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## EDITORIAL

### *The Way Ahead*

IN a recent series of broadcast lectures, the noted historian E. H. Carr took as his motto or text the words of Alexis de Tocqueville written more than a century ago in the preface to his book, *Democracy in America*.

"The Christian nations of our age seem to me to present a most alarming spectacle; the impulse which is bearing them along is so strong that it cannot be stopped, but it is not yet so rapid that it cannot be guided; their fate is in their hands; yet a little while and it may be so no longer. . . . A new science of politics is indispensable to a new world. This, however, is what we think of least; launched in the middle of the rapid stream, we obstinately fix our eyes on the ruin which may still be descried on the shore we have left, while the current sweeps us along and drives us backward toward the gulf."

If the stream seemed rapid a century ago, one wonders what word de Tocqueville would have chosen to describe its movement today. That we are being swept along by a mighty current is all too obvious. The most serious question confronting Christians is whether they possess resources which will enable them even yet to guide the flowing tide or whether the stage has been reached, which de Tocqueville seemed to envisage, when the stream could be guided no longer. The Christian may not be interested primarily in "a science of politics," but does he have such an understanding of progress as will enable him to keep his head and direct his energies toward those things which will remain when all else has passed away? If he belongs to the company of those who in New Testament times were regarded as the people of the Way, as pilgrims and strangers, as travellers toward a land of promise, as voyagers toward a better home, what are

## MYTH AND MIRACLE AT MID-CENTURY

BY WILLIAM HALLOCK JOHNSON

THE popularity of a recent book on *Miracles* by C. S. Lewis (1947) shows that even in this sophisticated age the topic still has a wide human appeal. Mr. Lewis is peculiarly fitted to discuss the subject because he says that he was at first an atheist with a "passionate conviction" that miracles never happened, but then became a Christian with an equally passionate conviction that the Gospel miracles are historical. Mr. Lewis knows both sides of the subject, and can talk persuasively to unbeliever and believer alike. It would be unwise for one who lacks the peculiar experience and talent of Mr. Lewis to enter the lists unless he has something really new to say. We believe that a study of the last half century in the fields both of New Testament criticism and of science will justify and will indeed demand a fresh examination of our subject. We confine ourselves here to the New Testament field.

### MIRACLES AND NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM

It would be an exercise of great value for every New Testament student to trace the course of criticism accurately from the beginning—from Reimarus to Wrede, and beyond. The best guide for the earlier period, taking us part way into the first decade of our century, is Schweitzer's notable book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (2nd Eng. ed., 1936). We are concerned with the attitude of the leading critics toward miracles and the supreme miracle of the Resurrection. There was first a Theory of Fraud, advocated by Reimarus. This did not long survive, because as Goguel has bluntly said: "One could allow himself to be persecuted for an illusion but not for a fraud." Next came the Naturalistic Theory of Paulus. Jesus, he said, is himself the miracle in his character and teaching, but he performed no miracles. These are exaggerated accounts of natural events. Strauss gave a fatal blow to the swoon theory of the Resurrection when he said that it is impossible to believe that one who was crucified and stole away half-dead from the sepulchre, who

crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment, could give the impression that he was the Prince of Life, the conqueror of death and the grave (*The Life of Jesus for the People*, 2nd ed., I, p. 412). The naturalistic theory, however, survives today in a new form. By the ambivalence of language the Resurrection of Christ has been transferred from the field of history to that of psychology. The Resurrection of Christ has in wide circles come to mean, to use an expression of Schweitzer's, "Jesus as spiritually arisen among men" (*Quest*, p. 399).

Sholem Asch says that if one cannot believe in the Resurrection on the third day, he must nevertheless admit "that in a moral and spiritual sense the Nazarene rises from the dead every day, every hour and every minute in the hearts of millions of his believers" (*One Destiny*, p. 6). Arthur Hugh Clough in his *Easter Day, 1839* set an example a century ago which is widely followed by theologians:

Though he be dead, He is not dead.  
Nor gone, though fled,  
Not lost, though vanished;  
Though He return not, though  
He lies and moulders low;  
In the true creed  
He is yet risen indeed;  
Christ is yet risen indeed.

This double meaning of words makes it possible to do away with the miracles of the Gospels altogether; one can now be a convinced "naturalist" in his philosophy and yet believe in the "Resurrection" of Jesus Christ.

The two most influential Lives of Christ which have ever been written, those by Strauss and Renan, belong to the last century. They dispose of miracles in summary fashion—in the preface instead of in the conclusion. Miracles are impossible. They simply do not happen. History and biography to be authentic must eliminate them at all costs. Sentence is pronounced before the principal witness for the defense can be heard. Both of these authors, while appealing to science for authority, adopt an a priori and what must be called an unscientific method.

Strauss had no illusions as to how deeply the cutting out of miracles would affect the historicity of the Gospels. He admits that a

life of Christ must be kept within "very unpretentious and modest limits, if it turned out that the Gospel materials, when critically tested, dwindled under the process down to a faint and hesitating outline" (*Life*, p. 4). Strauss, one of the keenest critics of the Gospels, at first believed that he could reduce the Gospel narratives to myth, but could retain the values and advantages of Christian morality. In the sequel Strauss himself abandoned Christianity altogether. The keenest critic of Strauss was Nietzsche who, complaining that Strauss did not go far enough, himself discarded and derided morality.

Renan has thrown the veil of romance over the figure of Jesus. He has the merit of seeing and describing the sheer beauty of the story of Jesus told in the Gospels. He has renewed for us "the sweetness of this matchless idyl," the beauty of this "delicious pastoral." It is indeed a dream, but a dream so beautiful that humanity has lived in it ever since. But the portrait, while drawn with the artistry of a literary genius, is defaced by a fatal flaw. To succeed in his mission Jesus must be a moral failure. He must compromise the purity of his earlier teaching. We read the ominous words: "every idea, in order to succeed, must make sacrifices; one never comes out unstained from the struggle of life." "He allowed himself to be given a title, the Son of David, without which he could not hope for success." The world, says Renan, expected miracles in a teacher with a divine mission; "Jesus was, therefore, obliged to choose between the two alternatives—either to renounce his mission, or to become a wonder-worker (thaumaturgus)."

It is incredible that one who uttered the most scathing words ever written against hypocrisy should be infected with the same leaven, and pretend to be what he was not. He is placed by Renan "at the highest summit of human greatness," but he falls far below his own ideals, and even below the ordinary norm of sincerity and integrity demanded of a moral teacher. Renan's eulogy turns into an exposure. As a teacher his Jesus cannot command the respect, far less the reverence, of mankind. Strauss makes Jesus a problem for the historian, Renan a problem for the moralist. By their rejection of miracles both make it impossible for Jesus to retain his place in the affection and worship of mankind.

## FIVE SCHOOLS OF CONTINENTAL CRITICISM

The first half of our Century has seen the rise on the Continent of five distinct movements or schools of criticism in the New Testament field. These are in order: I. The Religious-Historical School, or School of the History of Religion; II. The Eschatological School; III. The School of Form Criticism; IV. The French Skeptical School; and V. The De-Mythologizing School. We are interested particularly in what the leaders of these five schools, in the primary documents in which they were launched, say on the subject of miracles.

I. *The School of the History of Religion*

The movement was launched by the publication in 1904 of several brochures, *Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher* (Handbooks of the History of Religion). Important for our purpose are the first two of these, Paul Wernle's *Die Quellen des Lebens Jesu* (Sources for the Life of Jesus), and Wilhelm Bousset's *Jesus*; also his *Was Wissen Wir von Jesus?* (What Can We Know of Jesus?) published in the same year. Both authors attack the order of Mark's Gospel, stoutly defended by their predecessor Holtzmann. They follow Wellhausen's view that the individual incidents or units of discourse are "traditional," while the connective tissue, the place, time and circumstances, are "redactional," and of no historic value.

Wernle goes further than this. He says that in studying Mark we must disregard not only the order of Mark but the ruling idea which dominates the whole book, namely, that Jesus was the Son of God. A main difficulty in gaining an accurate portrait is that miracles, even nature miracles, are so prominent in Mark that "the historical portrait has been dimmed, the picture of Jesus distorted into something grotesque and fantastic" (p. 60). The faith of the Church again is an opaque medium. "Between Jesus and us stands always as the immediate object of research the faith of the primitive church" (p. 83).

Bousset sees only legends in the miracles recorded by Mark. "Already for Mark," he says, "Jesus is the miraculous eternal Son of God" (*Was Wissen Wir?* p. 54). Bousset breaks the string which binds together the pearls of tradition, and then finds that the pearls are not genuine. He says: "We only know the Christ in whom the Church believed, and that the underlying historical Jesus is for us

forever inaccessible" (p. 55). In his notable later work, *Kyrios Christos*, 1913, Bousset pictures Jesus as largely an imaginary figure, the product of the disciples' imagination, "surrounded by the golden nimbus of the miraculous" (p. 75). When we look beneath the golden sheen of miracle, the history has evaporated. In the same spirit Wrede in his *Messiasgeheimnis* (The Messianic Secret), 1901, can find in Mark only "faded remnants" of history, and says that in this respect the Gospel of Mark belongs to the history of dogma.

The critics in their flight from miracle can find refuge only in the shadow-land of unknowability. What is not explained is how the early Church added to the floating traditions of a teacher of a "sober and simple" piety just those elements of miracle and dogma that caused the bitter hatred of the Jews, and the determination of fanatics, like Saul of Tarsus and of the Roman emperors, to exterminate the Church.

## II. *The Eschatological School*

Albert Schweitzer in his *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, 1906 (*The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 1910), with the aid of Johannes Weiss, gave to New Testament criticism a new direction. With Schweitzer Jesus was no longer a "phantom created by the German mind," but he was "an imperious ruler" (*Quest*, p. 401), a figure of gigantic proportions. Jesus was no longer a Galilean Socrates, teaching a simple piety and a pure morality, a Gospel, as Harnack has pictured it, of the Fatherhood of God and the worth of the individual soul. Jesus becomes a rapt enthusiast, expecting that before the disciples returned from their mission in Galilee (Matt. 10: 23), he by divine interposition would be transformed and appear as the Messianic Son of Man. When the Twelve returned and nothing happened, Jesus postponed the "Coming" till his death, believing that then there would be a transformation, resurrection, and parousia of himself as the futuristic Messiah. Schweitzer is quite merciless in manipulating the Gospel records to suit himself. He reduces the supernatural to a delusive eschatological hope. Jesus, obsessed with the hope that he would immediately become a majestic figure who would close the drama of history, died upon the Cross in hopeless disillusionment and defeat. There was no resurrection. In the end Schweitzer disowns his own eschatological Jesus as having no value for religion. The historical knowledge of the Jesus he pictures will

not, he acknowledges, be a help, "but perhaps even an offense to religion" (p. 399). He adds: "But the truth is, it is not Jesus as historically known, but Jesus as spiritually arisen within men, who is significant for our time and can help it" (*ibid.*).

Schweitzer's historical method is open to question. He looks to Mark for his eschatology, but for his basic proof-text has to go to Matthew, 10: 23: "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man is come." He dismisses Mark's own eschatology in a foot-note (p. 387, 1), while in Mark's eschatological chapter, Jesus at least five times (13: 6, 8, 9, 10, 22) speaks of developments requiring considerable periods of time before his parousia. Of miracles Schweitzer says: "With Strauss begins the period of the non-miraculous Life of Jesus. . . . In the modern period it has lost all importance . . . so that miracle no longer concerns the historian either positively or negatively" (p. 111).

Schweitzer has convinced New Testament students of the supreme importance of the eschatological element in the teaching of Jesus. But of the correctness of his imaginary and highly colored portrait of Jesus, so far as known, he has convinced no one. This is the picture of a self-deluded enthusiast, even of a pathological megalomaniac. It is not the picture of one who has won the empire of human hearts, or who inspired Schweitzer to spurn the honors won by his achievements in many fields, and to plunge into the African jungle to minister to human need.

Sainte-Beuve has said that Renan offered Jesus a seat at the summit of humanity on condition of his abdication from the throne of God. Schweitzer's portrait of Jesus is also a dethronement. He is no longer even the world's great Teacher with the words of the highest human wisdom and the words of eternal life. The portrait that Schweitzer has painted is so bizarre and distorted and impossible and unlovely that it is the part of mercy to cover it with the veil of unknowability. Seeking to make his non-miraculous historical Jesus a majestic figure, he has reduced him, equally with the liberals whom he criticizes, to a negligible quantity.

In the study of Schweitzer's life and later writings, however, criticism is stilled in admiration for the amazing versatility of his many-sided genius, and for his career of service to humanity which has followed so closely in the footsteps of the Great Physician.

## III. THE SCHOOL OF FORM CRITICISM

Scholars between the two wars developed a new and promising method of studying early Christianity. Going behind the Gospels and their documentary sources they have studied the thirty years or more of oral tradition in the hope of finding a true picture of Jesus of Nazareth. The leaders in this movement have been Martin Dibelius of Heidelberg in his *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*, 1919, 2nd ed., 1933; Eng. trans. *From Tradition to Gospel*, 1935; and Rudolph Bultmann of Marburg in his *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, 1921, 2nd ed., 1931.

Form Criticism is a complex of various elements, but its leading features can be set forth in few words. A man that was called Jesus lived in Palestine, gathered a devoted company of friends about him, and was put to death on the cross. These friends formed the nucleus of what came to be called the Church. Scattered traditions about the Master were treasured in memory and repeated with elaborations and accretions as the needs of the Church for instruction or evangelism required. These fragments of tradition were modified in two ways. They were run into certain "forms" or patterns of religious discourse (paradigms in which a narrative leads up to a striking saying, miracle stories, etc.), and these forms had become so stereotyped as to be regarded as obligatory (*verbindlich*). Again there is a sort of "biology of the sage" according to which the legendary elements of a story grow, and embellishments are added to make it more effective as it passes from mouth to mouth. After many years of this process an author strung together these floating anecdotes and sayings of tradition, adding editorially particulars of time and place—"the house," "the lake," "the feast"—and the result is the connected narrative of one of our Gospels.

The method of our form critics is different from that of their predecessors, but the result is the same. Where Bousset leaves a void, Dibelius and Bultmann leave a vacuum. In both cases the elimination of miracles and Christology destroys the history. Thus Dibelius thinks that Mark describes the "epiphany" of a heavenly being, and says that Mark in its final form is certainly a mythical book (p. 279, German ed.). Bultmann likewise removes from the Gospel narratives most of their essential features, and subjects the words of Jesus to a treatment still more drastic if possible. Neither of our authors can work backward and determine what manner of man Jesus was.

Neither can give any definite and reliable information as to the course of his ministry or the cause of his death. In his later *Jesus*, 1929, Bultmann confesses that, "We know as good as nothing of the life and personality of Jesus" (p. 12).

The closely-knit Passion Narrative, admittedly early, not fitting in any of the "forms," and without analogy in the literature of the world, is a stumbling block to the form critics. Says Bertram: "Only in a group which believes in a Risen Lord is the Passion Story possible" (quoted in Brunner's *Mediator*, p. 180, n. 1). The Passion Narratives show that the Gospels were written in the conviction of the victory of the Resurrection. Otherwise the Gospels would close in a storm of tragedy and blood. Without the Resurrection, the greatest of the miracles, there would have been no Gospels written, no traditions about Jesus would probably have long survived. There would have been no Church to mold these traditions to its purpose, and no Kerygma or Gospel to preach.

Evidence accumulates that when the miracles and the attendant Christology are removed from the Gospels, very little of history is left and very little that is of any importance for religion. The figure of Jesus becomes so shrunken and so shadowy that he is no longer available as the world's great teacher and example.

#### THE FORM BEHIND THE FORMS

The negative result of the early Form Criticism was not without reaction in the English speaking world. It led to, or was followed by, the discovery of a "form" behind the "forms." By an intensive study of *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, 1936, C. H. Dodd and other scholars discovered, or re-discovered, a form of preaching which pervades and unifies the New Testament scriptures. They discovered a pattern of preaching that is more primitive, more fixed (or less vague) in its content, more authoritative and more enduring than any of the forms of the Form Criticism. This common type of apostolic preaching finds classical expression in I Cor. 15: 1-11: "That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures, and that was seen of Cephas, etc." Paul did not invent but "received" it either from disciples at Damascus or apostles at Jerusalem. In support of its truth Paul appealed to the leaders of the Jerusalem Church, Peter and James the Lord's brother, men still liv-

ing, men known throughout the Church, and men with whom Paul had intimate contact. "Whether it were I or they, so we preach." The statement carries us back to the earliest ages of the Church and in a form which in the faith and preaching of the Church has persisted to this day.

Bishop A. E. J. Rawlinson strikes a similar note in his *Christ in the Gospels*, 1944, when he says: "The modern New Testament scholar is discovering the Gospel afresh. Upon the making of a like discovery, not by a few scholars only, but by mankind, the world's spiritual future depends."

#### IV. THE FRENCH SKEPTICAL SCHOOL

The stampede of Continental critics toward the goal of mythicism approaches a climax in the work of Charles Guignebert (*Jesus*, 1933; E. T., 1935), and Alfred Loisy in his later mood (*Les Origines du Nouveau Testament*, 1936; E. T., *The Origins of the New Testament*, 1950). Maurice Goguel, whose *Life of Jesus* (E. T., 1937) closes with the crucifixion, has affinities with these authors, but is much more conservative. All three scholars carry on a spirited polemic with the complete mythicists, but Guignebert and Loisy at least come perilously near the precipice. Denial of the existence of Jesus is described as the "extreme limit" which their own view approaches, and this negation is said to be "in itself a perfectly legitimate theory entitled to serious discussion" (Guignebert, p. 64, E. T.). Jesus is described as "an ignorant man" with only a limited horizon (p. 178). Success in his short period of teaching does not justify reference to crowds or any enthusiasm whatever. "Either tendentious legend or subsequent invention, this is the verdict that perpetually recurs when we are reviewing the incidents which the Synoptic tradition has bequeathed to us" (p. 230). To impute to Jesus unusual spiritual gifts or depths of insight "is a kind of tenacious survival of the inherited belief in his divinity." Even the "sentimental effusions of Renan" are dangerous to the unwary reader and so eminent a critic as Holtzmann is rebuked for growing lyrical over the "peculiar genius" of Jesus (p. 246).

Guignebert praises Loisy for freeing himself of the fatal "religious complex" of faith in the historical character of the Gospels, and for coming to see "the desert of our knowledge in its true light, undeluded by mirages" (p. 55). Jesus is consistently belittled and pushed

into an obscure corner of history. But these things were not done in a corner.

Alfred Loisy has been a notable and picturesque figure in the religious history of his time. Removed from the Roman Catholic Church for his creed of "Modernism," he has been a prolific writer on New Testament themes. Skeptical tendencies have gained the ascendancy in his later *Les Origines du Nouveau Testament*, 1936. Such expressions as "fiction," "pure fiction," "redactional embroidery," "disconcerting puerility," are scattered liberally through his comments on the Gospels. Loisy says that the authors of the Gospels introduce "redactional miracles" and "multiply miracles to satiety" with as little scruple as in multiplying metaphors.

Loisy deviates in two ways from a more sober criticism. First, supposing that the Gospel stories are the invention of the Church, he *pre-dates* these by saying that they were put back proleptically into a record of the ministry. Second, he *post-dates* the New Testament books and the writings of the Apostolic Fathers far beyond the limits, for instance, of Harnack's *Chronologie*. He even goes so far as to deny to St. Paul the heart of his Epistle to the Romans, chapters 5 to 8, and the great chapters, 13 and 15, of First Corinthians. These extreme positions in the face of well-supported critical opinion remind one of the extravagances of Bruno Bauer. Vincent Taylor in the *Hibbert Journal* (July, 1950) suggests that Loisy, having escaped from the authority of the Pope, has now by his lofty disregard of sound critical principles assumed an infallibility of his own.

#### V. THE DE-MYTHOLOGIZING SCHOOL

The most recent school of criticism, still in the process of formation and delimitation, has grown out of an essay by Bultmann, first published in 1941 as part of a larger volume, *Offenbarung und Heilsgeschehen*, and now republished, with comments by nine other German scholars, under the title of *Kerygma und Mythos (Gospel and Myth)*.<sup>\*</sup> Bultmann's monograph has been widely discussed and has

<sup>\*</sup> *Kerygma und Mythos: Ein theologisches Gespräch*. Mit Beiträgen von Prof. D. Dr. Rudolf Bultmann, P. Götz Harbsmeier, P. Friedrich Hochgrebe, Prof. D. Dr. Ernst Lohmeyer, Dr. Paul Olivier, P. Hermann Sauter, Prof. D. Julius Schniewind, Prof. D. Dr. Friedrich K. Schumann, Dr. J. B. Soucek, Prof. D. Dr. Helmut Thielicke. Herausgegeben von Dr. theol. Hans Werner Bartsch. Hamburg: Reich & Heidrich, Evangelischer Verlag, 1948, pp. 242. For an interesting and detailed review of the book, see "Mythology and the New Testament" by Amos N. Wilder in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, June, 1950, and for an "apologia" for Bultmann, see Kendrick Grobel, "Bultmann's Problem of NT 'Mythology,'" *ibid.*, June, 1951.

created a stir in German theological circles. His thesis is that the New Testament and its message need to be de-mythologized to be made acceptable to the modern mind. Miracles as mythology must be eliminated.

It is necessary, it is said, to de-mythologize the Gospels because they were written when men believed in a three-story universe, the earth in the middle, heaven above, and hell beneath. Men then believed in miracles, and that the spirits of men were worked upon by supernatural forces, of God and his angels, of Satan and his demons. Written in this atmosphere, the New Testament is incredible for us today. The task of theology is now to de-mythologize, or decode, the message—the kerygma—so that it will be meaningful for the men of our age. It is not apparent, it must be objected, why the truth of a history or the validity of a spiritual experience should depend upon a theory of the physical universe. The history of a Thucydides or of a Luke the physician can be as reliable, a possession for all time, whether written in the Ptolemaic or the Copernican age, or in the four-dimensional universe of Einstein, where all motion is relative.

Bultmann goes further than others, excluding not only physical miracles but “miracles” in the sense of spiritual impulses as maintained by W. Herrmann. People, he says, cannot use electric light and the radio and modern medicine, and yet believe in the spirit-and-miracle-world of the New Testament (p. 18). But further, man now, taught by science and psychology, regards himself as a unitary and autonomous being, and cannot believe that foreign powers invade his inner life. He holds to the inner unity of his state and his actions, and “calls a man who imagines that this unity is divided by the access of demonic or divine forces a victim of schizophrenia” (p. 19).

When the storm of de-mythologizing has passed over the New Testament a single object—the Cross—is left standing amid the wreckage. This is Bultmann’s concession to history—a grudging one at that, because “it is not an event in the past to which we look back; but it is the eschatological event in time and beyond time” (p. 46). The Cross in our age has lost the old associations—satisfaction, substitution, redemption through the blood. “How can my guilt be atoned for by the death of a guiltless one (if one should speak of such a one at all)?” (p. 20). But the Cross faces us with the decision whether we are willing to die and rise again with Christ. It is “an act of God

which first makes possible self-surrender, faith, love and the real life of man" (p. 43).

Bultmann strikes here an evangelical, almost a Pauline note. He is determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified, but the Cross with him is a changed Cross. It is first stripped of the meaning it admittedly had with the apostles (p. 45), and then arbitrarily and by a rhetorical *tour de force* it is identified with the Resurrection. "Cross and Resurrection are as 'cosmical' events a unity" (p. 48). Cross and Resurrection are inseparable. But the Resurrection like the Cross has lost its old meaning. It has changed its meaning—if it now has any.

The Resurrection is not a "credible miracle" as the New Testament writers admittedly thought it was (p. 48). Of the legend of the empty grave and of the bodily appearances Paul knew nothing (p. 48)—in spite of the "died . . . was buried . . . rose again the third day" (I Cor. 15: 3, 4). It is surely a piece of critical caprice, in the face of the plain meaning of Paul's words, to deny that he appealed to the twofold evidence of the empty tomb and the appearances. But again, when Paul marshals the eyewitnesses of the Risen Lord: "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once," this is called by Bultmann "fatal" argumentation. "What kind of a historical event could it be whose actuality hangs upon a rising from the dead?" (p. 48). Instead of the solid rock of actual history, supported by strong, adequate, and many-sided evidence, the hopes of humanity are built upon the quicksand of psychological relativity.

That the Cross was never preached without the Resurrection is true, but the appeal of the Cross is that it was the Cross of Jesus of Nazareth who went about doing good, who was approved of God by mighty works, who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and was declared to be the Son of God with power by the Resurrection from the dead. A favorite text with Bultmann is, "The Word was made flesh," but he never completes the verse, "and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1: 14).

A theologian, H. Thieliicke, sees in Bultmann a shift from theology to the Existential philosophy. The Existentialist, when he is down and out and realizes his misery, can by self-assertion find his better self. He can, like the prodigal, come to himself, although he may not

say, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned." Bultmann tries to go beyond the Existentialist, but he has made for himself an impasse in his argument when he says that the Cross is an "act of God" (p. 43). If it is an act of God, leading men to repentance and a better life, then it is plainly, in spite of protestations and subtle distinctions in the meaning of the word myth, an invasion of the autonomy of the modern man, and we are back in the "mythology" and schizophrenia from which Bultmann has been at pains to free the Kerygma. The key to this paradox, we believe, is that Bultmann, who together with his extreme skepticism has kept one foot in the Barthian camp, has not escaped from the influence of evangelical convictions. The Cross of Christ still towers over the wrecks of time, and still provides the remedy, divinely given, for man in his sin and ruin and despair.

Bultmann has been the leader of a new Docetism which has made a phantom of Jesus of Nazareth.\* Some will think that this flight from miracle, and consequently from history, this freeing of Jesus from history, will be a gain for faith, that the less we know of Jesus Christ the better we can worship him. We suspect rather that the end of this *via negativa* will be the worship with the Athenians of an "unknown God," or the worship with Eckhart, the medieval mystic, of a "nameless Nothing."

The French skeptical critic Guignebert, whom his colleague Goguel classes with the complete mythicists, has with great clearness and candor placed the alternatives before us. He says, "If the belief of the disciples of the apostolic period concerning the Passion and the Resurrection was true—then there is no further cause for doubt: Christianity is really the work of Jesus; he came into the world to *found* it, and by the cross he both realized and vindicated it" (*Jesus*, p. 409).

Our review of fifty years of criticism leaves us faced with two choices only. We must dismiss Jesus of Nazareth and allow him to retire into the cloud-land of mythicism. Or we must allow him to appear in his inapproachable glory as he is pictured in the Gospels, doing in his earthly life the works which none other has done, and speaking the words which no other has spoken. We must turn from him as belittled and minimized, despised and rejected of men; or ac-

\* Cf. Donald M. Baillie, *God Was In Christ*, 1948, chap. I.

cept him in his high offices of Prophet, Priest and King, the Revealer of God and the Redeemer of man, the brightness of the Father's light and the express image of his love.

Time after time we see how impossible it is to draw any consistent and convincing portrait of a non-miraculous Jesus of Nazareth. We see again that the miracles are not an embroidery upon the fringe of the Gospels, but that they are woven into the very heart and substance of the Gospels. When they are removed the whole fabric falls to pieces, and Jesus has no longer any secure place in history.

Profit can be gained by the study of the criticism of the last half century. The leading critics have been men of prodigious industry and wide learning, but speaking in the name of science they have failed to grasp the broader aspects of history and the value of historical evidence. Philosophical bias has prevented them from listening to competent and unimpeachable testimony. The result is that the mythical has gained steadily and inexorably over the historical. The actions and attributes which revealed his glory have been stripped one after another from the figure of Jesus till he is shrouded in darkness. The critics have robbed the Gospel of its power. They have confessed their failure to answer the cry, "We would see Jesus." They have left a blank where men have looked for inspiration and comfort for this life and hope for the life to come. They have made the ideal of the Kingdom of God a kingdom in word only and not in power. They have made the Great Physician impotent to heal, and made the strong Son of God into a weakling and a nobody. The critics in their flight from miracle have arrived at a sort of *reductio ad absurdum*. The dominating figure of history from whose birth the years of time are measured, whom the world reveres as its highest ideal and the Church worships as the Lord of Glory, is denied any recognizable place in history and made to disappear in a cloud and a mist. As it affects our argument, we repeat the conclusion of the whole matter. By their complete and confessed failure to draw a credible portrait of a nonmiraculous Jesus, the critics have unconsciously built up a strong and cumulative argument, albeit a negative one, for the truth of the Gospel miracles.