

THE BIBLICAL PICTURE OF JESUS.*

BY A. T. ROBERTSON, D.D.,

Professor of New Testament Interpretation in the Southern Baptist
Theological Seminary,

LOUISVILLE, KY.

COME to put before you the greatest of all themes, for Christ is indeed our "hope of glory" and we know the facts about him and the sure record of his teachings only through the Bible. Canon Liddon says in *Some Elements of Religion*: "Not to be interested in the life of Jesus Christ is to be, I do not say irreligious, but unintelligent." What is the Bible Picture of Jesus? Is that Portrait true? These two questions press upon us from every side to-day. What will Jesus mean for us if the Bible no longer stands the test of historical truth? Who can then speak a "sure word of prophecy" out of the chaos? Dr. John Smith, of Edinburg, has not put it too strongly in his *Integrity of Scripture* when he says that the Arian Controversy was not more vital than the one now raging in the world concerning the Bible and our Lord Jesus Christ, for to many "Jesus Christ is a transitory gleam," an idealized picture merely, a pleasing mirage out of the dim past.

The Figure of Christ fills the horizon of the world, and like the Greeks of old, men are saying: "Sirs, we would see Jesus." "What manner of man is this," the astonished disciples asked in the olden time, "that even the winds and the sea obey him?" "Who is this?" the excited multitudes asked in Jerusalem as the whole city

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was stirred. "This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." There was not harmony then in the multitude of voices. "What think ye of the Christ?" Jesus asked. When some said: "He is a good man," others cried: "Nay, but he leads the multitude astray." Nor is there unison now among the scholars of the world. But Mr. Gladstone's remark is significant, when he said that all but five of the sixty master minds that he had known gladly bowed at the feet of Jesus our Lord. The bulk of modern scholars still joyfully own Jesus as Lord and worship him as God. It is folly to rail at Biblical scholarship as such. Criticism is not all hostile to Christ. There is a consecrated criticism for which we thank God and which is a bulwark of strength and power. The great article, for instance, on Jesus Christ by Wm. Sanday in the Hastings *Dictionary of the Bible* is a blessing to mankind. Biblical scholarship is a necessity and a treasure. Let us make no indiscriminating criticisms of Biblical students. There are radical critics of critics.

The purpose of this paper is to put two pictures side by side, to challenge the Jesus of modern radical criticism by the Jesus of the Bible, to show the unity, progressiveness and completeness of the Biblical conception of Christ, and to show how these facts rule out of court the entire naturalistic assumption; in a word, to show that radical criticism is really on the defensive, both as to subject and method. Let us therefore, aim to grasp the two pictures of Jesus in a large view and with a just perspective. Let us call the critics to the judgment seat of Christ's own personality. There can be no compromise between the radical criticism and the Bible. They do not present the same idea of Christ. It is not a mere reorganization of a creed that these critics suggest. It is not a mere revolution in theology that is attempted. It is nothing less than a new Bible that is presented with a new Christ, in fact, with no Savior at all, but with

simply a noble example, merely the climax of a religious development of the race. This great religious genius is described, not the Savior from sin. Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll is justified in calling this a crisis in the very existence of Christianity. His recent book, "*The Church's One Foundation, or Christ and Recent Criticism,*" is a bugle call to the people of God. A Christless Christianity is what the radical critics plentifully give us, a Christianity that has only the greatest and best of men as its leader and exponent. Like Mary of old, many are saying: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." The mediating critics are seeking to hold on to the Biblical picture of Christ after giving up much of the Bible itself. We are confronted with a great fact. We have the character of Jesus Christ portrayed in the Bible. He either lived or he did not. If he did not, the origin of this character calls for explanation. Fishermen and taxgatherers of Galilee, as has often been pointed out, could hardly have invented the grandest character of all ages. Such genius would cause the gifts of Homer and Shakespeare to pale into insignificance. No, no, it should not be soberly doubted that Jesus of Nazareth lived and that his career is correctly represented in the Gospels. Mr. F. C. Simpson rightly argues in *The Fact of Christ* that skeptics must account for Jesus Christ. He is the chief force in modern civilized life.

Let us then look at the broadest outlines of the Biblical Picture of Christ. For other purposes a more intimate view is best, such a look as George Matheson, the blind Scotch preacher, takes in his *Studies in the Portrait of Christ*. For one thing, he is presented to us as sinless. This trait is in the prophetic outline of the Messiah. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, whatever date you give it, presents the work of one who made an offering of himself for the sins of the people, "although he had done

no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." "He was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sins of many." According to the symbolism of the sacrifice, the Messiah was sinless. In the Psalms he is the Holy One of God, the Anointed. That is the prophetic outline, and seems to claim sinlessness for the Messiah. The Gospels do not praise the Master, but they present him as sinless. They tell the wondrous story and let it speak for itself. They give, indeed, "a study from life," as Prof. Fairbairn so aptly says in his new book, *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*. The authors write as those who reverently speak about what is above all praise. But no serious, and certainly no successful, effort has ever been made to pick flaws in the character of Christ. A few faultfinders have hesitatingly pointed to the withered fig tree, the destruction of the swine and the harshness of Jesus towards some classes of evil-doers, as, for instance, the hypocritical Pharisees. But these are not sinful deeds nor thoughts. The chief rebuke to all sin is the presence of Jesus. One by one the self-convicted shrink away before his look. Jesus is clearly conscious of freedom from sin. He shows no sign of penitence. He had never sinned. He always did the will of his Father. And we are not repelled by the absence in him of the sense of personal sin. It is in perfect harmony with the other features. In fact, if he had sinned only once, a blur would come over it all. In the Acts and Epistles and Revelation sinlessness is claimed for Jesus. "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf." "For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." So then in prophecy, historical sketch and theological interpretation of the great fact the sinlessness of the Messiah is emphasized.

The sinlessness of the Christ calls for another trait in his character, or, rather, another mark in his nature.

As Dr. Gerhard Uhlhorn so well asks in his *Die modernen Darstellungen des Lebens Jesu*, "A mere man and yet sinless?" If he was sinless, he was more than man, for all men have the consciousness of sin. We turn to Isaiah again and read of the Child that is to be born, whose name shall be called "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." The whole passage is Messianic, if there is anything Messianic in the Old Testament. In the Gospel story Jesus is presented as begotten of the Holy Ghost. His birth is supernatural, though he is born of woman also, and so is both God and man. Moreover, Jesus claims to be God and arouses the fierce anger of the rulers by his divine claims. John in his Gospel later said that he existed in the beginning with God and was God. In the Acts and Epistles and Revelation he is presented as God. He is worshipped as God. The efforts to explain away the representation of Jesus as God by Paul, Peter, and John are utterly futile.

But why did he come to earth? He came to save the lost, both among Jews and Gentiles. He was the Savior of the world. He was the Redeemer from sin, and this redemption was purchased by his death. Isaiah 53, though prophecy, reads like a chapter from the Epistle to the Romans, or from the Gospel of John. The Gospels show that Jesus did come to save. His very name means that. He said he came to seek and to save the lost. He died, as he said he would, to give his life a ransom for many. In the Acts, Epistles, and Revelation, the "*First Interpreters of Jesus*," as Prof. Gilbert calls them in his recent book, explain his career in harmony with the prophecy of the Old Testament and the facts of the Gospels.

Let us look at one more feature in the Biblical outline of Jesus. In the Old Testament he is presented as the King in a universal spiritual Kingdom which is

typified by the Davidic Kingdom. This Kingdom is to be spiritual, universal in the sense of including some from all nations, and is to be everlasting. This is the glorious promise repeated through the Old Testament that cheered the Jewish people in their darkest days. Not that they fully understood the motive of King and Kingdom. The record and the sequel show that they did not. But the promise of the Kingdom is true. In 2 Sam. 7, the everlasting Davidic Kingdom is plainly predicted. In Ps. 89 this Kingdom is shown to be spiritual. In Daniel we see that it is universal and everlasting. When John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness by the banks of the Jordan he announced that this Kingdom had come. It had been coming a long time, had indeed in one sense already been in existence, for all the redeemed of all times belong to it. The Kingdom of Heaven is the rule of God in the heart, and all belong to it who yield themselves to God's rule. But a new epoch in the Kingdom had come. The King's Son had come himself. In Matt. 16:13-20 Jesus announces his purpose to build this spiritual and everlasting Kingdom. He is to be the Head of it. In the later parts of the New Testament we see the disciples expounding the character of this spiritual Kingdom. We find Peter speaking of "the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And Paul speaks of Christ as the "Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

Let these features suffice. There are four characteristics of Jesus Christ that mark him off from all men of all times. He is free from sin, he is God's own son and God himself, he saves from sin by his atoning death, and he reigns as King in an everlasting and universal spiritual Kingdom. These outlines we have seen in the Old Testament long ages before Jesus appeared on earth. The Gospels present more boldly the same features after the Messiah had come. The other Apostolic writings ex-

pound these traits and show that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of the Old Testament. They put history and prophecy side by side, and find them in harmony, and draw the necessary inferences from this startling fact. This is the burden of the preaching of Peter and Paul. The Messiah was to suffer, die, and rise again. Jesus did suffer, die, and rise again. Therefore, Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. This is the object of the Gospel of Matthew, to prove that Jesus is the Messiah of the Old Testament. John's Gospel aims to show that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.

Now, the Biblical portrayal has unity. Each of these traits is in all three portions of the records. Prophecy, history, and interpretation all fit. The Jews at first saw it as Peter preached, but the veil lay on their hearts so heavy that they could not and cannot see Jesus where Moses is read. This is "*The Hebrew Tragedy*," as Conder so well calls it, for when the Messiah came to his own they shut the door in his face. There is progress in the character thus outlined. The lines are large in the Old Testament, clear to us, not always to the prophets themselves, who did not always understand what the Spirit of Christ in them signified. The Picture was plain when Jesus came, plain to those who had eyes to see, whose eyes had been opened so that they could see, but dim and vague to all the rest, even to those who came close to the wondrous Person. They had the glasses of their time and were all awry till the Holy Spirit gave them new eyes. Jesus opened their understanding as he opened the Scriptures about himself. After Pentecost the Apostles have a new light turned on the Portrait of him who had been so close to them. The Spirit had taken of the things of Christ and made them theirs. There is, once more, a marvellous completeness in the outline. Each part supplements the other as mere invention could not do. First, the dim prophetic outline.

Then the dazzling fulfillment which blinded men's eyes for the moment. Then the soft touches of memory and interpretation by the hand of the Holy Spirit. The Picture is complete and is the hope of men's hearts, the joy of the whole earth. This is in brief sketch the Biblical conception of Christ, who saw himself in the Old Testament when the short-sighted critics of his time, doctors of the law, did not. Moses wrote of me, he said. David spoke of me, he said. "Abraham saw my day and was glad." If we admit the supernatural or the miraculous, if we do not rule God out of his world and believe both in the transcendence and the immanence of God, if we admit prophecy, if we admit the reality of sin, if we admit the love God had for men and his great purpose in Christ for men, we have no trouble with the Biblical story of Jesus Christ. It hangs together from beginning to end, from the Garden of Eden in Genesis to the River of Life in Revelation. There is a *raison d'être* in it all. The Bible is no riddle to the man who admits these things. Jesus himself is the key to unlock the Scriptures. He is the bond of unity. The Bible becomes a puzzle only when he is taken out of it or when "another Jesus," as Paul says, is put in his place. This is the conception of Jesus Christ that we joyfully hold and that has conquered the world. We take the Bible at its own estimate and we risk all on Jesus, our God and Savior. This is the true historical Christ and this is the true historical method.

But this view is sharply challenged in our time. We have a right to ask why. If this view is denied, what then? We must face the situation frankly and fearlessly.

For one thing, the Old Testament presentation of the Messiah must be adequately explained. The frank acceptance of the supernatural both in the Bible and in Jesus does give an adequate solution. If this solution is cast off because the supernatural is not accepted, the

naturalistic explanation must be rational and consistent. It must settle difficulties, not raise them. If the Old Testament Idea of the Messiah is not from God, it is from men. If from men, the idea came from what men? Not from Egypt, not from Babylon, not from Persia, not from Greece. Was it a national longing of the Jews themselves? It is undeniable that the Jewish literature of the Interbiblical and New Testament times betray a passionate longing for a Messiah. The Book of Enoch, Psalms of Solomon, 2 Esdras, and the Sybilline Oracles outline the national hope of the Jews. They look for a great Deliverer from Greek and Roman power. They expect a temporal Messiah, one who will triumph over all the enemies of the Jews and set up a grand Jewish Kingdom in Jerusalem. Part of this conception is temporal, national, and unspiritual. It is distinctly not the Messiah of the Old Testament. There is progress in the revealing of the Old Testament Messiah, but even in the earliest stages he is not depicted grossly as the later Jewish Apocalyptic books describe him. This is in direct conflict with a mere evolutionary hypothesis.

However, it may be said that the Old Testament idea of the Messiah arose in better days, before the backs of the people were bent with sin and sorrow. Very well, let us see. In the preëxilic times the people of Israel were given to idolatry. It was so in the long period of the Judges. It grew worse under the Kings. Finally the Kingdom of Israel went down before the Assyrians because of idolatry, and then Judah likewise fell before the Babylonians for the same reason. How could the prophetic picture of the Messiah originate from such an atmosphere? If the writers of the preëxilic times rose higher than the people, whence did they get their conception on purely naturalistic grounds? Occasional reaction against all the prevailing idolatry would be natural certainly, if there had been antecedent monotheism, but

would not plausibly solve the origin of the Old Testament Messiah. But how about the post-exilic time? We know much about this period. It was the time of scribism, the dismal period of the letter of the law. The tithing of mint, anise and cummin came to fill the hearts of the leaders of Israel. The withering blight of rabbinic theology settled down upon Israel. No time, surely, was this for the origin of the loftiest spiritual hopes. If the early part of this period be chosen, when the temple was restored and the people returned, that would be the day of all days when the national hopes of the people would be rekindled for a temporal Messiah. The naturalistic hypothesis is in a dilemma between idolatry and scribism, for the point is not the existence of a Messianic hope, but the origin of this kind of a Messianic hope, the hope of a spiritual Messiah in the Old Testament, while not in the later books of the Interbiblical time. The denial of the really supernatural prophetic element in the Old Testament creates a situation that has no explanation. It is gratuitous effrontery to charge all the Old Testament books with being unreliable and then proceed to take out all the supernatural, recast the history, and change the outline of the Messiah which they gave. I had rather risk the infallibility of Moses and Isaiah than of Wellhausen and Cheyne. We can at least credit the Old Testament writers with knowing what they meant to say. If we reject the conception of the Messiah which they give, it is a superfluity to create a new Messiah and claim that this is what they meant to say. It is unscientific and unscholarly to juggle with their words in this fashion. That method was tried on Homer and failed. If we tear down the Old Testament history and Messiah, we are unable to build another, for we have only what the Old Testament says. It is rather late in the day to write a new Old Testament.

Let us come to the Gospels. Suppose we deny the

Gospel account of Jesus of Nazareth. What then? We are called upon to do two things in all honesty. We must explain the existence of this picture of the Messiah on the assumption that it is untrue and we must show why it is like the Old Testament presentation. The latter point might seem an easy matter. We may say that the Gospel writers simply copied from the Old Testament. But *there* is precisely where the trouble comes in, for in Palestine the people and teachers did not understand the Old Testament Messiah. The rabbis had so covered up the Old Testament with their own sayings that the people could not get to the Bible. When Jesus brushed aside all this rubbish and explained the Word of God as it was, they thought him sensational and revolutionary. In point of fact, the people turned away from him finally because he would not be a national and temporal Messiah. It is idle to say then with Renan that Jesus merely accommodated himself to the national hopes. The Pharisees killed him because he collided with their idea of a Messiah. The Sadducees expected no Messiah, but found Jesus troublesome. The Jewish literature of the time pictured a national temporal Messiah. We even know from the Talmud what the Jewish scholars of a late time think of Jesus, for they deride him there as a sorcerer and as worse. How comes it then that the Nazarene was able to grasp the Old Testament idea when all the Jewish world had lost it? Did he get it from John the Baptist? There is no proof of it. And if he did, where did John get it? From the Essenes? That likewise is futile, for the spirit of Jesus is anti-Essene at almost every point. Stapfer is guilty of wild special pleading and blindness in urging this in his books on Jesus Christ. Harnack seeks to make room for the revival of the Old Testament idea of Christ by saying: "Thus in Christ's time there was a surging class of disparate feeling, as well as of contradictory theory, in regard to this matter." He appeals

to the fact "that John the Baptist and the Twelve acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah" as "a proof of the flexible character of the Messianic idea at the time, and also explains how it was that Jesus could himself adopt it." This is curious reasoning. The Twelve disciples got their idea from Jesus and had great difficulty in doing so. There is left only John the Baptist and Jesus at that time who had caught the Old Testament idea. "The surging chaos" was unanimous so far as the evidence goes in the absence of the spiritual element. If we fall back upon the Gospel writers, how did they contrive to rise above the current Messianic ideas and revive and fill out in such wonderful completeness the Old Testament idea of the Messiah? The naturalistic or merely evolutionary hypothesis breaks down utterly. If appeal be made to tradition, myth, or legend, we may ask what started a counter current right in the midst of Jewish life and right against all Jewish hopes and ideals of the time? In fact, in the Gospels, the writers themselves make a confession of their early ignorance of the spiritual Messiah. In simple truth, the Lord Jesus was an anachronism in all the three worlds of that day, whether Roman, Greek, or Jewish. They laughed at the story of Christ in Athens. They persecuted the heresy in Jerusalem and in Rome. Only slowly did the closest friends of Jesus come to see him in his true light, so holden were their eyes by the light of their own day. The apostles themselves were planning for temporal place in a temporal Kingdom and were unable till Pentecost fully to apprehend a spiritual Messiah. Jesus was not a product of the Judaism of his time, nor of any time. He was and is to Jews a stumbling-block, and to Greeks foolishness. He was not the accidental development of religious ideas, for he is too high, too great, too masterful, too original, and too pure. Nor is he the creation of literary men of his own or a later generation. If we deny the

supernatural in Jesus and in the Gospels, we flounder helplessly on purely rational grounds. We greatly increase the difficulties to the human reason.

Mr. W. J. Dawson, in his new and able book, *The Man Christ Jesus*, says: "It did at one time seem possible to write a life of Christ from the sole point of view of its human grace and efficiency, but the design was soon rejected as entirely incompetent to the theme. The first chapters were scarcely drafted before the story seemed to pass from the author's hands and to write itself in terms of its own. . . . In the very nature of the story itself, and therefore in the nature of Christ, were elements entirely incommensurate with the human. It is not possible to disengage the human elements in Jesus from the Divine."

But this is not all. We must explain how the disheartened and scattered disciples came to believe in a Risen and Mighty Savior, who, they knew, was dead and buried; how they came to understand what they had utterly failed to understand while he lived; how they had courage and power, instead of cowardice and weakness; how, with no arms, no money, and little learning, the disciples won a strong foothold in Jerusalem itself; how they presented a Christianity cosmopolitan in its sympathies in spite of race prejudice between the Jew and Gentile; and, finally, how their conception of the Prophetic and Historic Christ won such a place in the Roman Empire that it ultimately captured it and is now the dominant force in the civilized world. All this must be done on purely rational grounds with no appeal to the supernatural. This is a hopeless undertaking. Baur tried it, and his *tendenz* theory of party documents made quite a furor, but that is now discredited. He could not explain Saul of Tarsus. What made this cyclonic Jewish leader turn right round and surrender to the Nazarene and champion his cause just when he seemed to have triumphed over

it? Baur finally gave it up. But that is to give up rationalism. If you appeal to Cæsar, to Cæsar you must go. Strauss tried the swoon theory to explain the resurrection of Christ and the faith of the disciples, but Keim riddled that utterly, though unable himself to explain the rise of hope in the disciples on rational grounds. He suggested a real vision of Christ, but that is to abandon the rationalistic standpoint. Renan's idea of the fright of the women is silly, for the disciples would not believe the women till Peter and the rest had seen Jesus. The difficulty that the disciples had in accepting the fact of the Resurrection of Christ has to be accounted for. Harnack puts all the emphasis on the faith of the disciples and insists on the power of a Living Christ, but he skips the crucial point as of no importance, or at least as outside the range of testimony. In his now famous book, *What is Christianity*, he says: "Either we must decide to rest our belief on a foundation unstable and always exposed to fresh doubts, or else we must abandon this foundation altogether, and with it the miraculous appeal to our senses." He gives up the defense of the bodily resurrection of Jesus and founds Christianity on the convictions of the disciples that the spirit of Jesus still lived, on the immortality of Jesus, in other words. That is gratuitous, anti-scriptural, and a wholly incompetent explanation. If "belief" which has no necessary basis of fact is the origin of Christianity then we do have a slim foundation indeed. Did Jesus come out of the grave? That will explain everything, if we add the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Thus we understand their faith and their power. An ounce of fact contains more than a pound of fancy. If we reject the supernatural, once more we are at sea and fail to explain the situation. In less than 27 years after the death of Christ, Peter, Paul, James, John, and the rest confronted the Jewish and Gentile world with a masterly system of theology

which clashed with the Jewish rabbinical theology and the Greek philosophy. We know the outcome of the conflict. Rabbinism dried up into the Talmud, and Greek philosophy sought to compromise with Christianity.

If the radical critics are right, we have a curious situation. A lofty spiritual Messiah was conceived in an idolatrous or legalistic time, was forgotten, was recovered by a people who did not wish him and who killed him for restoring the old conception, was understood suddenly by those who had utterly failed to understand him and who suddenly gained power to conquer the world. This naturalistic conception is opposed to evolution at every step. If, however, we recast the narratives in the Old Testament and New, we have the greatest conception of the ages produced and preserved and preached for long centuries by blunderers and frauds. That is too much credulity for anybody but a hard pushed anti-supernaturalist. Never was there such a conspiracy for holiness. It is asking too much of us to think that such a pretense was carried on for many centuries and that the greatest literature of the world, to say no more, grew up as a hoax. A beautiful illusion bore them on to the noblest conception of the ages, and that illusion, not to say delusion, still dominates the world! One has sublime faith in himself, however skeptical about the Bible he may be, who can rely on his own rapid speculations in the presence of the historic Christ.

But many do not hesitate to put their own views against those of the Christ, evidently thinking that they "didn't know everything down in Judee." Here is the late Prof. Paine, of Maine, seeking to explain the origin of the Trinity by ethnic evolution. Here is Prof. Gilbert, of Chicago, explaining the preëxistence of Christ as merely the idea in the mind of God. Here is Prof. Harnack, of Berlin, who deftly states the Ritschlian view of Christ, robbing him of actual diety while willing to use terms of

deification, a value judgment, having the worth of God to us though not God in essence. In his treatise, *What is Christianity*, Prof. Harnack minimizes the importance of the Person of Christ. He says: "It is a gruesome story. On the question of Christology men beat their religious doctrines into terrible weapons, and spread fear and intimidation everywhere." He even says: "The Gospel, as Jesus proclaimed it, has to do with the Father only and not with the Son." But here we have a Christology, forsooth! And Harnack's Christology is this: "It is knowledge of God that makes the sphere of the Divine Sonship." We can become sons of God like him simply by knowing God. In spite of Harnack's disclaimers about the Person of Christ he is compelled to state his idea of Jesus to give any coherence to his statement of Christianity.

Schmeidel, of Zurich, admits at least nine genuine words of Jesus, and he is gifted with the marvellous acumen, a kind of second sight, to tell these nine. The attack on the Biblical records has been perfectly impartial. From Genesis to Revelation not a book has escaped. The rationalistic modern critic can see a huge mass of stupidity and fraud in the long record from Genesis to Revelation. Pious fraud, if you please. Poor fellows, they meant well at any rate! Moses didn't write any of the Pentateuch. Abraham didn't even live, but was a moon-god! Jehovah is only a tribal god of the Kenites, and monotheism is a development, not a revelation. David didn't write any Psalms and didn't foretell the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah didn't tell about the suffering Messiah. Jonah didn't have that experience with the fish. Daniel didn't foretell the everlasting kingdom of the Messiah. Jesus was merely the son of Joseph and Mary. He did not work miracles. There were no demons, and Satan did not tempt Christ. Jesus didn't speak the Sermon on the Mount. He didn't raise Lazarus from the dead. He

didn't rise from the dead himself, but the women thought they saw him. He did not ascend on high. He did not say that he would come back again. The Holy Spirit did not come on the Day of Pentecost. Peter didn't write these letters. John didn't write his gospel nor did Matthew his. Paul didn't write his letters, hardly any of them, anyhow. The Book of Revelation is merely a party pamphlet like the Jewish Apocalyptic books of the time. In a word, the poor blundering writers of the Bible from Moses to John either did not write at all, or if they did, they got things all twisted and mixed. They created a Messiah after their own hearts. They attributed miracles and the power of God to their great men. Or if God did speak by the prophets, others wrote down what they said and either innocently or wilfully misrepresented them. And this *potpourri* is served as vastly superior to the old Bible. The radical critics admit that the face value of the Bible is against their view of Jesus. They calmly proceed to recast the Biblical account. Kuenen frankly acknowledges in his *Religion of Israel* that the Old Testament account and the New Testament account as they stand do not accord with his theory. Jesus and the New Testament writers he considers incompetent judges of the Old Testament. He deliberately reshapes the whole story, when lo (presto! change!) his view appears. By this wholesale legerdemain, modern radical criticism has challenged the Biblical Picture of Jesus Christ. But this naturalistic presentation of Christ destroys Christianity, for as Uhlhorn well says in his *Die modernen Darstellungen des Lebens Jesu*, Strauss is right in treating "the miracle-question as the existence-question of Christianity." The one issue that stands out sharply between the contending camps of criticism is the question of the supernatural. The one side start with God, a real God of love, mercy, and power, who discloses slowly but by real interposition his will to men, and who manifests

himself in his own Son, the Saviour of men. The other side starts with man, denies supernatural revelation save as it comes by processes of evolution, challenges the whole Biblical record as illusion or delusion, proclaims at this late day a truer insight into Biblical history and teaching than Moses had, than David, than Isaiah, than Paul, than John, than Jesus himself. The audacity of this challenge takes one's breath away, but it must be met. There is no half-way house for Jesus of Nazareth. It is idle to worship him if he is not God. It is poor consolation to worship a mere idea. Modern criticism is face to face with the question of Pilate: "What then shall we do with Jesus who is called Christ?" Shall we crown him or shall we crucify him? Shall we leave him where the Bible puts him or shall we pull him down from his throne? When a man like A. B. Bruce can write the article on Jesus in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* and pass by his divinity and treat him as a mere man, it is time for Christians to be awake to the real situation.* The crux of modern theological controversy is the question of Jesus Christ. Many modern men stumble at his personality and claims. They will not have this man to rule over them. Note the prolonged and almost bitter attacks on the Bible. If the Bible goes, Jesus Christ becomes to men an unhistorical character. He fades into the limbo of myth and legend. We should have left the blessed experience of grace in our lives, the witness of the Spirit in our hearts that we are Christ's. That is a priceless boon, for Jesus is "the mystery of God, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden."

We have thus shown that the picture of the Messiah in the Old Testament is not explicable or rationalistic grounds, that the story of Jesus in the Gospels demands

* In justice to Dr. Bruce's article it should be said that he does speak of Jesus as "the object of faith."

the reality of the Christ, that the Apostolic history finds its only explanation in the blending of prophecy and realization in Jesus Christ. All else is pure assumption that satisfies no known facts. The Biblical picture is consistent and unassailable save that it does assume a real God who had and has a plan to save sinners through his Son. But experience without objective evidence is bound to become evanescent and uncertain. Experience without the Bible will limp as it walks forth to take the world for Christ.

It is hardly fair for those who have developed lofty characters under Christian influence to rail at the Bible. What shall we have when the scripturally trained mothers and fathers themselves aim to train up their children without the old Bible and the true Christ? As has been often said, the best apology for the life of Jesus is the life of a Christian in which Jesus lives.

The heart of Christianity is Christ. Christ is Christianity. We come to this issue, the Christ of the radical critics or the Christ of the Bible; which is true? After writing thus far I came across an article by Prof. W. M. Ramsay. It was a brief sketch in *The British Weekly* on "How a Picture of Paul Grew." I was greatly interested to see how Prof. Ramsay had applied the same line of reasoning in this address to the career of Paul. Suffer a few quotations: "And so, for many years after I grew up, the Paul whom my mother knew was forgotten by me, and in his place was set up the Paul of the commentators and the critics. . . . I read much modern opinion about Paul, and very little of Paul himself, and that little was always contemplated through the colored spectacles of acquired opinions. . . . One found that every critic was at variance with himself. . . . It was never possible to find a man in the critics' Paul. They set before their readers no unity or reality, but a many-natured bundle of qualities like

Frankenstein's artificial man. . . . If the critics' Paul be the true one, then the writer of Acts had never known him, for he describes a different person—the generous and lovable Paul." And so Prof. Ramsay came to see that his mother was right and had seen Paul as he was, while the learned critics had missed him and had been describing a pigment of their own creation, a caricature of Paul. Likewise we shall find that our hearts have not been mistaken as they have felt the touch of the Christ of our mothers and our fathers. He is in the Bible and he is our Risen King and Glorious Lord. He is God's Son who came to save from sin. He is the touchstone of the ages. Lücke somewhere says that the way men treat Christ is like the way the birds greet the morning light. The bats, owls, and other birds of the night shut their eyes and refuse to see the day and hide away in the darkness. But the song-birds carol as the morning comes and sing in joy as the sun gladdens the earth.

Let us appeal then from the radical critics to Christ himself. Let us turn from the torn and tattered painting which they offer us as the Christ to the Biblical picture of Jesus. Let us, critics and all, come into the presence of Christ himself. Let us see his countenance and catch his eye and then condemn him if we can. Some can so condemn him. One day in the synagogue at Capernaum our Lord was explaining the spiritual life to the crowds who the day before had eaten the loaves and fishes. He was telling them in mystic language who he was and what he had come to do. He was the bread from heaven. If they ate him and drank his blood, they would want no more. They would not die but have life everlasting. Here was the true fountain of life. It was a wonderful moment. Was it true? Could they depend on it? Could it be believed? The rationalistic critic was there. He said: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How doth he now say, I am come down

out of heaven?" They murmured like the hum of bees (*ἐργόγυζον*), they even "strove one with another, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" They turned away in disgust and rage at so irrational an idea, and left Jesus for good. "Behold this child is set for the falling and the rising up of many in Israel; . . . that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." There was left a goodly company of professed followers of the Nazarene. These had seen the tide turn, had felt the force of the scriptural objections to this idea of Jesus concerning his person and mission. What should they do? Jesus had evidently lost his hold on some of the intellectual leaders of the group, the men who dared to think things through for themselves. Should they go with the scriptural majority or remain with Jesus even though they did not fully understand it all? Could they hold on to both faith and reason? Faith or reason, which? They hated to do it, but they felt the ground giving way and they said: "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" Could not Jesus make it easier to believe? Our Lord replied by making still greater claims. He had come from heaven, yes, and he was going to ascend to heaven. He, so far from yielding his claim to the supernatural, made larger claims of the same kind. It was enough. "Upon this many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him." It was a solemn moment in the earthly career of Jesus. When one of the Galilean crowd had seen in him his true character, they turned away from him. Yesterday they wished to make him king; to-day they leave him in indignation. He turns to the handful that are left, the twelve whom he had chosen and whom he had been training. "Would ye also go away?" They likewise had reached a crisis. Shall they too go with the rationalists and the rabble? Shall they believe Jesus if nobody else does? Shall they think things through for themselves and come to a deeper truth? Can reason go hand in hand with

faith? It was a severe test. Peter nobly said: "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Where had the others gone? Out into the night. And Peter added: "Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." They had learned by blessed experience the truth as it is in Jesus. They had made this choice and it was their highest reason. We are there to-day. The supreme question of the world and of every individual life is the question of Jesus. Let us face that question honestly. In the full searchlight of modern criticism let us not fear to look. We wish to know the truth, the whole truth. Let us look at the matchless picture, not of man's painting, not mere fancy, but the precious reality of the Bible and Christian experience. Let us gaze more at him and listen less to the sneering words of the passersby who jeered him as he hung on the cross. They are jeering yet, but Christ goes on conquering and to conquer. If we could only catch the eye of Jesus, should we ever doubt? We should go out like Peter and weep bitterly that we could disown or dishonor him who "loves us and loosed us from our sins by his blood." Like Thomas we should turn from doubt and fear and say: "My Lord and my God."