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IN an address delivered in 1872 by the aged church-historian Moll, professor at Amsterdam's Athenæum, on the subject of the idea of universities in its historical development, a warm plea was made for the founding of Free Universities alongside the State Universities, and the wish was expressed that such a Free University should be placed in Amsterdam for the welfare of city and nation, to which there was added a prophecy that this wish would witness its fulfilment before long. That prophecy was fulfilled, although in a different sense than Moll intended, when sixteen years later the first Free University in our land was opened in Amsterdam. Although the jubilees of a university are not counted by decades but by centuries, yet there is a reason, now that our University has existed half a century, why this should be remembered. Its founding was an act of faith. The future needed to show whether the heroic attempt to maintain such a school without government subsidy or privilege, resting only upon the power of its principle and the liberality of our Reformed people, would succeed or not. It has withstood this test gloriously. At this golden jubilee we need not doubt its vitality. The cutting planted in Netherland's garden grew up, to be sure, not like Jonah's miracle-vine, but at least showing gradual increase in strength. And although the storms that have beaten down upon it have been severe, storms that have robbed it of many a valuable branch and that have shocked it clear to its roots, it has seemed, to borrow the beautiful imagery of Isaiah, that just as the stock remaineth in the oak even when it is felled, so, too, for our University, the holy seed entrusted to it has never lost its strength. Thanks for this is not due to us, but to the Lord our God who, according to the words

¹ An address delivered by Professor Doctor H. H. Kuyper, rector magnificus, at a meeting commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Free (Reformed) University of Amsterdam, and translated from the Dutch original by Dr. W. Burggraaff, Milwaukee, U.S.A.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE HISTORIC JESUS¹

THIS book by the distinguished Church historian presents with a clearness that leaves nothing to be desired a purely humanitarian or naturalistic view of Jesus. According to Dr. Mackinnon, "what the actual record reveals is not a divine being becoming human, but a human being becoming divine in the sense of developing in the highest degree a sonship of which, in his own teaching, all are capable, though only he has actually attained to the fullness of this filial consciousness, and only he is chosen to be the Son in the distinctive Messianic sense" (p. 391). Thus Jesus becomes merely "the greatest idealist of the race" (p. 254), "the highest embodiment of the divine in the human" (p. 393), "a creative religious genius of the highest order" (p. 307), "the great free-thinker, the religious emancipator of his age" (p. 328), "the highest product of his race" (p. 397). He differs from the rest of mankind, in other words, in degree only, and not in kind; His "sonship is religious and ethical, not metaphysical; functional, not essential" (p. 393).

In seeking to present such a Jesus as the real Jesus who lived in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago, in seeking to give a detailed account of His life, this writer is placing himself in opposition to two tendencies that have their representatives in the modern world. In the first place, he is opposing the historic Christian faith; for the Christian faith presupposes a Jesus who was just what this author is most firmly convinced that Jesus was not. In the second place, he is opposing the radically sceptical tendency which is becoming increasingly dominant in modern New Testament criticism; for while the recent critics agree perfectly with our author as to what Jesus was not, they are by no means so confident as he is regarding the ability of the modern historian to determine what He was.

Nearly seventy years ago, in 1863, H. J. Holtzmann published his book on the Synoptic Gospels.² At that time the "two-document theory" as to the sources of the Gospels was just becoming clearly dominant. There had been a long period of conflict; various theories as to the literary relations of the Gospels had been advocated by able historians; but at last the detailed researches of Wilke and Weiss seemed clearly to have borne fruit, and at least those scholars who rejected the supernaturalistic view of the origin of Christianity were coming to believe with an ever greater unanimity that the two chief sources of Matthew and Luke were (1) Mark (or a proto-Mark) and (2) a source, finally called "Q," that contained chiefly sayings as distinguished from deeds of Jesus. It seemed to be time to sum up the results of so much patient research; and Holtzmann proceeded to do so, with an almost lyrical enthusiasm, in the constructive part of his book. Much, it was admitted, had been removed by modern literary and historical criticism—the miracles, the bodily resurrection, the entire supernatural aspect of Jesus' person and work. But there was also much that remained, and when due use was made of that remainder the real prophet of Nazareth, freed of unfortunate metaphysical accretions, could at last, it was supposed, be presented to the world. So was produced that remarkable reconstruction commonly called "the Liberal Jesus," which has had such an immense vogue in the modern Church.

Underlying the construction there stand two fundamental convictions: (1) that the supernatural element in the Gospel picture of Jesus is unhistorical; (2) that that supernatural element may so be separated, by literary and historical criticism, from

¹ *The Historic Jesus*. By James Mackinnon, Ph.D., D.D., D.Theol., Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History, University of Edinburgh. Longmans, Green and Co., 1931. Price 16s. net.

² H. J. Holtzmann, *Die Synoptischen Evangelien*, 1863.

the rest, that what remains may be used to reconstruct a true account of what Jesus actually was and said and did.

So, despite the discrediting of much in the sources of information, we have in our possession, the "Liberal" historians supposed, sufficient trustworthy material to enable us to write something like a "life of Christ." Many have been the books that have been written with this comforting assurance; and great has been the resulting enthusiasm in the Church. At last, it has been supposed, the real Jesus has been rediscovered; and He is found not to be the pale metaphysical abstraction presented to us in the creeds, but a living human being of flesh and blood; at last, in other words, we have the truly human Jesus; at last we have found Him to be one of us, and being one of us He is able, by His example, to lead us into that higher life which He Himself once lived.

But this enthusiasm for the "Liberal Jesus" has faced increasing opposition even from those whose presuppositions, being naturalistic, are essentially the same as the presuppositions of those to whom the construction of the "Liberal Jesus" was due.

A serious attack came, for example, from W. Wrede, whose book on "The Messianic Secret"¹ appeared in 1901. The "Liberal" historians had derived their outline of the life of Christ essentially from the Gospel according to Mark; they had found especially in the scene at Cæsarea Philippi, as Mark narrates it, the key to the Messianic consciousness of Jesus and to the attitude of Jesus' disciples toward that Messianic consciousness. But Wrede attacked all that in the most disconcerting and thorough-going way. In reality, he said, the Second Gospel does not enable us at all to distinguish different stages either in the ministry of Jesus or in the beliefs of His disciples about Him. Rather does this Gospel present throughout a view of the Messiahship that is radically untrue; the whole account which "Mark" gives of a secret Messiahship is due merely to his apologetic effort to explain how it was that if Jesus was really the Messiah He was not before the crucifixion regarded as such. In point of fact, said Wrede, Jesus never presented Himself as Messiah; Messiahship was attributed to Him only afterwards by the Church. But if He was the Messiah, must He not have been the Messiah even during His earthly ministry? Yes, said the Church. But unfortunately one thing was opposed to that view; it was the memory of the unpalatable fact that during the public ministry Jesus had not been spoken of as Messiah even by His friends. That was the fact which, according to Wrede, Mark endeavoured to explain away: he endeavoured to explain it away by his theory of "the Messianic secret." According to that theory, Jesus was not known as Messiah during His earthly ministry for the simple reason that though He knew Himself to be Messiah He kept the fact secret from all except a few intimate friends and bade them keep it secret too. But when this supposedly Marcan theory is held to be unhistorical, as Wrede held it to be, then it is at once seen how precarious a foundation the Gospel of Mark is for a reconstruction of the life of Jesus. Thus Wrede had struck a blow against the very foundations of the "Liberal Jesus."

Another serious blow was struck by the "consistent eschatology" of A. Schweitzer and others. Quite essential to the construction of the "Liberal Jesus" was a minimising of the eschatological element in the Gospels. Jesus did, indeed, the "Liberal" historians admitted, regard Himself as the Messiah; and with that belief there may have gone, as part of His Jewish inheritance, certain convictions about a catastrophic coming of the Kingdom of God: but such convictions were at best quite secondary; they were merely the husk in which the precious kernel of Jesus' teaching was contained. Essentially, for the "Liberal" historians, Jesus was a preacher of a universal and timeless gospel of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man: when He claimed to be the Messiah, it was only because Messiahship offered a form in which He could express His vocation of bringing other men into the

¹ Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien*, 1901.

same filial relationship to God as that in which He Himself stood; when He proclaimed the Kingdom of God, He might, indeed, retain as a piece of traditional baggage the hope of a future catastrophic establishment of the divine rule, but what was really essential in His teaching was the proclamation of the Kingdom as a present reality in the hearts and lives of men. Against such a view of Jesus the consistent eschatologists uttered an emphatic protest: that view may represent, they said in effect, what modern men could wish Jesus to have been, but a scrutiny of the sources shows plainly that it does not represent at all what Jesus actually was. As a matter of fact, said the consistent eschatologists, the eschatological or apocalyptic element in Jesus' thinking, fantastic though it may seem to modern men, was for Jesus Himself quite essential: even the ethical teaching was dominated by it, in the sense that Jesus' ethic is an "interim ethic," a programme of conduct suitable only to those who expected the end of the age to come within a few weeks or months.

Even more serious, perhaps, than these detailed and express attacks upon the "Liberal" reconstruction has been the undermining effect of a certain central weakness inherent in the construction itself. The great trouble with "the Liberal Jesus" is that He must be constructed by the use of the very sources of information which have already been discredited in the course of the demolition by the "Liberal" historians of the Jesus of the historic Church. The "Liberal" historians rejected the supernatural element in the Gospels. Could they then, after rejecting the supernatural, hold that everything else in the Gospels is true? Obviously they could not do that. It is evident that many things in the Gospels, not themselves supernatural, are so closely connected with what is supernatural that if the supernatural be removed they too must go. Moreover, what is just as serious, it is necessary, if the supernatural be rejected, to hold such a view of the character of the sources attesting the supernatural as to render very precarious a use of those sources even where the supernatural does not seem to be directly involved.

In other words, if the witness of the sources cannot be taken as it stands, if a very large element in them must be rejected because of the rejection of the supernatural, how shall the historian find a criterion to distinguish what is true from what is false in that which remains?

This question has been becoming more and more acute in recent years. Increasingly it is being observed how very pervasive in our sources of information about Jesus are the supernatural elements, or at least those elements which are inextricably intertwined with the supernatural elements. The writers of all the sources, it is observed, regarded Jesus as a supernatural Redeemer and allowed that belief about Him to colour their narratives. How, then, when that belief is rejected, can the historian ever hope to distinguish the modicum of fact in the sources from those elements that reflect the dogmatism of the early Church?

Various attempts have been made in the course of modern criticism to answer this question. P. W. Schmiedel, for example, tried to answer it thirty years ago by his famous treatment of the "pillar passages": we can find a solid basis for our knowledge of Jesus, he said, if we start with those passages in the Gospels that obviously run counter to the opinions of the early Church; for the early Church never would have invented what was opposed to its cherished convictions. But this method leads at the best only to very meagre results.

In recent years, another effort is being made. It is being made in the *Formgeschichte* of Dibelius and Bultmann and others. Back of our Gospels and back of the written sources upon which they are supposed to be based, there lay, it is said, a period of oral or written transmission of detached bits of information regarding the words and deeds of Jesus. These detached bits of information were not "literature," it is insisted; they found their inception not in the conscious art of individual writers, but rather in the effort of early preachers or teachers to accompany the gospel with

¹ P. W. Schmiedel, Article "Gospels" in *Encyclopædia Biblica*, ii, 1901, especially columns 1872f., 1881-1883.

illustrative or apologetic material. In the case of such products, it is said, the personality of the writers is unimportant, the result being determined by the character of the "form" that is used in any particular case. Thus Dibelius¹ distinguishes as forms or moulds in which these early bits of materials appeared "paradigms" (illustrative dialogues culminating in some brief and pithy word of Jesus), "miracle-stories" (*Novellen*), etc. By establishing the character of the forms in which these bits of information originally appeared, the historian is able, it is supposed, to eliminate as redactional and secondary those elements in our Gospels by which the purity of the forms is marred. He is also able to see that one form must have come into vogue in the Church at an earlier time than another. Thus *Formgeschichte* seeks to provide a method of distinguishing various strata in the tradition underlying the Gospels.

But even the earliest stratum thus distinguished was, according to the leading advocates of this method, far from being a stratum of pure historical information. The unfortunate thing is, says Dibelius, that even at the beginning detailed information about the words and deeds of Jesus was dominated by a practical, rather than an historical, purpose; the catastrophe of the Parousia being immediately expected, there was no place in the primitive apostolic Church for transmission of historical information as such. Thus even the "paradigms," which Dibelius apparently regards as constituting the most primitive of the forms, were by no means what we should regard as purely or objectively historical.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the results of *Formgeschichte*, as the method is applied by its leading representatives, are extremely negative so far as historical information about Jesus is concerned. What the historian really has directly before him, says Bultmann in effect, is not Jesus Himself but what the early Church thought about Jesus. We can, indeed, infer that back of that thought of the early Church there stood a powerful personality, and we can detect certain elements of His teaching; but what sort of man He Himself was—to that question we can give at best but a vague and unsatisfactory answer.²

As over against such scepticism, Dr. Mackinnon stands firmly with the older "Liberal" historians; he believes that Jesus may still be known, that even a rather detailed account of His life and teaching may be reconstructed by literary and historical criticism.

The reconstruction as presented in Dr. Mackinnon's book moves, in general, along familiar lines. By a use especially of the Gospel of Mark—a mistaken use, we think—the main features of the "Liberal Jesus" are here presented to us once more. Jesus, it is said in effect, was a religious genius of a high order; He arrived by "intuition" rather than by "acquired doctrine" at a consciousness of God as Father and at the experience of a filial relation to Him. At the time of His baptism by John the Baptist, this sense of His sonship toward God, and of the consequent mission that rested upon Him, became explicit in the consciousness that He was the Messiah. He was not, however, the kind of Messiah that the people generally connected with the term. Hence He kept His Messianic office at first in the background; His references to it were "reserved" and—to use a favourite word of this writer—"furtive" (p. 106). Hence also His teaching about the Kingdom of God was "veiled, indirect, parabolic, suggestive" (*ibid.*). But Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi was "the turning-point in the life of Jesus" (p. 99). He now began to face the thought of death; the heavenly Son of Man of the seventh chapter of Daniel was now combined, in His thought of His mission, with the suffering Servant of Jehovah of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah; He began to predict His death and subsequent resurrection—though "resurrection" it is to be observed, did not involve, according to Dr. Mackinnon, an emergence of the body from the tomb. Thus the eschatological and apocalyptic element in Jesus' teaching, which had been present

¹ *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*, 1919.

² See especially Bultmann, *Die Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien*, 2te Aufl., 1930, pp. 32f.

from the beginning, now became far more prominent than before. Jesus brought about the crisis by going up to Jerusalem. He suffered death. After His death His disciples experienced—what? Well, certainly not any such presence of Jesus as would involve the emergence of His body from the tomb. What we can say with certainty is that “the early disciples attained to a consciousness of his spiritual existence as real as had been that of his presence among them in the flesh” (p. 296). If the experiences were “visually” rather than “spiritually” grasped, we must bear modern parallels in mind:

Telepathy is an established experience, and of itself proves the direct intercourse of mind with mind without a sensible medium. Nor is the experience confined to the contact of spirit with spirit in the case of those living in the body. One has heard of experiences of this contact of the living with the departed, apart altogether from the intervention of professed mediums, which can only be explained by the capacity of the departing or departed spirit to make known through telepathy, say, the fact of the departure from this life, it may be thousands of miles at a distance from the object of this communication (p. 297).

In any case, one thing is sure about these experiences according to Dr. Mackinnon —“there is really nothing supernatural in them” (p. 298).

How does Dr. Mackinnon arrive at the rather detailed account of Jesus’ life which he presents with so much confidence in this book? He does so by applying, implicitly and perhaps unconsciously, two rules of procedure: (1) eliminate the supernatural from the Gospel account of Jesus; (2) accept in the remainder everything against which no particular objection can be found.

The application of the former of these two rules is thorough-going. Our author regards any belief in a supernatural interposition of God into the course of the world as being a belief in something “magical”:

As far as our experience guides us, God does not intervene in Nature and history in the magical, theurgic fashion, which such a naive belief assumes. He works His will by adapting means to ends through the quickening of latent conditions or forces which are fitted to produce the desired result (p. 351).

The use of the term “magical” in this connection, here and elsewhere in the book, is surely quite unjustifiable. Magic, as distinguished from religion, means the attempt to use God or some higher power for our own purposes without thought of attaining His favour or seeking personal communion with Him. It is certainly a misuse of language, therefore, to apply such a word to the miracles narrated in the Gospels and accepted by devout Christians of all ages. But the application of the word, unjustifiable though it be, is instructive. It serves at least to indicate the thorough-going rejection of, and antipathy to, the supernatural on the part of the author of this book.

The supernatural being rejected, what is to be done with those stories in the Gospels in which the supernatural is involved? Here the author engages sometimes in a rationalising method of treatment which was especially in vogue a hundred years ago. Not only is most of the healing ministry explained as being analogous to modern faith-cures or the like—so much is a commonplace in contemporary treatment of the life of Christ—but Dr. Mackinnon is inclined to look with some favour, for instance, upon the view (presented in classic form by Paulus some hundred years ago) that the five thousand were fed through the good example given to other fortunate ones among the crowd by Jesus’ distribution of His own little store (p. 364). So the “walking on the water” was possibly, according to Dr. Mackinnon, an optical illusion:

In the haze and dimness of the early morning the disciples, who are labouring towards the land against a contrary wind and are in a perturbed state of mind, descry what they take to be an apparition on the water, but which is, in reality, the moving figure of Jesus on the shore (p. 365).

“Those who have experienced the wonders of the mirage in a hot country,” says the author further, “will not be disposed to impugn off hand the explanation of an optical illusion.” So also with regard to the Gerasene demoniac we are told that “Jesus did effect the cure of the maniac, but only after a prolonged convulsion

which frightens the swine and causes them to rush helter-skelter over the precipice into the lake" (p. 360). If David Freidrich Strauss could read such passages in this modern book, he might think that he had lived in vain; the rationalising of a Paulus might seem to him to have come to life once more.

We have already noticed how telepathy and spiritualism are drawn in as possible explanations of the resurrection "appearances." Somewhat similar to such rationalising—at least in logical implication—is the treatment of the virgin birth. Dr. Mackinnon is inclined to think that "the virgin conception was . . . the attempt of Christian apologetic to meet Jewish calumny"—the calumny, namely, that alleged an illegitimate birth of Jesus (pp. 14*f.*, especially p. 14, footnote 46). But what in turn produced that Jewish calumny? Why, if there was no basis of truth in it, was it not refuted simply by insistence upon the honourable birth of Jesus as the son of Joseph and Mary? If there was some basis of truth in it, if there was something unusual, though perfectly natural, about the birth of Jesus, then once more we are back again—though we do not for a moment mean to imply that this writer has thought the thing through that far—in the rationalising of a Paulus or even of a Venturini.

At any rate, the supernatural in one way or another is eliminated by Dr. Mackinnon from the life of the real Jesus. This elimination of the supernatural is rooted in certain pre-suppositions regarding God and the world. As we read this learned book, we are impressed anew with the fact that a true and full theism is apt to be lost when belief in Biblical miracles is given up.¹ Theoretically, no doubt, it can survive; a man may conceivably hold to the transcendence of God, he may believe that God is the creator and ruler of the world, and yet hold that as a matter of fact God has never intervened in creative fashion in the course of the world, but has been content to work always through the things that He has made. But in practice it is discovered that those who reject the Biblical miracles seldom hold to a full and genuine theism, but tend always to drop back into some form of pantheism, "higher" or lower, which brings God into necessary connection with the world. That does not mean that theism must be established, or can be established, merely by an appeal to the Biblical miracles; but it does mean that if theism has already been established and is firmly maintained, then the evidence for the Biblical miracles is amply sufficient, so that, conversely, the rejection of the miracles is a symptom to show that theism is really being abandoned.

In the case of the writer whose book is now under review, the matter is particularly clear. Not only has he, so far as we can tell, abandoned theism in the high and full sense of the word, but it almost seems as though he has lost the comprehension of what a true theism is. The only alternative which, in one passage at least, he seems to admit to the one-sided doctrine of the divine "immanence" that he himself holds is a crude deism:

It has been averred, as a sufficient guarantee of the actuality of the supernatural works of Jesus, that God can, if He chooses, operate such a miracle as the walking on the water or the stilling of a storm by a word. It is further urged that such happenings are fully in accord with the unique personality of Jesus. We may not, indeed, set a limit to the divine working in Nature and history, if only on the score of the limitation of our knowledge of the ways of God in the actual government of the universe. The question is not, however, can, but does God rule and overrule both Nature and history by methods of this magical sort? We do not, like the Deists, conceive of Him as extraneous to the universe, inaccessible to the behests of the human spirit. In Him we live and move and have our being. Both reason and intuition, as well as faith, which is the fruit of these, testify to the reality of His immanence in the world, of the spiritual communion with an invisible Presence and Power which, in virtue of reason and intuition, we experience or may experience (p. 371).

A similar misunderstanding of the position of his opponents is found in another passage, where apparently he holds the supernaturalistic view of the miracles to involve an operation of God not only "above," but also "contrary to," natural law (p. 355). He is here speaking, it is true, of the teaching of the Roman Church; but probably

¹ Compare Gore, *Belief in God*, 1921, chapter III.

he would bring under the same condemnation the teachings of any true believer in the supernatural.

Against these representations, let it be said very plainly that we do not hold a miracle to be *contrary to nature*, but only, as the word "supernatural" indicates, *above nature*. Let it be said, in the second place, that we believe in the immanence of God just as strongly as Dr. Mackinnon does. Where we differ from him is that we believe also in the transcendence of God. Only in one place in the book, if our memory serves us, does Dr. Mackinnon speak of God as being above nature¹:

God's working in Nature is at once natural and supernatural. It is natural because God works through means to ends. It is supernatural because He, who is above Nature, is present in this working. To explain the miraculous in terms of the natural is not, therefore, to explain away the supernatural in and behind all Nature (p. 372).

We cannot think that this language, when it is taken in connection with the rest of the book, involves any really clear belief in the transcendence of God. It remains true that, according to our author's thinking, God works only in and through nature; not only does the world not exist independently of God, but God, so far as we can see, does not exist independently of the world; the distinction between God and the world, the supernatural and the natural, is broken down. And that means that the separateness of God—what the Bible calls His holiness—is given up. It becomes only too evident from a careful perusal of Dr. Mackinnon's earnest and learned book that if we follow him we shall have lost more than the miracles, more than supernatural redemption from our sins. Those losses would themselves be serious enough. But we shall have lost more still; we shall have lost also our belief in the living God.

After the supernatural has been eliminated from the Gospel account of Jesus, Dr. Mackinnon proceeds to use the remainder in a reconstruction of the life of the great religious genius who lived in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago. That reconstruction will no doubt be regarded as unsatisfactory not only by conservative historians but also by many historians whose presuppositions are the same as this writer's own.

We have characterised the method of reconstruction which is here followed as being determined by the rule: "After the supernatural has been eliminated from the Gospel picture, accept everything that remains unless there is some particular and decisive objection to it." It is only fair to say that the author does not himself formulate this rule, and that he might not agree at all to the formulation. Yet we are inclined to think that it does characterise rather accurately the method that is employed.

Certainly the method is not that of any careful analysis or evaluation of the sources of information. Questions of literary criticism are scarcely dealt with at all in this extensive book. It does appear incidentally that the author holds, regarding the Fourth Gospel, (1) that "the beloved disciple" was not John the son of Zebedee but a Judean disciple of Jesus, (2) that the writer of the Gospel may have been his disciple and used his reminiscences, into which, however, "he freely worked his own conceptions and reflections," (3) that the Gospel finally underwent "a clumsy manipulation by an editor or redactor" (p. 153). Dr. Mackinnon does, again, incidentally, show that he rejects the early dating of the Third Gospel, which puts that Gospel before the destruction of Jerusalem. But for the most part such questions of literary criticism are not discussed.

How, then, is the true distinguished from the false in sources of information which have been so widely discredited by the rejection of their supernatural content? In the answer to this question, it cannot be said, we think, that this writer can be cleared of the charge of subjectivity. He accepts those things in the Gospel account which can be harmonised with the "Liberal" view of Jesus, and rejects the rest.

¹ In this place he is summarising with approval the view of C. J. Wright, in *Miracle in History and in Modern Thought*, 1930.

In accordance with the former tendency he retains various elements in the Gospels which are almost universally rejected by other naturalistic historians. Thus he believes that Jesus was born in the reign of Herod the Great and in Bethlehem. He accepts the Davidic descent. He thinks that there is no decisive reason for questioning Luke's accuracy about the census of Quirinius.

We agree heartily with Dr. Mackinnon in holding these details in the Gospel narratives to be historical; we rejoice in the way in which here and there he even engages in harmonisation of the Gospel narratives in places where they are often thought to be completely contradictory. But the question is whether such maintenance of the historicity of these details is consistent with his general attitude toward the sources—an attitude which becomes necessary the moment the central supernatural content of the sources is rejected as untrue.

Perhaps an example will make our objection clear. Dr. Mackinnon repeatedly quotes as authentic words of the Apostle Peter utterances that are attributed to Peter in the early part of Acts (pp. 8, 393f.). We think that he is quite right in regarding these utterances as authentic; and the belief in their authenticity is quite consistent with *our* view of Luke-Acts. But is it consistent with the view of Luke-Acts which *he* is bound to hold? Certainly it is quite contrary to the overwhelming weight of opinion among those modern scholars whose attitude toward the supernatural is the same as his. Yet he does not seem to feel any obligation to provide a critical grounding, over against that weight of opinion, for his truly amazing confidence in Luke-Acts at this particular point.

The reason for his confidence in Luke-Acts at this point is in reality very clear. It is found in the agreement of these speeches of Peter—only, indeed, when they are interpreted in a way which to us seems to be erroneous—with his own reconstruction of the life of Christ.

We have said that after the supernatural has been removed from the Gospel account of Jesus the method of this book is to accept, in what remains, those things against which no particular objection can be urged. Is this method at all justifiable? Because there is no particular objection to a thing, it does not follow at all that it should be accepted as true. There may be every reason to accept it on *our* view of the Gospels; we think the Gospels are trustworthy sources of information. But the "Liberal" historians have discredited the Gospels in the course of their rejection of the supernatural. Have they then a right to put together into an account of "the historic Jesus" those detached bits in the discredited Gospels which happen to agree with their modern predilections?

In this objection we are in essential agreement, we suppose, with radicals like Wrede and Bultmann. Our sources of information about Jesus are dominated by the conviction that Jesus was a supernatural Redeemer. If that central conviction is untrue, then the sources are so thoroughly discredited that the effort to piece together from those same sources an account of a purely human Jesus can never transcend a fatal subjectivity in the choice of the materials that are to be used. The "Liberal Jesus" is a manufactured product, not a portrait drawn from the life.

The artificial character of the reconstruction is seen with particular clearness in the consciousness of being the Messiah which the "Liberal" historians are obliged to attribute to Jesus. In the book now under review the attribution is particularly clear. The author admits fully that Jesus regarded Himself as the Messiah not in some lower sense but in the sense that He was the heavenly Son of Man who appears (or was thought to appear) in Daniel's vision. But this consciousness surely introduces a thoroughly discordant element into the "Liberal" picture of Jesus. According to that picture, Jesus was the fairest flower of humanity, the religious and ethical leader of the race. Yet such a leader, without real basis in truth, held the fantastic view that He was to come with the clouds of heaven and be the judge of all the earth.

The trouble is not merely that this apocalyptic claim involves, unless it was true, an element of imperfection in Jesus' teaching and in His life. Dr. Mackinnon

is not inconsistent enough to attribute "sinlessness" to Jesus; he rejects supernaturalism in the ethical as well as in the physical sphere. He will not, indeed, say in so many words that Jesus had sin in His life, but at least he says that He "was conscious of his limitations in the presence of the perfect good" (p. 62), that in His indictment of the Pharisees "allowance must be made . . . for the tendency of the impassioned idealist to over-statement and over-emphasis" (p. 137), that the eschatological influence upon His teaching might in a certain respect "not be altogether a healthy one, and it accounts, in part at least, for what is the limitation as well as the thorough-going idealism of Jesus' conception of the kingdom" (p. 323).

But the trouble is that Jesus' claim to be the heavenly Messiah, unless it be true, involves an imperfection in Him and in His teaching that cuts even deeper than all that. Just think of it for a moment! This wonderful ethical teacher, this preacher of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, actually believed that He was to sit on the throne of God and be the final judge of the men among whom He walked and talked and indeed the final judge of all the earth! The "Liberal" historians may try to mitigate the difficulty all they please; they may point out that that age was different from ours and that such a claim was not then so preposterous as it would be today: but essentially the difficulty remains. The fact remains that the "Liberal Jesus," if He ever existed, was not the sort of person who ever could have claimed to be the heavenly Son of Man. The Messianic consciousness, in other words, introduces a hopeless contradiction into the "Liberal" account of Jesus; it shows that the Jesus presented by these historians not only never did exist, but never could have existed, upon the earth.

A third objection to Dr. Mackinnon's imposing reconstruction is found in the fact that he ignores almost completely the witness of Paul.

He does refer to Paul in a number of places in his book: he attempts, for example—quite unsuccessfully, we think—to show that the Apostle took a "spiritual" view of the resurrection of Christ which did not involve the empty tomb (pp. 282-286); he says, in a way we think mistaken, that "the Epistles do not tell us much of the actual history of Jesus, since Paul was chiefly concerned, not with the historic Jesus, but with the risen and glorified Lord" (p. ix.); he tries to maintain that "even Paul, who has little to tell of the historic Jesus, does not go the length of equating the exalted Christ with God in the absolute sense" (p. 394). More legitimate is his use of Paul to refute the radical denial of the historical existence of Jesus (p. xv.).

But in general it may be said that he passes very lightly indeed over what is for every naturalistic historian the central problem of early Christian history. Even when the Pauline teaching about Jesus Christ is reduced in the unwarrantable way in which this writer reduces it, still it remains clear at least that Paul regarded Jesus distinctly as a supernatural Person, and that there is not the slightest trace in the Epistles of any disagreement on this point between Paul and those who had been Jesus' intimate friends. This witness of Paul to Jesus does not depend merely upon details; it is found rather in the entire phenomenon of Paul's religion. The religion of Paul presupposes a Jesus who is totally unlike the Jesus reconstructed by modern naturalistic historians and is exactly like the Jesus presented in the four Gospels. In refusing to regard that Jesus as being the real Jesus, in substituting another Jesus for Him, the naturalistic historians have made of the beginnings of the Christian Church a hopeless puzzle. The Jesus whom they have substituted for Him is a psychological monstrosity; and even were He less of a monstrosity than He is, He would still be insufficient to account for the origin of the Christian Church. Once admit, on the other hand, that the Jesus presupposed by the Epistles of Paul and presented in the four Gospels was the real Jesus, and everything in early Christian history falls into its proper place. The Christian Church was not founded upon a pin-point; at the basis of its life there stands the supernatural Christ.

It will have been observed that our attitude toward Dr. Mackinnon's book is almost wholly one of disagreement. Yet there is at least one feature of the book which we admire—namely, the utter frankness and clearness with which the naturalistic view of Jesus is here presented. We respect such frankness very much more than we do the vagueness which is often found in the treatment of these great themes. Dr. Mackinnon presents to us with the utmost clearness a Jesus who is man only, and not, in our sense of the word, God. By doing so he helps us to hold with all the greater clearness of conviction to the Jesus presented in the New Testament, who is "God, and man, in two distinct natures, and one person, forever." And by telling us that "the essence of Christianity consists in the revelation of God, and of the divine in the human, on the exalted moral and spiritual plane of the life of Jesus" (p. xvii.), he causes us to turn with all the greater thankfulness and humility from such a Christianity to the Christianity that has at the heart of it redemption from sin by the precious blood of Christ. It is well that the great issue of the day should be made thus clear. The reduced Jesus of modern naturalism inevitably involves the reduced Christianity which Dr. Mackinnon here presents. If, on the other hand, we are to have a Saviour of our souls, we can find Him only in the mighty Redeemer offered to us in God's Word.

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PSYCHOLOGY AND GOD¹

IN the preface Professor Grensted apologises for his excursion into a field outside the sphere of his professional competence. The apology is entirely superfluous. If he is not a psychologist he could easily become one. The width of his reading in psychological literature is noteworthy, but much more striking is the quality of his understanding of it; and he can state a psychological theory or a mental fact with a surer, as well as a more elegant, touch than many experts. But the chief reason why his apology is superfluous is that he has not stepped out of his professional sphere at all. In so far as the psychology of religion is not simply an integral part of a scientific scheme, not a mere chapter of general psychology necessary to the completeness of the latter, but a serious attempt to discover the nature of religious experience, it surely falls within the province of the theologian.

The purpose of the book is to consider the current attack on religion from the side of psychology. I am not sure that this attack deserves such scholarly and sensitive consideration, and fear that it will rather feel honoured at having been counted worthy of treatment in Bampton Lectures than be chastened by the arguments these lectures contain. The so-called attack is in the hands of only a few psychologists, nearly all psycho-analysts, and has become prominent more because their voices have been amplified and broadcast by the popular press than by reason of any intrinsic weight. Professor Grensted seems to me to have taken them too seriously. But a mistake (if it is one) that gives us such a book as this one cannot be deplored.

The charges to be met are: (a) from the side of psycho-analysts, that religion is explicable as a "displacement of affect," a deflection of "libido" from its proper terminus in the real world to a world of phantasy, God being simply a projection of the infantile idea of one's father after the flesh; and (b) from certain other psychologists, that prayer, worship, assurance, the mystical experience, and religious healing of body and of mind are all explicable in terms of suggestion. I cannot summarise Professor Grensted's reply, for its point and excellence lie in its many

¹ *Psychology and God*. Being the Bampton Lectures for 1930. By the Rev. L. W. Grensted, M.A., B.D., Oriel Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion in the University of Oxford. London: Longmans Green & Co., 1930, pp. ix., 297. Price 10s. 6d. net.