of the Father" is the common gospel position. In not knowing all the counsels of the Father he is simply put on a level with the younger Gods of Olympus.

7. Distinctly stronger is the claim that the cry of despair on the cross (Mk. xv, 24; Mt. xxvii, 48), "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is unlikely to be a Christian invention. But this "pillar," as it happens, has been destroyed for us by Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter, who in his 'First Three Gospels,' *after* using this very argument, adopts Schleiermacher's view that the phrase, which derives from Psalm xxii, is meant to suggest the whole Psalm, which closes in hope.¹ Those who may be too much scandalized by the tactics of Dr. Carpenter to adopt a view which he endorses, must remember (*a*) that he is not its first framer, and (*b*) that to regard the God-Man as drinking the cup of the bitterness of death is really part of the complete dogma of his saving sacrifice. A God who died tranquilly, knowing his immortality, would not meet that conception. Besides, the Psalm supplied the usual traditionary motive. And, yet further, as the Chorus in the *Suppliants* of Æschylus (213–215), praying to "holy Apollo,

¹ Work cited, 3rd ed., pp. 300, 348.

a God once exiled from heaven," recall to him that experience, and adjure him therefore to be benign to mortals, so would the Christists wish that their God should be able to feel for them.

8. The passage (Mk. viii, 12; Mt. xii, 39; xvi, 4; Lk. xi, 29) concluding: "There shall no sign be given unto this generation," does not at all serve Dr. Schmiedel's purpose; on the contrary, it creates a bad dilemma for himself. On his view, Jesus was a man making no pretensions to supernatural status. Then how should such a man declare that "there shall no sign be given to this generation"? The vaticination implies that he *could* give "signs" but will not: a claim to supernatural power, with the additional claim of a supernatural knowledge that no one else will give them. In all three synoptics it is the Son of God who is speaking. And if we suppose the full Matthew text to be the earlier form, the curtailment by Mark is perfectly intelligible in view of the obscurity of the whole passage.

9. At first sight the Marcan text (vi, 5; cp. Mt. xiii, 53 *sq.*; Lk. iv, 16-30), "And he could there do no mighty works, *save* that he laid hands on *a few* sick folk and healed them," is something of a "pillar" for Dr. Schmiedel, inasmuch as it naïvely declares the healings to depend on the faith of the patients. But it would surely be demanding too much theoretic precision of a believer to call on him to recognize that this was a limitation of the God-Man's power to create faith. The doctrine of the potency of faith is by him expressly inculcated in the gospels. To dwell on the amount of unbelief shown in Galilee was quite in keeping with one side of an evangel which exhorted all to believe in order to be saved.

But, as usual, the chosen pillar turns out to be only a new danger to the main thesis. The scene of failure is Nazareth, the home of the God-Man. The family are not named, or, at this point, even mentioned. Mark, claimed as the first evangelist, has here none of the names given in Matthew (xiii, 55). From him we have only, in the next section, the story of "his mother and his brethren," with a notable difference from Mt. xii, 49. There Jesus "stretched forth his hand *towards his disciples*, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren": in Mark (iii, 34) he is "glancing round in a circle on those that were seated about him," as T. S. Green renders it. Here we have, as it were, a claim for an institution of "Brothers of the Lord," *not* the Twelve, and *not* uterine brothers, as against an older myth in which the Lord is grouped with mother, brothers, and sisters.

Curiously, we are thus left with only a new and strong doubt concerning the whole "testimony." The proverb has latterly turned up among the *logia* found in Egyptian papyri, in the form: "A prophet is not received in his own city, and a doctor works no cures on those who know him"—a piece of cynicism that suggests a not very dominical origin. Such *logia* circulated as "of Jesus." What are they worth, biographically? To what Jesus were they assigned? Some of them Christians would like to accept; some they will not.

Finally, we are led to surmise that the gospel passages under notice originated under stress of the difficulty that there was no trace left of the influence of Jesus in his own country. As Professor Smith has pointed out, Galilee plays no part in the history of the cult after the death of Jesus. There is no Galilean Church. How could the

evangelists account for the situation save by telling that in Nazareth there was no faith—albeit at the cost of discrediting their own account of the Galilean ministry in general, to say nothing of the Matthæan details about his family? If such an explanation be not accepted, there is one left: that, apart from and before the gospel “movement,” there were current *Logia Jesou* such as those latterly dug up in Egypt; that the gospel-makers took such *logia* as they came, giving them to “the Christ.” Either way, where is the support for the biographical view as against the myth theory? In the face of Professor Schmiedel’s claim, Dr. Rudolf Bultmann decides that the story of the rejection at Nazareth is sheer invention!

10. Of Professor Schmiedel’s nine “pillar texts” there remain to be considered two (Mk. viii, 14–21; Mt. xi, 5 = Lk. vii, 22), dealing with the rebuke to the disciples concerning bread and leaven, and the message to the Baptist as to the wonders wrought by Jesus. Here the argument becomes highly embarrassing for the biographical school in general, inasmuch as Professor Schmiedel takes the whole recital by Jesus to allege *spiritual* healings only, and thus to countersay all the stories of miraculous healing; and this view, save for certain phrases, entirely satisfies Professor Smith as expounding the myth theory, and equally Professor Drews, who has latterly developed the symbolistic theory of Mark with great fullness!

Those of us who find a difficulty in conceiving that the gospel according to Mark primarily puts forward an *entirely* symbolical doctrine, in which all stories of healing mean merely conversions of polytheists to monotheism, and that the other synoptics uncomprehendingly literalized the whole,

must for the present leave the biographical school to turn the argument to their account, with Professor Schmiedel granting to two leading myth theorists almost exactly what they want!

Some supporters of the biographical view, approving of Dr. Schmiedel's method, might be expected to add to his pillars.¹ For instance, something might be made of Mark vii, 27, and Matthew xv, 26—the accost to the Syro-Phœnician woman, classifying the heathen as “dogs.” On the modern principle that Mark *must* have come first, they might argue that he, the Paulinist, would never have invented so harsh a saying for the Lord. Dr. Vernon Bartlet, indeed, has framed an engaging explanation to the effect that Mark's word *kunarion*, being a diminutive (= “doggie”), suggests a genial twinkle in the Master's eye, and a kindly intonation! But Dr. Bartlet's argumentation seldom carries much weight, and never less than here. There is rather more in the Jewish protest of Dr. Klausner, that “if any other Jewish teacher of the time had said such a thing, Christians would never have forgiven Judaism for it.”

This is so far justified that, as we learn from Dr. Montefiore's commentary, “some Christian commentators are much exercised by this story. ‘It is sad enough,’ says one, ‘that a Jewish Christian was still capable of *inventing* it. It is “incredible” that Jesus would have hesitated to help anybody on

¹ Professor W. B. Smith, in the Postscript to his *Ecce Deus* (p. 339), remarks that the Matthæan verse xi, 19 (cp. Lk. vii, 14), citing the reproach of “gluttonous and a wine-bibber,” has long seemed to him “by far the most plausible that the historicists can produce.” The abstention of Dr. Schmiedel from the employment of that, however, is readily intelligible. It is, in any case, evidence of a conflict of Christian views as to whether the Christ should or should not be an ascetic, a “Nazirite,” or a normal man.

the ground that he or she was not a Jew.'” Is not this, then, a “pillar” for those who believe in the priority of Mark? Would *he* have “invented” such a saying for the Lord? Sooth to say, coming in Mark, it is one of the hundred-and-one arguments *against* the priority of Mark. It is a Matthæan story, expressing the older Judaistic attitude, albeit “Matthew” (a late redactor, surely) relates the concession, which duly exalts the principle of “faith.” And “Mark” (or a redactor), finding it in Matthew, accepts it as mediating between the Judaists and the Paulinists.

And still the biographical theory is not helped, when some Christian commentators refuse to believe that Jesus can have called Gentiles dogs. Neither Dr. Schmiedel’s “pillars,” in short, nor any others selected on his principles, will avail to save the historicity of Jesus. The more faithfully we reason on any text, the more surely we seem to be driven—“some Christian commentators” helping—to the solution that it is all myth, be the logion “good” or “bad.”

Dr. C. G. Montefiore, that most liberal of Jews, frankly friendly to all that he finds “good” in the gospels, is heartily ready to praise Jesus for the “great” logion of Mark, vii, 15, declaring against all concepts of external religious defilement—albeit he justly defends the Rabbis at other points. Yet his own commentary reveals that such ideas, which he strangely calls “new,” were long before current in Greece; so that Christians of the second century were able to improve their gospel ethic at points by pagan leading. Dr. Rudolf Bultmann, whom he quotes, has advanced the sane and sound solution that those stories of debates between Jesus and the Pharisees on religious defilement are simply

expressions of a much later debate between Judaizing and Gentilizing Christians, with the Gentilizing view referred back to the Lord. And Dr. Bultmann in turn, in the teeth of his own just inference, holds that the logion is "most authentic"!

Kept free of many presuppositions by his Jewish descent and training, and laying no violent stress on these, Dr. Montefiore nevertheless yields absolutely to the presupposition of the historicity of Jesus, as do most Jewish scholars of all shades of opinion. But never does he face the myth solution, even in the act of abandoning the entire body of myths of action and great quantities of the Teaching. On one page (xcviii) of his Introduction¹ he quotes from Luke the "Father forgive them!" as one of the noblest sayings in the Gospels, and comments: "But this verse is very possibly not authentic."² "Can anything be imagined more superb," he adds, than the passage in Matthew, xxv, 34-40, which is found in Matthew only? "But is it not more than probable," he goes on, "that this passage was not spoken by, and was later than, Jesus?"

He may well ask. The passage embodies a compend of a standard section in the Egyptian 'Book of the Dead';³ and is quite certainly a late addition to the gospels. Yet, thus confessing the extraneous character of some of the "best" of the

¹ Second edition, 1927.

² He might have added that it is pagan. See Montaigne's third essay, recounting a Greek record from Diodorus Siculus, xiii, 21 (102). The text is noted in R.V. as absent from several ancient codices; and its authenticity was expressly denied by Cyril, as against a citation of it by Julian. See T. Whittaker's *Neo-Platonists*, 2nd ed. p. 145.

³ See *Christianity and Mythology*, 2nd ed. p. 392, and refs. there given.

gospel *logia*, he cites approvingly on the opposite page the claim of Wundt that, while "the outward life of Jesus is a tissue of legends," there is no counterpart in the pagan myths to "the *series* of sayings and speeches of Jesus *as they had been handed down* to us in the Synoptic Gospels." As if that reasoning would not validate the "sayings" in the Fourth Gospel! As if there were not a vast mass of added sayings ascribed to Buddha! As if there had not been ascribed to David and Solomon whole books that they never wrote!

Thus do theologically-trained scholars continue to darken counsel through the survival in them of the faulty modes of ratiocination which all theological training and religious sentiment engender, however humane and truth-loving be their cast of mind. Let the rest of us be the more careful to recognize the measure of their better service, which is large.

§ 3. *Arguments of Dr. Burkitt*

In some respects the Norrisian Professor of Divinity at Cambridge is more circumspect than Dr. Schmiedel in his no less temperate argumentation in favour of the historic character of the gospels. Like him, he only indirectly puts the *à priori* plea; but neither does he claim to indicate texts which "cannot have been invented." In his little book of three lectures on 'Christian Beginnings' (1924) he even mutes the note to the extent of resignedly confessing that ere long the problem of Christian Beginnings will cease to excite much interest. "We have lost our beliefs in the authority of the Past." Any audacity can find free currency. "But, alas, the old interest is dying." The people who remain religious "tend more and

more to rely on 'Experience.'” In a word, the more intelligent church-people are turning away.

Still, however, he tranquilly propounds reasons for believing that the gospels and the epistles proceed on a real tradition ; and he does not appear to suspect that his arguments, all of them indicating the subjectivity of the documents, can tend to prepare his readers to accept the myth theory. Thus he shows that the title of “Lord” (*Kyrios*) plays a small part in Matthew and Mark, and that the formula “the Lord Jesus Christ” is inferably a product of the Greek-speaking Church at Antioch. The earlier gospels, it follows, are true to the fact that “Lord” was not the usage in Jewry.

For the myth theorist, of course, this creates no obstacle. Matthew is formed in the Jewish environment, and will not trade on a form not in Jewish use, whatsoever redactors may add. Mark, written (as the experts are again inclining to admit) in a Roman environment, for the same reason restricts the use of the term to the Syro-Phoenician woman. Luke simply exhibits the extending Hellenistic influence. But the argument was framed in a reasonable spirit, and it makes an approach to cogency that is never begun in the shouting derision of the brigade who dispose of the myth theory with the “must” formula.

It is in his earlier, but revised, work on ‘The Gospel History and its Transmission’ (1906-7-11) that Professor Burkitt most fully develops his inductive argument. But it is there that the pseudo-inductive argument most disastrously reveals its infirmity. Even his confident defence of the assumption of the priority of Mark must have revealed to many the factitiousness of that thesis, which has really won its ground because the

absence of the fabulous Birth Story from Mark promises *ad hoc* a sounder historical basis. In every case, the passages reproduced by Dr. Burkitt from Sir John Hawkins fit perfectly well with the view that Mark is a selection from Matthew and Luke. It is significant that the Marcan school never *try* that hypothesis on their passages.

We have already seen that the Marcan version of the "Why callest thou me good?" episode is critically intelligible only as a manipulation by redactors to the purpose of making Jesus press the querist to an admission that Jesus is divine. That interpretation, which concurs with the exegesis of the early Fathers, is mentioned neither by Dr. Chase, whom Dr. Burkitt quotes, nor by himself. They are blissfully confident that Mark was allowing Jesus to deny his divinity; though the exegete frankly confesses that "our Evangelists altered freely the earlier sources which they used," and "does not assert that they were trustworthy, or even truthful."

But it is in his general or ultimate defence that Dr. Burkitt most completely wrecks his venture. For he stakes his case on the thesis that alike the most obvious importations or disarrangements of doctrine and the most incredible fictions of event prove the historicity of Jesus by showing "that the total impression of the life and words of Jesus of Nazareth *made the Evangelist write in this manner, and made the Society for which he wrote accept the portrait he has drawn.*"

That is to say, the more reckless the narrator, the more blindly credulous the audience, the more certain is the abnormal greatness of the Personality which is the subject of the fictions. There can be no mistake about Dr. Burkitt's meaning:

he reiterates it through four pages (ed. 1925, pp. 24-27).

"We shall be told," he writes, "that the Sermon on the Mount itself is not a true discourse at all: it is a cento of more or less detached sayings, grouped under heads, and many of these sayings, *even if they be genuine*, belong to the later stages of the Ministry.....All this is more or less justifiable historical criticism.....

"But this is not all. The course of events is important, *but the effect produced upon us by the course of events* is still more important. What was the effect which *the course of events*, the Life of Jesus Christ on earth, produced on our First Evangelist? *Was it not this*, that it *made him arrange His Gospel as it stands for us to read?*"

In other words, the more false witness the better! The more unhistorical the testimony, the greater must have been the inspiring Personality!

"The more a rigorously objective criticism impels us to regard this and that traditional saying of Christ as a later accretion into the Gospel legend, how much more wonderful, how much more forceful, must He have been round whose Personality *grew up not only the stories of the Nativity and the Temptation but also the parables* of the Prodigal Son and of the Pharisee and the Publican?"

The stories are admittedly fables; the best parables are admittedly post-Jesuine; but how much the more remarkable must Jesus have been, of whom such stories could be framed, and *for* whom such parables could be invented! As who should say, What a poet David *must* have been, to have the Psalms ascribed to him!

After such a desperate paralogism, one pauses to draw breath. Avoiding the ordinary "must have been" futility, Dr. Burkitt eclipses it by a theorem from which, one would suppose, the ordinary apriorist must recoil. Yet there it is, a staggering illustration of the power of a presupposition to lead a liberal, enlightened, and candid scholar to logical

vertigo. It is therefore necessary to indicate to possibly bewildered readers a few of the logical implications.

1. Krishna, concerning whom far more wonders are recorded than were invented for Jesus, must have been a much more wonderful personality still. And the (late) Bhagavat Gîta, which endows Krishna with a mystical philosophy, must be taken as proving the "impression" made by his personality on his followers.

2. Only a marvellous personality could have inspired the inventions concerning a Herakles, a Dionysos, an Orpheus, an Osiris, or a Mithra; and only a supremely sagacious actual woman can have inspired the myth of Athênê. (In point of fact, in the eighteenth century Mosheim, the soundest ecclesiastical historian of his time, was convinced that only remarkable Personalities, achieving great exploits, could have given rise to the cults of Mithra and Hermes.)

3. The same line of argument might be made to "prove" the historicity of Hamlet, conceived as Shakespeare conceived him.

4. By the consent of the leading Hebrew scholars, the Book of Joshua is entirely unhistorical. By the test of Dr. Burkitt, however, its narratives, including the staying of the sun, decisively prove the immense impression made by the personality of an otherwise untraced Joshua. Who was he? The present writer's answer is that he was a God; but that would probably not be conceded by Dr. Burkitt.

5. The logical application of Dr. Burkitt's principles to hierology in general would yield the theorem that the cults of Yahweh, Zeus, Bel, Brahma, all the cults of all the "High" Gods of

ancient religions, must proceed on the impression made by them as great human Personalities on the poets and prophets who acclaimed them as Gods; and the fact that Zeus and Hêrê are about the most realistically depicted personages in the *Iliad* would go to prove that Zeus, at least, must once have been a very remarkable man indeed. That kind of reasoning is as old as Evêmeros: the astonishing thing is to find it freshly adopted by an accomplished modern theologian and scholar.

Dr. Burkitt might perhaps obtain a glimpse of the enormity of his logic if he would in this connection cast a dispassionate eye over the dedication of the Authorized English Version to the Most High and Mighty Prince James. Doubtless James's predecessor had made an impression that validated the figure of that "bright *Occidental Star*," but it has not been commonly held, even in the Church of England, that seven years of James had created a real working conception of him as comparatively "the Sun in his strength," otherwise "that sanctified Person who, under God, is the immediate author of their true happiness." It is now common, among laymen, to decide that the dedication proves, not the supernal attributes of James, but the capacity of theologians to suppress truth and suggest falsehood.

If then a company of sober and serious and pious English scholars, in the year 1611, could thus solemnly present to his contemporaries the figure of the actual James I, what specifiable reason is there for denying that in the first and second centuries of the Christian era devout and ignorant believers in a God-Man could possibly invent astonishing attributes for a Founder whom they had never seen at all; or for concluding that

the more startling the story, the more marvellous must he have been?

It is irksome to have to frame and press such considerations as against such a publicist. His earnest argument, seriously considered, is in effect a negation of every real critical canon acknowledged in modern historiography. It belongs to the psychology of the medieval believers in the Lives of the Saints—with the difference that it posits as a process of reasoning what they accepted without any pretence of reasoning at all. It seriously calls upon us to recognize that Samson *must* have been a very remarkable man *because* it is told that he slew a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass, and accordingly *cannot* be a sun-myth. "Not for nothing," as Dr. Burkitt predicates, can the stories of the labours of Samson and Herakles have been glyphed and penned.

It must at least be conceded that, after all, the non-reasoners who dispose of the myth theory by the alternate formulas of Pooh and Bah are wise in their generation. They may claim, as against the debaters, to illustrate the force of the counsel: "Give your judgment; but do not give your reasons."

§ 4. *The Argument from Josephus*

We have seen that, under the pressure of the myth theory, there is a growing anxiety on the side of the defence to found on the long discredited "testimony" of Josephus to the historicity of Jesus. The great majority of New Testament scholars appear still to hold, with Dr. Klausner, that a Jew and a Pharisee, as was Josephus, could not conceivably have written that Jesus "was the Christ," since that would have amounted, on his

part, to a declaration that he was a Christian. But even that position is disputed by Dr. Burkitt, doubtless because he sees that the "silence of Josephus" is one of the strongest documentary grounds for rejecting the historicity of Jesus. His argument is that we misconceive the significance of such a phrase as "he was the Messiah" in the mouth of a Jew; and that Josephus might quite well have used it. The theory appears to have satisfied neither Jewish nor Christian scholars, and certainly cannot appeal to the impartial rationalist. It is, in fact, a case of the wish being father to the thought.

Let us, however, faithfully scrutinize anew the disputed passage¹ as a whole, transcribing it from Shilletto's revision of Whiston's translation for the reader's convenience, and noting (1) that the preceding paragraph deals solely with the indignation of the Jews at Pilate's use of "the sacred money" to pay for a supply of water to Jerusalem, and the consequent slaying of a great number of them, rioters and non-rioters indiscriminately, by Pilate's soldiers, outgoing Pilate's commands. The paragraph ends with "Thus an end was put to the insurrection"; and it is to be noted (2) that section 4 of the chapter begins: "*About the same time, also, another sad calamity troubled the Jews.*" Between these passages comes § 3:—

"*Now about this time lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it be lawful to call him a man. For he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of men who receive the truth with pleasure; and drew over to him many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the information of the leading men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him at first did not cease to do so. For he appeared to them alive again the*

¹ *Antiquities*, B. xviii, ch. iii, § 3.

third day, as the divine prophets had foretold this and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."

The attentive reader will at once observe that the suspected passage is introduced exactly in the manner of the introduction of the story of the Lord's impeachment of Judas in Matthew and Mark, and of other gospel interpolations before noted, by the use of *the opening phrase of the passage next following*. One might almost infer that the same interpolator had been at work. But if the reader is not alive to the significance of that phenomenon, let him look to the sequence of the paragraphs. That preceding our § 3 relates a real calamity befalling the Jews. That following professes to relate another. Whether that section in turn (given up as it is to a story of priestly frauds at Rome, and ending: "I now return to the relation of what happened about this time to the Jews at Rome, as I said before I should") is not also open to suspicion is a question for the textual editors of Josephus.¹ But that § 3 is a Christian forgery is a matter to be realized by every student of Christian origins. By its elimination the text proceeds at least intelligibly. By its protrusion as an account of a "calamity that troubled the Jews" we are forced to recognize a gross incongruity.

¹ It is to be noted that a distinguished scholar, Dr. Rudolf Steck (see Dr. Smith's *Ecce Deus*, p. 340), has advanced the interesting hypothesis that Josephus may have inserted, in the place of the forged § 3, a section describing Jesus in terms of the Jewish "Ben Panthera" story, making him illegitimate and an impostor; and that this would connect naturally with § 4. Similar suggestions of a "something else excised" have been current since Renan. But a "Ben Panthera" story, on the lines of the *Toledoth Jeschu*, would be a deadly "pillar" for the historicity of the gospel Jesus.

Dr. Klausner, confident that Josephus could not have called Jesus the Messiah or have admitted that he rose from the dead as the divine prophets had foretold, with "ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him," is yet satisfied to accept the rest, having no eye for the phenomena of total interpolation. Albert Reville, he pronounces, "rightly argues that no Christian interpolator would speak of Jesus as 'a wise man' and so necessitate the further interpolation 'if it be lawful to call him a man.' Nor would a Christian interpolator be satisfied to apply to Jesus the general term 'wonderful works,' or call his disciples simply 'lovers'; nor would he have given the Christians such a name as 'race' or 'tribe' (*φῦλον*) with its nuance of contempt."

The value of a critic's judgment is to be measured by, among other things, the propositions he puts as self-evident; and the value of Dr. Klausner's confidence in this case may be left to the estimate of the reader. He is in effect arguing that no Christian interpolator of a Jewish document would stop short of the strongest expressions of Christian belief, though the stronger the expressions the surer would be his detection.

It would really be more plausible to suggest that a Christian clever enough to forge anything would have hesitated to insert "He was the Christ"; and that that may well be a super-interpolation. But on the other hand we have to remember that the forgery had to be a laudatory testimony if, from the Christian standpoint of the second or third century, it was to be worth having at all. It could not then be foreseen that the day would come when Christian scholars could be in a mood to be profoundly thankful for a genuine paragraph in Josephus

aspersing Jesus as a false prophet crucified either for making Messianic claims or for profaning the temple!

Thus the argument from the Josephan paragraph stands in no way salved, and in no way vindicated against the mass of criticism that has been passed upon it by scholars of all critical schools. No apologist has ever overcome the solid negative inference from the fact that Origen in his reply to Celsus never once quotes from the Josephan passage, which would have been of so much value to him as a Jewish testimony. No inference is critically possible save that Origen had never seen or heard of the passage, which must have been inserted after his time.

The fact that Origen does repeatedly quote from the reference in Josephus to James the Just is the crowning proof that he knew nothing of the other passage. And the reasons for regarding that passage also as interpolated *before the time of Origen* are irresistible for those who recognize the spurious character of the paragraph on Jesus. Josephus is made to say (*Ant.* xx, ix, § 1) that the high priest Ananus (the second) "assembled the sanhedrim of judges and brought before them *the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James,*¹ and some others, and having accused them as breakers of the law, he delivered them over to be stoned." Here the very phrasing tells of manipulation. The naming of James would be the *first* thing after "brought before them," in a natural narrative.

It is easy to understand that those who, like

¹ Literally "the brother of Jesus, him called Christ (James was his name)". See above, section i, as to the whole problem.

Dr. Burkitt, believe this passage to be genuine, should be encouraged to stand by the other; but the improbability of its genuineness is so great that it has been urged by many scholars who had no doubts of the historicity of Jesus. And the answers made to the charge of spuriousness by orthodox scholars are not only bad in themselves but, as has been shown by Professor W. B. Smith, are really pointers to their own refutation. As Professor Smith writes, in the collection of studies which he has entitled 'Ecce Deus':—

"The words in italics have been regarded as spurious—we think correctly. Neander and others defend them, and McGiffert says ('The Church History of Eusebius,' p. 127, n. 39): 'It is very difficult to suppose that a Christian, in interpolating the passage, would have referred to James as the brother of the "*so-called* Christ.'" Indeed! On the contrary, it is just because this phrase is the most approved Christian, evangelic, and canonic that we suspect it in Josephus. It meets us in Matthew i, 16; xxvii, 17, 22; John iv, 25. *The depreciatory 'so' is not in the Greek.* Thus we read of 'Simon the *so-called* Peter' (Mt. iv, 18; x, 2), 'the high-priest the *so-called* Caiaphas' (Mt. xxvi, 3), 'the feast the *so-called* Passover' (Lk. xxii, 1), 'the man the *so-called* Jesus' (John ix, 11), 'Thomas the *so-called* Didymus' (Jn. xi, 16; xx, 24; xxi, 2), 'gate the *so-called* Beautiful' (Acts iii, 2), 'tent the *so-called* Holy of Holies' (Heb. ix, 3), where depreciation is out of the question. The indication is merely that of a surname or nickname, or name in some way peculiar or extraordinary."

And the presumption of Christian tampering with the copy of Josephus used by Origen (though it ante-dated the forgery in xviii, iii, § 3) is highly strengthened by the fact that he cites in his reply to Celsus (i, 47; ii, 13) other passages from the 'Antiquities' ascribing the calamities of the Jews to the crime of slaying James the Just. As these passages are found only in a few MSS. of Josephus, and are absent from others, they must be regarded

as spurious ; and if this be so, the spuriousness of the first reference to James as the brother of Christ becomes still more probable.

Even if it were not, the phrase "brother of Jesus," as we have already noted, would be no proof of physical consanguinity. On such points, it need hardly be said, the ordinary defenders of the historicity say nothing. The whole question as to the Josephus passages was fully debated by Professor W. B. Smith, and by Professor Drews in his volume on 'The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus.'¹ Yet further, Professor Smith in his 'Ecce Deus' advances (as does Professor Drews) a crushing array of arguments against the authenticity of the passage in Tacitus concerning the burning of Christians by Nero—arguments which no scrupulous historical critic would ignore. But from the latest "biographers" of Jesus there comes no mention of, no attempt at an answer to, the arguments against them. "Theirs not to reason." Their simple task is to asseverate.

If Dr. Klausner had been concerned to handle in scholarly fashion the problem of the Josephus section concerning Jesus, he would have taken account of Professor Smith's exposition of its New Testament phraseology. The phrase "that receive the truth with pleasure" points directly to these: "receive the word with joy" (Luke viii, 13); "received the word with all zeal" (Acts xvii, 11); "receive with meekness the engrafted word" (James i, 21). The very phrase "until now" points to the "unto this day" of Matthew xxviii, 15. To his own argument that a Christian would not use such a general term as "wonderful works" for

¹ Eng. trans. R. P. A., 1912.

the miracles, it is a sufficient reply, further, that "wonderful works" is no more a belittling expression than "wonderful things" in Matthew xxi, 15.¹ Had he been a disinterested truth-seeker he would have noted for himself what had been pointed out by Professor Smith, that the § 3 section is written in clear short sentences, like so much of the gospels, and quite unlike the involved sentences of the Josephan style. In fine, the latter-day vindication of the Josephan forgery, zealously begun twenty years ago by way of repelling the myth theory, does but proceed from bad to worse, as is the way of all factious defences of false causes.

We have to take account, however, of the already mentioned attempt of Dr. Vacher Burch to establish the theory that in his Aramaic original Josephus penned things which have disappeared from the Greek 'Wars of the Jews.' A study of that attempt will be found to convey the strongest impression of the hopelessness of the whole Josephan argument. During the past twenty years students have from time to time heard of that remarkable discovery of a North Russian translation of the 'Wars of the Jews,' in a manuscript "to be dated somewhere in the late Middle Ages." The "Christian" passages began being discussed by continental scholars in 1906; and in 1924 Mr. G. R. S. Mead translated them into English. The complete text has not yet been published; but that, probably, is of little importance.

The burning question is as to the claim that there were certain passages in Josephus' 'Wars,' in

¹ The Greek terms are different, but the values are the same, as our version testifies.

its original Aramaic or Hebrew form, which were dropped from his Greek translation ; and that those are preserved in the Slavonic translation, which, we are told, can be seen to have been made from the original. When we come to the main passage the claim simply collapses. It is visibly a development of the familiar forged passage in the 'Antiquities,' with the interesting difference that here the Scribes are declared to have offered *Pilate* "thirty talents" to kill Jesus, who has been described mainly in the manner of the pseudo-Josephan passage, with additions, some of which are plainly suggested by the gospels. We get, for instance, the item that it was the habit of Jesus to stay on the Mount of Olives ; and there is an allusion to Pilate's wife's dream.

As for the reasons for believing that Josephus wrote this passage in his original and dropped it in the Greek version, we get from Dr. Burch two propositions, of which it is hard to say which is the feebler. The first is that "No early Christian could have written this," and that "it would be a *greater* impossibility for this to have been written by a Christian hand after the first two centuries." There could be no idler assertion. Thus to pretend to limit the possibility of fraud in either early or medieval Christian literature is a proceeding unworthy of a scholar who knows that the literary frauds of those ages are past counting.

But we need only carry the argument of Dr. Burch to its consequences to realize that it is for him a fatal device. If the passage cannot have been written by a Christian, but could have been written by a Jew, it could obviously have been written by a Jewish forger. And Dr. Burch, as it happens, supplies us with a ground for con-

fessing that a Jewish forger might conceivably find his way into even a Christian document.

He has proclaimed (p. 32) the little-known fact, unmentioned in our Variorum Bibles, that Acts xviii, 4, in the version of Codex Bezae, runs: "On entering into the synagogue every Sabbath-day he [Paul] conversed, *inserting the name of the Lord Jesus*, and persuaded not only the Jews, but Greeks." Could a Christian hand have invented that? If not, must the passage be a true record? And if it be not a true record, who more likely to have invented it, *prima facie*, than a Jew?

Truly, the path of the defender of the faith is strewn with pitfalls. The thesis which appears to be central to Dr. Burch's book is that Jesus must always be thought of as a "Revealer"; that to everything he takes from previous Jewish literature, canonical or uncanonical, he gives a "revealing" quality; and that any given moral maxim, put in the customary words, becomes in his hands a new thing. And even this thesis is of old standing, having been put by Paul Janet, among others, seventy years ago. It is for the critical reader perhaps the most empty of the variants of the *à priori* argument. But it is perhaps, nevertheless, a safer gambit than the attempt to extract from Christian or Jewish forgeries in Josephus fresh evidence for the historicity of Jesus.

III.—THE *À PRIORI* ARGUMENT

§ 1. *Its Vogue and its Nullity*

We are thus left with the familiar *à priori* argument, all forms of *à posteriori* reasoning for

the defence having been found invalid. And the à priori argument, *prima facie*, is actually more plausible than the ostensibly à posteriori argument of Dr. Burkitt: "The greater the fiction, the more certain is the greatness of the Personality so embellished." The ordinary apriorist does not frame such an explicit paralogism. He argues simply that *so* remarkable a movement, *so* remarkable a teaching, must start from a uniquely powerful Personality; and that the accretion of fables and fictions is in the ordinary way of early hieroglyphy.

Further, the assumption is not confined to Christians or theists. It was vehemently propounded by Sir J. G. Frazer, twenty years ago, with general reference to discussion then on foot. As he has not replied to the critical rebuttal then made, and has more recently supplied a not antipathetic preface to the English translation of Dr. Couchoud's *Le Mystère de Jésus*, which upholds the myth theory, the illustrious anthropologist may be supposed to have recognized that his scorn and his reasoning had been alike hasty, and that his own mythological canons were against him. Still, other agnostics may and do stand to the general position that "there must have been" a historical Jesus, largely answering to the gospel figure. But how can they make the thesis stand?

It is fairly obvious that the position is dictated by a spontaneous revolt against the notion that such a great "historic fact" as the Christian Church and its creed, with the chronology of the "Christian era," can have arisen out of sheer fiction and delusion. That inference seems too humiliating to the human spirit, too wounding to the instinctive sense of "reality," to permit of its acceptance. But what of historic novelty is involved

in such a theorem? The dating of the Birth of Christ is on a par with the dating of the beginning of the world, and the equally speculative dating of the foundation of Rome. And that is not all. Till the other day, it was the standing ground of all Christians that their faith was founded on "the fact of the Resurrection." It certainly did so stand, for nigh eighteen hundred years. And how many educated men now believe in the Resurrection?

In abandoning that, the "historicists" confess that a vast delusion *can* yield a great historic processus, a colossal series of institutions. For the rest, it is only the heredity of Christian arrogance that keeps men insisting that delusion cannot have been the mainspring of the religion of *their* civilization when they take for granted, without even staying to argue the question, that delusion was the mainspring of the age-long religions of the East, of Egypt, of pagan Greece and Rome, and of the vast welter of the animisms of the savage.

In the eighteenth century the argument which is now relied on to establish the historicity of Jesus was as confidently put to establish the supernatural truth of the entire scheme of Christian theology which the historicists themselves have abandoned. It was thus put by the aged Young, with the pious assent of Cowper:—

"The fall of man, the redemption of man, and the resurrection of man, the three cardinal articles of our religion, are such as *human ingenuity could never have invented*, therefore they must be divine."¹

An age which has accumulated a lore of anthropology unknown to Young and Cowper can realize

¹ Cowper's letter to Lady Hesketh, July 12, 1765.

that such an argument amounts to exactly nothing. Is the later use, then, any sounder?

The general answer to Sir J. G. Frazer was that the alleged necessity of a "powerful Personality" does not in the least validate the particular assumption made, seeing that a number of powerful personalities may have been engaged in the making of the gospels, even as powerful prophets proclaimed the actuality of Yahweh and delivered his messages. On this head, indeed, we have from a hot opponent of the myth theory a pronouncement which makes a sad breach in the Personality thesis, as commonly put. It is the late Dr. Estlin Carpenter who writes¹: "Those who plead that the Church should go 'back to Jesus' must never forget that but for Paul there would (humanly speaking) have been no Church at all."

That is to say, the Great Personality (acclaimed as such by Dr. Carpenter) *could not*, without the work of Paul, have achieved the historical influence which is actually the main ground on which the average apriorist takes for certain the existence of the said Personality. The collision of pleas is surely fatal to one. Which?

A perhaps greater theologian than Dr. Carpenter, the renowned F. C. Baur, put in another form a proposition equipollent with his: "How soon would everything true and important taught by Christianity have been relegated to the order of the long-faded sayings of the noble humanitarians and thinking sages of antiquity, had not its teachings become words of eternal life in the mouth of its Founder!" In other words, the dogmas of Divine

¹ Pref. to English trans. of *Paul*, by the late Professor W. Wrede, 1907.

Sonship, Divine Sacrifice, Eternal Salvation by Faith, are the real foundations and effective factors in the maintenance of the Church : not the inferred human Personality. A Personality, however great, would not have sufficed without the machinery of dogma. If this is true, the "must" argument is already eviscerated, if not exanimated.

Reverse the order of reasoning, and we come again to the positions already indicated in regard to the unquestioned vitality of cults in the historicity of whose "founders" nobody now believes. If millions of men could worship during thousands of years an Osiris, a Krishna, an Adonis, by virtue of habit and efficient priestly organizations, what more reason is there for inferring great primary personalities behind those names than in the cases of Bel and Brahma, Yahweh and Zeus?

It needs no Founder to establish an intense conviction of Godhood. In the day of Plato, if we may rely on the dialogue in the 'Laws,' some men were capable of a fierce resentment of the denial of the divinity of the Sun. The account of it by Anaxagoras as a large white-hot mass bigger than the Peloponnesus roused them to a spirit of murderous retaliation.¹ To suppose that only a real personality can evoke the devotion of uncounted myriads through whole ages is to announce substantial ignorance of the mass of hierology.

§ 2. *Its Analysis*

The apriorist argument, as we have seen, is already stultified for most of those who use it by the avowals made by their allies. Everybody, out-

¹ *Laws*, x.

side the pale of blind faith within which men believe in the Ascension, recognizes myth somewhere in the records. The scholars who alone are debated with in these pages have given up the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, the miracles, the mission of the Seventy, the trial before Herod, many of the *logia*, and the historicity of the Fourth Gospel in general. Cheyne gave up the Betrayal by Judas; and he privately avowed that he "feared that the Crucifixion would have to be abandoned."¹ Loisy gives up the Night Trial, and avows that if the trial before Pilate can be effectively put in question there is no basis left for a historical Jesus. And how many serious students can convince themselves that the Pilate trial, as described, could really have taken place? And if all or most of these things be myth, what is left?

Loisy, irritated by the pressures of the myth theory, protests that we cannot account for the "conflagration," so to speak, of the Christist movement, without a "match"; and where, he asks, is the match, save in the Personality? Where then was the "match" for Mithraism? Or Yahwism? Or Osirianism? Or the cult of Dionysos? The accomplished scholar seems to have thought little on hierology in general—a fact in keeping with the intuitionist quality of his ethics. The true proximate root of the Jesus-cult, the secret sacrament which develops into the mystery drama, is the "ever-burning lamp" in the case of the Christian movement, even as rites were the vital factors in the other cases. Call the lamp a "match," and the challenge is met. Note that a number of other

¹ See Dr. Edward Greenly's pamphlet, *The Historical Reality of Jesus*, R. P. A., 1927, p. 10.

movements can be seen to coalesce with the Christist,¹ and the "matches" are multiplied.

But Loisy is not alone, he is with the main army of theologians, in his failure to see rightly the economic and socio-political sides of religions in general. Not to speak it profanely, they have no sociology, though they sometimes sociologize over a detail. It would be hard to name one who has noted these three salient facts:—

1. Judaism was preserved after the political fall of Jewry by international popular organization, by the co-operant factors of the temple priesthood, the organized ritual-using synagogue, and the Sacred Books.

2. Christism originally modelled itself, as to organization, on the synagogue, adding also the factor of Sacred Books, and developing organization on the lines of the Imperial structure, finally employing conquest in the manner of Islam when it had become identified with the State.

3. Mithraism, which, as the adopted cult of the Roman army from the time of Pompey onwards, was a far-faring rival of Christianity for four centuries, even without Sacred Books, disappeared not because of lack of a Personality but because of lack of organized adaptation to the general life when the life of the Roman army drew to an end. It was a freemasonry, faced by a quasi-democratic ecclesia which was organized for permeation everywhere, and everywhere drew revenues.

Cults survive inasmuch as they are schemed to survive. Mithraism was never sought to be popularized by its adherents; rather they cherished a secret and mysterious ritual, expressly adjusted

¹ See *The Jesus Problem*, pp. 107-12.

to the life of the army ; and in the Roman Empire Mithraism was never anything else.¹ Christism from the first meant a livelihood for its " prophets," with the further attraction of sectarian influence. Other Saviour cults there were which never aimed at propaganda or diffusion, subsisting rather in their limited way by their very exclusiveness.² Judaism and Christism alone, in that age and world, were systematic in international proselytism, organization, officialization, and the regular extraction of revenue, contriving to be at once demotic and hierarchic ; and the Christian Church clearly derived its working ideal and practice from the Jewish model. The age-long cults of Egypt, subsisting on their vast endowments of land as well as by the economic machinery of provision for the souls of the dead, would have lasted forever but for sheer military overthrow ; and it was finally by sheer violence that Christian ecclesiasticism destroyed or captured the shrines of paganism. It was a " survival of the fittest to employ force." To generalize the whole socio-political and economic processes as an operation of a Personality on spontaneously recipient souls is to frame a verbal hallucination.

When we speak of the vital importance of the economic factor in all religious history, wiseacres loudly inform us that the economic factor cannot " account for " the beliefs which are financed. Of course it cannot. The causation and persistence of religious belief is the subject of a large literature which the wiseacre might profitably study, but

¹ See the section on Mithraism in *Pagan Christs*.

² See *The Evolution of States*, pp. 114-15 ; and compare *Pagan Christs*, Part I, ch. ii ; *Short History of Christianity*, Part I, ch. ii, § 4.

does not. He might thus learn that no belief *subsists as a popular system* without an organized economic basis; and that the religions of Babylonia and Egypt, having such bases, subsisted for more thousands of years than the Christian religion is likely to.

One might read a hundred treatises on Christian origins without finding attention called to facts which leap to the eyes in the Acts and in the Epistles. In the former, the Sin against the Holy Ghost is declared to be defalcation in money payment to the Church, compared with which the Denial by Peter is seen to be a peccadillo. In the Epistles we find Paul battling—or, as some of us think, dramatized by a pseudepigrapher of a later generation as battling—for salaries for the labourers in the vineyard. The text (I Cor. ix, 14) which declares: "Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel," tells plainly of a later hand, using a text which had been added to the gospel to the same end.

These were the kind of provisions requisite for the permanent establishment of an organized cosmopolitical Christian Church—these and the further developments of episcopacy, Councils, primacies, papacies, which made the Church a valid instrument of organization for emperors and for kings, and so secured the persistence of the system across the gulf of the decadence. To say that the Personality inspired the economic organization is to come within sight of bathos.

§ 3. *The Thesis of "Sinlessness"*

When such considerations of comparative hierology are (with difficulty) forced on the unwilling

attention of the apriorist, his usual course is to protest that the gospel Jesus is *sui generis*, incomparable, unapproachable, the exponent of a new ethic, the transformer of a dying world into a regenerate one. The essential falsity of the statement need not here detain us: we are concerned with the reasoning. The apriorist expresses himself, in short, exactly as does an earnest Buddhist concerning "the Buddha," the faith in whom, as a real Personality, has swayed the lives of many more millions than have been seriously affected by love of Christ.¹ For the scientific hierologist the Buddha is no more a historic figure than Zoroaster, or Moses, or Jesus; though in that case also some rational scholars affirm the "historicity."

But the outstanding fact is that in all these cases alike the *presented* "Personality" is something non-human, something conceived as supernormal, overwhelmingly great, inexpressibly good, originating all manner of truths and precepts which, nevertheless, we know to be of no one man's origination; as Yahweh and "Moses" are credited with a decalogue growing out of prehistoric law and embodying an actual code.

To attain the purpose of magnification, that is to say, humanity is as systematically undervalued as the Figure is extolled. Credit is withheld from nameless moralists, to be heaped upon that. Many an "educated" Christian feels quite certain that Jesus must have been a supremely "saintly" figure

¹ How the partisan Christian mind reacts against that large historic fact is seen in the pitiful pronouncement of Tulloch: "The character of Çakya-Mouni, pure and noble and self-denying as it *may* have been, was never a *living, consistent, and intelligible* reality to the millions who submitted themselves to his doctrines or institutions" (*Lectures on Renan's "Vie de Jésus,"* 1864, p. 162).

because he is alleged to have prescribed, in the Sermon on the Mount, love to enemies—a thing that to the natural man seems “angelic.” Christian scholars can tell him that there is not an item in that set of precepts which was not in previous circulation, in Jewish forms, long before “Jesus”; but he does not read his scholars, though he counts his general education a sufficient warrant for contemptuous dismissal of the myth theory and for insolence to its propounders.

The fact that such disputants, themselves sinning against the canons of rectitude no less than against the canons of courtesy, are often found convulsively convinced of the “sinlessness” of Jesus, is particularly significant. That doctrine, long ago popularized by Ullmann, is one of the pseudo-arguments most frequently advanced in support of the *à priori* case. Dean Inge is understood¹ to hold that it is the last conception of which the Church can afford to leave hold; and Professor Foakes-Jackson employs it with the usual professional disregard alike of the difficulties and the answers. He never seems to be aware that there are any. “Jesus as a sinless man,” he writes, with sketchy syntax, “is a phenomenon not less strange than one over whom death can have no dominion..... The sinlessness of our Saviour is, after all, perhaps a more complete *proof* of His Divine nature than any miracle could be.”²

Professor Jackson has avowedly done some thinking on theological problems; but he seems to have done little on this. The thesis must obviously

¹ As cited by Professor Foakes-Jackson.

² *Christian Difficulties in the Second and Twentieth Centuries*, 1903, p. 117.

take the form : " Jesus as presented in the gospels is unquestionably sinless "; and, if there is to be any argument at all, " sin " must be defined in the ordinary " Christian " sense, as including angry passions, injustice, deflection from truth, et cetera. Either, then, all ordinary verbal usage is flatly defied, or it follows that the alleged action of Jesus to Judas, his description of opponents as " a brood of vipers " and " children of the devil," his account of previous teachers as " thieves and robbers," his gross misrepresentation of Rabbinical teaching in the matter of " Corban," his giving over to perdition all communities which do not blindly receive his disciples, his description of the Gentiles as " dogs," his quibbling about the tribute to Cæsar—all his deflections from the code of temperance and gentleness and scrupulosity of speech which is put in his mouth—are removed from the category of " sins " *because he claimed to be the Son of God.*¹

It is an absolute logical circle—unless we are to understand that the actions specified would not be " sins " on the part of an ordinary man. Until that is seriously asserted, the argument is at an end. *Is it seriously asserted?*

In the face of such impercipience of the meaning of words, on the part of a scholarly and temperate theologian, it is necessary to point out to the normal reader that the tactic of Churchmen in this matter is a mere stultification of the form of reasoning they profess to apply.

To say that the gospel Jesus is a " unique " figure

¹ The old orthodox dogma expressly rested on that ground. Edward Irving was vehemently censured because he taught that the human body of Jesus was " sinful matter," though that was logically implied in the dogma of Christ's humanity. See Mrs. Oliphant's *Life of Irving*.

is to conceal the issue by an ambiguous term. Strictly speaking, *every* human being, and equally every notable fictitious character, is unique. The word is, even for ordinary purposes, as applicable to Queen Elizabeth, Mary Queen of Scots, Queen Victoria, or George the Third, as to Socrates, Plato, Alexander, or Napoleon. If we are to understand uniqueness as predicated of Jesus in point of sinlessness in comparison with all other men, our negation must be instant. The gospel Jesus is no more sinless, no more unique, than the historical Socrates, and less so than the non-historical Buddha or Lycurgus, to say nothing of the many human beings who have never resorted to the vituperative language put in the mouth of the gospel Jesus.

There is reason to think that the concept of "sinlessness" still arises for many Christians, as regards Jesus, in respect of his celibacy. That primitive conception, however, belonging as it does to the ethic of savagery, is not to be supposed to constitute the position of theologians who make the assertion of Professor Foakes-Jackson. Buddhists argue that the celibacy of Jesus, who is never supposed to have had sex feeling, is as nothing beside the *renunciation* of Buddha.

The summary of the debate, so far, must be that the doctrine of the sinlessness of Jesus is not only a moral perversity in itself but a fruitful source of perversion in Christian history—partly comparable in this regard to the sainting of the Peter of the Denial Story and the Ananias story, and the David of the Old Testament. The central factor is just the religious assumption that what the religious mind conceives as divine *must* be "righteous"; an assumption which has yielded the

mass of deified unrighteousness constituting so large a part of ancient literature—Indian, Persian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Hebrew, Greek, Roman, and Christian.

It is in fairness to be noted, of course, that a conviction of the historicity and supernormal importance of the gospel Jesus has been and is held by many who put no thesis of "sinlessness," and indeed recognize that such a thesis in effect cancels that of historicity, inasmuch as it alleges, as Professor Foakes-Jackson expressly claims, "miracle." Renan, who did so much to establish the Neo-Unitarian sentiment on the subject, shocked his more religious readers by actually representing Jesus as committing "pious fraud" in the matter of thaumaturgy in general and the raising of Lazarus in particular;¹ even as Mr. Middleton Murry, combining the positions of De Quincey and Dr. Schweitzer, alleges what one critic describes as a "frame-up" between Jesus and Judas to bring on the Crucifixion.

And Shelley, who was visibly influenced by Rousseau, sets forth in his posthumous 'Essay on Christianity' a glowing picture of a noble-minded and philosophic philanthropist who nevertheless "did what every other reformer who has produced any considerable effect upon the world has done. He accommodated his doctrines to the prepossessions of those whom he addressed.....Like a skilful orator (see Cicero, *De Oratore*), he secures the prejudices of his auditors, and induces them, by his professions of sympathy with their feelings, to enter with a willing mind into the exposition of

¹ See the complaints of Tulloch, *Lectures on M. Renan's "Life of Jesus,"* 1864, pp. 152-4.

his own.....Let not this practice be considered as an unworthy artifice.....All reformers have been compelled to practise this misrepresentation of their own true feelings and opinions."¹

The "misrepresentation" thus alleged and defended by Shelley (who, like the modern biographical school, was quite sure he could see the authentic amid the unauthentic elements in the gospels) consisted in professing to maintain to the uttermost the traditional Law. To get a favourable hearing Jesus had to profess devout orthodoxy. "Having produced this favourable disposition of mind, Jesus Christ proceeds to qualify, and finally to abrogate, the system of the Jewish law." While this may have satisfied Shelley as a feature in the character of an admirable reformer, it will hardly give satisfaction to the biographical school to-day, and will not by the official school be embodied in the claim of "sinlessness."

In the end Renan was driven by the protests of sympathetic and other readers to modify *his* "soft impeachment" of benevolent fraud. But the apriorist who, like Shelley and Renan and Mr. Murry, clings to his concept of an actual Jesus, will do well to ask himself whether at many points he will not suffer more disillusionment from the effort to account in detail for the gospel record in terms of a faultless personality than from the acceptance of a myth theory which dismisses alike disparagement and idolization.

With "sinlessness," in the old theology, was associated the concept of resistance to temptation

¹ *Selected Prose Works of Shelley*, ed. by H. S. Salt, R. P. A., pp. 162-3. It is difficult to date Shelley's "Essay." Mr. Salt rightly thinks it was written "at a date considerably later than that usually assigned to it—viz., the year 1815."

of a supernormal kind. But that too yields less than nothing for the biographical position. The biographical method is latterly working itself out in such futilities as the attempt to establish the order of "the Lord's" sensations in the Temptation—which is at length admitted to be imaginary—and to explain the story of the no less obviously mythic Transfiguration by subsuming the "experience" of Peter, who *must* have "imagined" that. The myth theory explains the Temptation story as an application of an Eastern myth made widely current by striking pictograms and by poetry, and anciently told of Jupiter, of Olympus, of Dionysos, and of Apollo.¹ The historicists still prefer to ascribe the invention to "the Lord."

The story of the Transfiguration was long ago explained² as one of the usual gospel transferences to the new Messiah of Old Testament marvels—the original being Exodus xxiv, 12–18, of which the very "after six days" is duplicated. Harnack assures us, nevertheless, that it is "a true piece of Peter's reminiscences," and that the very puerility of the remark, "It is good for us to be here," is "also authentic and characteristic." Which is the worse puerility? Peter has really suffered more than his fair share at the hands of the interpolators and commentators from first to last. The myth theory deals with him more kindly!

§ 4. *The Value of "Impression"*

When we consider the argument of Dr. Burkitt

¹ See *Christianity and Mythology*, 2nd ed., p. 318 sq.

² The author has elsewhere suggested (*C. and M.*, p. 361) that the Transfiguration may have been connected with the mystery drama.

under its secondary aspect, dismissing for the moment the logical, and considering only the claimed "impression" made by the inferred Personality, there arises the question, What was the character and what the calibre of the people alleged to have been so impressed, to such ends? And the answer surely must be: Feeble brains, childlike characters. An evangelist moved to wilful fiction by the greatness of his "impression" is an odd voucher for the quality of the impact. Of what significance were the impressions which produced the mass of the apocryphal Gospels and Acts? Did not these reach the largest audience of all?

As it happens, there is a large consensus among the defenders of the faith as to the poverty of the human material on the Gentile Christian side. Professor Foakes-Jackson is very explicit on that point: "Not without reason does Paul call the Corinthians 'babes.'" In fairness, he would doubtless accept equally the characterization of the "foolish Galatians"—who used, before 1914, to be indicated as the peccantly "Celtic" element in early Christian Greece. The Professor even becomes momentarily sociological on the subject. "The degenerate provincial under the Roman rule had no [civic] incentives to manliness. Civil duty and patriotism, almost the only good things [!] his ancestral religion had inculcated, were no longer possible *under a strong paternal government*.....The free man was a slave at heart....."

On the other hand, to the Professor's eye, "the Jewish believer possessed many advantages over his Gentile brother." Was not he, then, equally "under a strong paternal government"? The

theorem cannot stand ; and we can but suppose that the Professor sees in Jewish *fanaticism* an element of "strength" passed on to Christianity. But what does he make of the disappearance of Galilee from the Christian horizons after the gospels? And what now becomes of the claim that Hellenistic elements were markedly present all along in the church of Jerusalem? Were Hellenes there less slaves than in Greece?

We had better face the question for ourselves, and ask whether the narrative of the Acts exhibits a community more notable for mental capacity or veracity than the Greek recipients of the Pauline letters. And the difficulty of finding the evidence is insuperable. There is in fact something highly anomalous in an official theologian's claim that, while the Gentile Christians "impressed" by Paul were poor stuff, the Jewish Christians impressed by the apostles were much better. For what shadow of evidence have we of high moral and mental qualities in the alleged apostles themselves? Are they not exhibited in the gospels as mostly impercipient, "materialistic," avid of a high place in the New Jerusalem; the best of them, the selected three, sleeping when their Master told them he was in his utmost trial?

An "impression" averred to have been made on and by such spirits is truly a singular guarantee for supernormal moral and intellectual qualifications in the "unknown X" who is claimed to have necessarily made it. One of the many dilemmas of the biographical school is the declaration of the records that Jesus failed at Nazareth; won a great hold in Galilee, and then wholly lost it; entered Jerusalem in triumph and within a few days was discarded for Barabbas. How did the impression

so fluctuate?¹ That question, so readily answered by the myth theory in terms of purposive narratives belonging to a period of strife between Jew and Gentile Christists, is unanswerable on the "Personality" theory.

And the sum of the whole dispute is that the impressionists would do well to check their entire dialectic process from the beginning, analyse their psychosis, and really examine the myth theory in detail instead of relying on the simple polemic of the unstudious champions who assure them that it is absurd, "exploded," "a denial of all historic truth," an aberration, a parallel to the Baconian theory, and all the rest of it. Even this brief scrutiny may serve to show which side is doing the aberration, and reducing its own case to absurdity.

§ 5. *The Method of Bluster*

In case the foregoing account of current polemic against the myth theory should be deprecated as external to serious debate, it is expedient to note how the matter has been quite recently handled by a popular divine of some scholarly status. It is after praising Plato because, "at the point where abstract ratiocination could go no further, he fell back on Myth," that Canon Streeter, in his work entitled 'Reality,' thus discourses:—

"Unfortunately for our present purpose the word 'myth' has been fatally injured by the foolish people who talk of the

¹ It might be argued that such fluctuation is an argument for historicity, in view of the fact that Edward Irving had immense popular success before his collapse. But Irving made his impression by great expansive eloquence; and this is never alleged of the gospel Jesus. Irving, finally, was deposed by his underlings in a state of physical decay and subdued volition, which will not be admitted by Christists to have existed in the case of their Lord.

'Christ-myth,' with the implication that Jesus either never lived or that we know next to nothing of Him. These ought not to be taken seriously. Some of them, never having given real study to the subject (or lacking the equipment to do so if they would), speak from second-hand or superficial knowledge; others are of that class—unfortunately, not a small one—who feed an unconscious egoism by championing some ingenious paradox. Competent scholars, here and in Germany, have been at pains to publish refutations of their arguments; but, like those who maintain that Shakespeare was Bacon, or that the British are the Lost Tribes, they are impervious to refutation."¹

Any one who cares to peruse the preceding part of the work cited, which gives an edifying account of the Rev. Canon's intellectual career, and the subsequent part, which reveals his philosophic calibre, will be able to realize the mentality of this Christian champion, who, it should be noted, is deeply impressed with the importance of loving our neighbour as ourself. To have interfered fatally with the rev. gentleman's operations on the word "myth" would seem to be something of a public service on the part of the mythicists.

Leaving his evangelistic personalities to bear their fit fruit, we have first to note that he has entirely misinformed himself as to the publication of "confutations" of the myth theory by competent scholars who, as he protests, ought not to have done it. Apart from the recent work of Professor Goguel, which has been examined above, there has been no attempt at confutation that has not been rebutted thrice over in respect of its ignorance of the subject, its fallacies, and its misrepresentations. Dr. Conybeare, the most prominent English assailant, had made no adequate study either of anthropology or of mythology, holding as he did

¹ Work cited, pp. 52-3.

that totems are gods ; and he made a series of fatal misstatements of fact concerning the New Testament narratives which proved his slight acquaintance with these. To the rebuttals of his attack there has been no answer from the biographical school. To the rebuttal by Dr. W. B. Smith, it is safe to say, Canon Streeter is wholly incompetent to reply.

The allusion to the Baconian theory is characteristic of the method of ignorance. The Baconian theory *has* been repeatedly confuted, by strictly inductive argument, and further by the demonstration that its supporters are unqualified in respect of knowledge of Elizabethan literature and vocabulary. But it would again be safe to say that a comparatively sane Baconian, who "knows his silly business," could make short work of the mere bluster of opponents who, like Canon Streeter, know even less than he.

The special charm of the situation is that the dialectic procedure of the Baconians is exactly that of the apriorists in the matter of the gospel story. Both alike proceed on a presupposition. As the Christian (and other) historicists assume that there *must* have been a marvellous Personality to account for the "impression" registered by the evangelists and the rise of the Christian Church, so the Baconians decide that there *must* have been a lawyer and a classical scholar and a trained philosopher behind the Plays, Poems, and Sonnets ; and that these *cannot* have been the work of a "mere" man of the theatre, who had only a common schooling at Stratford-on-Avon.¹ Neither

¹ Of course the champions of the historicity of Jesus can reply that *they* make no difficulty of the rustic upbringing of the gospel Jesus.

school pays any loyalty to induction. And both are wont to ignore all the arguments against them, and to compensate themselves for the weakness of their case by jeering at their opponents. Canon Streeter has quite the Baconian manner, temper, and preparation. Of the necessary preparation in anthropology, mythology, and hierology, he seems to be more innocent than was Dr. Conybeare.

The myth theorists, then, must be content not to seek their reputation in the Canon's mouth. He doubtless avails much for the comfort of the faithful, though the serious scholars of the Church do not pay him the compliment of imitating his tone and tactics. It is to be recorded, on the other hand, that a number of men of letters do exactly copy his tone and attitude. On the recent appearance of the late Dr. Georg Brandes' work on 'The Jesus Saga' in an American translation, several of our literary journalists disposed of the matter by pouring scorn on all such doctrine, and by citing Mr. H. G. Wells and Dr. Eduard Meyer as historical authorities whose mere opinion outweighed all argument.

Those who perused the historical work entitled 'England,' published by Dr. Eduard Meyer during the war, can tell how much weight now attaches, for instructed readers, to his historical judgment—a matter not to be further laboured by those who know of his sad personal experience. Of the authority of Mr. Wells it is more difficult to speak. Many readers, it is understood, find in his distillation of history a species of truth not previously attained. Yet even that somewhat lightly acquired conviction, on the part of readers who have *not* extensively sought to ascertain the results of all other research, scarcely warrants the inference that the mere opinion of Mr. Wells outweighs that of

the long series of eminent Dutch experts, Pierson, Loman, Bolland, and Professor Van den Bergh van Eysinga, and of Professor W. B. Smith, Professor Arthur Drews, Dr. Couchoud, and Dr. Brandes, as to whether Christianity *could* have arisen without there being a real personage answering to the gospel Jesus—barring the large element of myth that even Mr. Wells is understood to find in the gospels.

And if the adherents of Mr. Wells continue to treat his *ipse dixit* as decisive in such a matter, it may even be found necessary to suggest to them that their own dialectic smacks more of incompetence and presumption than of authority. They are sitting in the seat of judgment without either scholarly or sociological qualification. Mr. Alfred Noyes is a charming poet, with a gift of melody outgoing at times that of Swinburne; but he is not a thinker, and his *à priori* opinion on the myth theory has no more value than would attach to his opinion on the Law of Rent.

But let us not seem to suggest that the unlearned laity, or even the less scrupulous of the clerical defenders of the faith, alone resort to the cheapest devices of defence. A number of years ago, Dean Inge did the present writer the unmerited honour of likening him to the Abbé Loisy, of all men, as being of the class of negligible speculators. This because M. Loisy, in the way of his scrupulous research, had abandoned many items in the gospels as unhistorical. More recently, the same distinguished publicist, faced by the new propugnation of the myth theory at the hands of Brandes, supposed himself to dispose of the whole matter by noting that no scholar of the first rank had accepted it. Loisy is admittedly a scholar of the very first

rank. And the Dean had dismissed him as of no account in that he outwent most other specialists in disintegrating the gospel text. Yet he had been preceded by Dutch experts of a scholarly rank certainly higher (in these matters) than Dean Inge's—experts who had gone the whole length of the myth theory. The Dean might reasonably have dismissed any man's theory, irrespective of scholarship, on the score that it was ill reasoned. For the question is not ultimately one of scholarship but of argument, with all the data of the scholars laid on the table. But in the first instance he treated Loisy's scholarship as counting for nothing in support of his views; in the second he affects to settle the question by claiming that the best scholars do not go the whole way of the myth theory.

It would be idle indeed to expect eminent and *mature* clerical scholars, challenged by the results of other scholars, to admit that they have passed their whole lives under a delusion. But it might seem no extravagant exigence to claim that English clerics of high standing and liberal repute, professing to conform to the normal standards of critical rectitude, should cease thus to flout them in this particular matter.

Already when Schweitzer wrote, without acceptance of the myth theory, the "liberal biographical" view of the Jesus problem was by his confident account reduced to wreck. That is to say, the *bulk* of the gospel narratives was seen to be what the myth theory posited as to the central figure. To-day not only is the myth theory accepted and defended anew by an eminent Dutch Professor, but Professor Bultmann of Marburg has gone so far in concession to the argument

from textual analysis that he avowedly finds no recognizable "Personality" left. If Loisy in the past was of no account, with all his special scholarship, Bultmann must be of no account for Dean Inge to-day, since he goes further than Loisy, though still holding to a shadowy "historical" Jesus. On what kind of personal qualification, then, does Dean Inge claim to deliver his judgments? Has he any higher principle than that of finding, as journalist, phrases of disparagement for all who imperil the status of the official creed, of which so many of his colleagues doubt his acceptance?

§ 6. *Conclusion*

Sometimes one is tempted to meet Hegel's sophism, "Religion is the Place of Truth," with the flat contrary: "Religion is the Place of False Spirits," so constantly is sophistry at work in its service. But that would only be to answer rhetoric with rhetoric. The true summary is just that religion is the Great Backyard of the Blundering Spirit of Man; and that whereas the more enlightened of the specialists already see how the past history of their subject is but a vast record of organized delusion, they are still deaf and blind to the great lesson of human mental experience, that truth is to be found only by utter submission to the law of discovery.

A poet duly indifferent to the primary historic fact might make an effect by using the Jesus Legend to show how a hero slain for proclaiming new truth became the God of a Church whose main business ever since has been to slay all new truth, banning and blocking in turn the sciences of medicine, geography, astronomy, geology,

biology, anthropology, mythology, hierology, and the science of Christology itself. But of course it is not merely in religion that Man, the Mole, execrates all new light so long as he can expel it. His so-called martyrdom is the record of his blindness: his animal conviction that what he feels must be true. It is only his rebel seers who save him.

The lines of reasoning which have been combated in the preceding pages exhibit the common formula of all error—assumption without due inductive check. Herein the present process of opinion on religious matters is but a belated duplication of the process of scientific opinion in general. As to astronomy, “The radical defect of all solar systems previous to the time of Kepler (1609 A.D.) was the slavish yielding to Plato’s dictum demanding uniform circular motion for the planets, and the consequent evolution of the epicycle, which was fatal to any conception of a dynamical theory.”¹ Only with Kepler and Newton did induction come into its own.

The accomplished expert just cited has pronounced that Newton’s *Principia* is “the highest example of inductive reasoning ever produced.” A no less competent expert in the theological field has declared in regard to the debates on the Apocalypse in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, that “wildest and most fantastic of all are the English commentaries of this period,”² among which are the works of Napier of Merchiston and Sir Isaac Newton (1593 and 1732). These illustrious men, among the greatest

¹ Professor George Forbes, *History of Astronomy*, 1909, p. 26.

² Professor Bousset in *Encyc. Biblica*, art. “Apocalypse.”

of their times in respect of the free scientific use of their minds, played thrall to authority in matters of religion, and in that field outwent in obscurantism even their professional rivals.

If anything could shake the confidence, alike of our theological scholars and our unlearned literary laymen, in their traditionism, that record should surely suffice. The spectacle of mighty faculties reduced to puerility by blind adherence to a pre-supposition, when the same faculties were able to move mountains by turning away from traditionism to loyal induction, might surely serve to warn the multitude of lesser men of the penalty of all refusal to do their thinking under scientific law. Newton stands alternately pillared and pilloried as the greatest physicist and the foolishlest commentator of his time. Most of us easily escape either form of notice, whether we are right or wrong. But the mass of modern academic scholarship, as regards the problem of Christian Origins, is in a fair way to be arraigned by posterity for inability to learn the main lesson of all scientific progress.

Outside of the purely mathematical sciences, where emotion is at a discount, nothing seems to avail to prepare men to look genially at what claims to be a new truth, and "as a stranger give it welcome." We are now reading of the savage opposition offered to Lister and his discovery of antiseptic methods in surgery. That was but a generation ago: to-day the method is high orthodoxy in the profession.

It is the same story, in a worse degree, in the literary "sciences," wherever a habit of mind and an academic teaching have become well settled. In Shakespearology the academic orthodox operate

their creed exactly in the fashion of the Baconians (whom *they* did nothing to confute), assuming that all the plays in the Folio *must* be of Shakespeare's planning, and must be so envisaged, even when the ground has been dug from beneath the dogma by the detached avowals of generations of critics. Equally, of course, the Sonnets *must* be all Shakespeare's, and 126 of them addressed to one man. The very theologians, having "disintegrated" the Pentateuch and the Psalms and Isaiah and critically scanned the whole Old Testament field, may comment: "We, the so-called unprogressive profession, have been far in advance of lay criticism in its handling of *its* non-sacrosanct problems."

We can but say, with the dramatized Galileo: "Yet it moves." Some rationalists have fought in the ranks of tradition; while some theologians have been found to see in the scientific induction a discovery that liberates them from a vast perplexity. Every extension of Christian scholarly research supplies light that makes clearer the way of the myth theorist. Even as certain supernaturalists made decisive steps in the analysis of the Pentateuch when some so-called rationalists were refusing to see the sutures of documents, clerical textual-analysts, albeit strangely blind to some salient phenomena, have prepared the way for the inductive analysis which reduces all elements of the gospels to their purposes, and eliminates the "Personality."

Ultimately, the solution will be the product of all the honest labour that has been spent on it, whether by traditionists or by untrammelled rationalists. That the chief stress of vituperation should meantime fall on those who proclaim the

law of science as the sole authority to be recognized is in the ordinary way of culture history.

Of course they will be told, as by the Very Reverend Dean Inge, that they are rooting-out the elements which cause society to cohere; that they are playing into the hands of the Bolshevists, who have in their mindless and futile way sought to suppress religion even as religion has normally striven to suppress all dissent from *its* rule. The Dean does not rede his rune. Bolshevism has arisen and wrought its crimes in the very area of the most indurated form of the Christian religion; and in the name of that religion were wrought the most atrocious wars of a thousand years, as the Dean has himself avowed. It is not by taking the Oath to hate Science, any more than by taking the Oath to hate the Demos, that civilization will be saved.

A poet who, being a great innovating rhythmist, necessarily missed general recognition as such in his lifetime, has sung for us the answer to the cry that the world has lost its hope with the sinking of the great ship Immortality:—

Thousands of wings about her bows
As she cast away the deep,
The morning star swung from a spar
And every sail asleep.....

No frothings in your purple wake
On the lone path to the pole;
White as the spread of sail on her
That lent wings to your soul.....

Apollo.

What was her build, that boat of yours,
So proud upon the sea?
What was her make of hull and deck?
What suit of sails had she?

Seaman.

Her stretch of sail so white, so white,
By no man's hand unfurled,
Was Heaven !

Apollo.

And the decks you kept so bright ?

Seaman.

For us, the bustling World.

Apollo.

And the holds and cockpit out of sight,
Pitch dark and ill to smell,
Full of the friends of your delight ?

Seaman.

That was the pit of Hell !

We have read, what the traditionists will not percipiently read, the history of the world ruled by that tradition : we have

Beheld the horror of those decks
Bloodied with mystic wine ;

and, knowing that man has never truly lived well by delusion, we are reasonably sure that he never can. But in that creed there is nothing of revolution : it is the message of Evolution, which the very hierophants are quaintly beginning to profess to act upon—this in the very act of resistance. For even they build better than they know, carried as they are on the flood of change.

The tides of men obey a ghost,
The ghost of the unborn ;¹

even when they are paying fealty to the Man-made phantoms of the past.

Dr. Montefiore, best of Jews or Christians, after

¹ Herbert Trench, *Apollo and the Seaman.*

conceding the unreality of more than half the substance of the synoptics, turns away from the toppling ruin to assure himself and us that genius in a teaching is not a matter of the cogitable content, and that here we have a something over and above the echoed written word, a kind of "surplus value" not known even to Marxian economics. And that elusive x , he thinks, "we need," and cannot do without. Yet Dr. Montefiore must be aware that there are now living millions of instructed men who have not his "need"; who face the universe without dreaming of valuations in terms of the religious commonplaces of antiquity, and who have ceased to hold his inherited and inculcated intuition of a "Father" in the skies. Such homily cannot avail for really reasoning men.

And the negative holds equally of sheer literary special pleading. Mr. Middleton Murry, a generous spirit, thinks to save the legend by eloquent dithyramb. Jesus, he tells us, gave his life because men would not believe his teaching, which conveyed a "mystery" that Jesus himself "could not expound." Alas, when millions of millions of men have given their lives through the æons without a thought of claiming divine Sonship, what signifies the motive or the meed? Sadder, surely, is the thought of the millions upon millions who in the ages were brought to their death as sacrifices in their own despite, to "take away the sin of the world."

The late James Darmesteter, another generous spirit, more plausibly declared that Jeanne Darc was a worthier martyr than the gospel Jesus. Are such debates worth waging, after the World War?

Saner and fruitfuller, surely, is the effort to

know aright what the world's history has actually been, how things really went, what is false and what is true; and thereupon to think out what for men is right action now, in the light of knowledge and thought, not of traditionist homily and the worship of the past. Then, perhaps, we might pretend to settle "the nicely calculated less or more" of real or imaginary personal merit—if we still thought it fit to try.

EPILOGUE

THE myth theory, being a process of scientific induction from a multiplicity of data, is far from having reached a stage that can be called "completion." Like every truly scientific hypothesis, it remains under revision and development. In the foregoing pages many of its aspects are not even indicated; and he who would master it must go further afield. But it may be fitting to suggest here a possible development, not previously mooted.

Professor W. B. Smith has called attention to the outstanding but little-recognized fact that Galilee, which plays so great a part in the gospels, wholly disappears from the story of the propaganda and the church-building of the cult, after it is told in Acts (ix, 31) that "then had the churches rest through all Galilee," and that "the word..... began from Galilee." On the other hand, Dr. Burkitt avows, several times over, that "*there never were any Christians in Galilee till the days when Christians were to be found in every corner of the Empire.*"¹ Yet he never attempts any solution of the immense contradiction in the Christian record that is involved in this avowal. Theologians pass over such profoundly perplexing matters as they pass over the equally striking fact that never, in the Epistles or the Apocalypse, is Jesus called "of Nazareth," or "Nazirite," or "Nazarene." Of such

¹ *Christian Beginnings*, p. 84. Cp. pp. 76, 89, 97.

phenomena, ignored by the historicists, the myth theory has to take account.

The present writer (once described in the *Hibbert Journal* as being an à priori denier of the historicity of Jesus) actually spent a long time in trying to construct a working theorem of *three* possible historical Jesuses ; one the elusive Jesus of the Talmud, first dated under Alexander Jannæus ; one a Nazirite ; one not a Nazirite, and therefore declared to be "of Nazareth," by way of deflecting the other term. The theorem could not be carried beyond the stage of unsupported hypothesis, and had to be abandoned. But the location of the bulk of the narrative part of the synoptic gospels in Galilee raises for the myth theorist the question, Why that location, when there was no subsisting Galilean Church?

There suggests itself the hypothesis that there may have been a "wonder-working" Jesus of the district of Gennesareth, not a Teacher, not an utterer of *logia*, not the head of a band of Twelve Disciples, not crucified under Pontius Pilate, but just an oriental "faith-healer" who for a time made a local reputation, which later suggested to some of the cultists of the pre-Christian Jesus the idea of retrospectively using his repute to advantage their cult ; of which the mystic sacrament was the "headstone of the corner." Such an enterprise would involve the invention of many "signs and wonders," as later it involved the compilation of *logia Jesou*.

Suppose, again, that such a rustic wonder-worker had lent himself to selection as the "Jesus Bar-Abbas"—Jesus the Son of the Father—of an ancient Palestinian cult, which could better survive in Galilee, and perhaps in Samaria (the land of

Joshua tradition), than in Judea ; a rite which, once one of annual human sacrifice,¹ had become exoterically one of mock sacrifice, and so connected externally with the sacramental cult, which had been primarily one of actual human sacrifice. The repute of the wonder-worker might thus locally aggrandize Jesuism.

The main point of the hypothesis is that it would account for the preservation in the gospels, at a later stage, of a Galilean background. Its weak point obviously is that if the Bar-Abbas rite had survived chiefly in Galilee, that basis might suffice without any prominent wonder-worker. An annual selection, such as apparently took place at Alexandria,² might suffice to create a Galilean vogue for the name. But a particular reputation, embodying tales of healing, would conceivably serve better to act as a nucleus for the later legend.

Possibly some "historicist" might be content with such a hypothesis if it were expanded to include an *actual* sacrifice of a Bar-Abbas victim at some time of social tumult, the kind of situation in which, we know, ancient ritual practices could be horribly revived—as in the child-sacrifices of Carthage. The record of such a sacrifice in Galilee would of course not serve the purposes of the later developed cult of Jesus the Christ. That had to be staged at Jerusalem and connected with the Roman imperium. The story of an actual Galilean sacrifice, the work of a fanatical peasantry, would have to be suppressed for evangelistic purposes ; even if it were known to have taken place.

A shadowy hypothesis, truly, yielding no "Per-

¹ See *The Jesus Problem*, pp. 32-39 ; and *Pagan Christs*, as there cited.

² See *The Jesus Problem*, as cited.

sonality" for the seekers after that. The Figure built up in the gospels is a manifold literary composite, answering to no imaginable individual. The hypothetical wonder-worker, the hypothetical Bar-Abbas, is to be conceived rather as an unbalanced than as a remarkable or gifted person. This is not a tracing of "the gospel Jesus" to an original: the "original" of that is an old God of folk-lore, without temple or priesthood, transformed by literate men into a Teacher as well as a miracle-working Messiah. But it suggests an explanation, not offered from the "historicist" side, of the location of so much of the gospel story in Galilee. As such it may be worth considering. It would account for, among other things, the text: "After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."

If the reader, cowed by the truculent negations of some of the anti-mythologists, should reply that there is no documentary ground for the hypothesis of a pre-Christian Jesus-cult, let him be assured that he has been deceived. There are grounds in Jewish lore, as well as in the Book of Zechariah, for the conviction that an ancient Jesus-cult underlies the legend of the admittedly unhistorical Joshua of the Old Testament. And these grounds are never examined by the defenders of the historicity of the gospel Jesus. Neither Jewish nor Christian commentators latterly face the fact that in Jewish "Talmudic" tradition there was a "Jesus, the Prince of the Presence," and a rite of "The Week of the Son,"¹ called by some "The Week of Jesus the Son."

As is noted in the margin of the Revised Version, "many very ancient authorities read *Jesus*"

¹ See *The Jesus Problem*, pp. 85-8, and *Pagan Christs*, pp. 162-7.