

## THE JESUS OF "LIBERAL" THEOLOGY.\*

BY PRESIDENT E. Y. MULLINS, D.D., LL.D.,  
LOUISVILLE, KY.

It is proposed in this article to analyze and examine the teachings of two recent books dealing with fundamental questions connected with Christian origins. These volumes are by Professor S. J. Case, of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. They present an interpretation of early Christianity and of the person of Jesus which may well challenge the attention of all who value the Christian religion. The views expressed are by no means confined to Professor Case. They represent a type of opinion becoming more and more widely prevalent in certain circles. The analysis of the argument in the two volumes must, of necessity, be brief, but it will be accurate. The first volume is entitled *The Historicity of Jesus*, the second *The Evolution of Early Christianity*. We begin with *The Historicity of Jesus*.

"The main purpose of the present volume is to set forth the evidence for believing in the historical reality of Jesus' existence upon earth." Thus Professor Case announces his purpose in the first sentence of the Preface. Professor Case speaks from the standpoint of the "liberal" school of criticism and theology and against what he describes as the modern "radical" school (p. 3). Whether or not his distinction between "liberal" and "radical" is warranted will have to be determined by the facts.

In the first chapter Professor Case presents to us the "Historical Jesus of liberal theology." The author repeatedly refers to the "theology" of the standpoint he adopts. He thus frankly enters the realm of doctrinal teaching. Positive and definite views which are rigidly inclusive as to contents and quite as rigidly exclusive as to other views, are found in abundance in these volumes. (See "Historicity, etc.," pp. 1, 3, 18, 22, 28, etc.)

\**The Historicity of Jesus*, by S. J. Case, University of Chicago Press., Chicago, 1912.

*The Evolution of Early Christianity*, by S. J. Case, University of Chicago Press, 1914.

The Jesus of "the liberal theology," based upon the results of modern historical criticism of the New Testament, must be interpreted in the following terms: 1. "Christological speculation" has been supplanted by a "world-view in which natural law is given a higher and more absolutely dominant position" (p. 4). The phrase "more absolutely dominant" is a careless one and not easy to understand. The general meaning is clear, however. Miracles are so interpreted as "to bring them within the range of natural events, or else they are dismissed as utterly unhistorical" (pp. 5f). 2. The desire to exalt Jesus, and a "literary inventiveness," common among Jews in dealing with Old Testament characters, combined to produce narratives of a virgin birth, transfiguration, resurrection and ascension, and other miracles. Jesus is "no longer the miracle-working individual whom the Gospels portray" (pp. 5f). 3. Religious knowledge is no longer to be regarded as supernaturally acquired. "Bible writers were wholly conditioned by their own mental grasp upon the world of thought surrounding them" (p. 7). 4. Religion cannot be derived from any external authority. Its inherent truth alone must commend it. Its "truth" must answer to the "highest" intellectual demands of the age. 5. Religious values are not conditioned by the truth or falsity of alleged historic facts (pp. 8f). 6. If Jesus brought knowledge of God in the supernatural way, there is now no sure way of finding out his revelation. 7. The Jesus of "the liberal theology is not a supernatural person" in any "real sense" of that term, as employed by the traditional Christology. The pre-existent Christ of Paul and John are products of primitive interpretation (p. 11). 8. The constitution of Christ's personality belongs wholly in the natural sphere (p. 12). He was unique only as he was superior in the ordinary processes of spiritual activities. 9. The "liberal theology" is not clear in its conclusions as to the Messianic consciousness of Jesus. Some think he

claimed to be Messiah as a deduction from the sense of spiritual relationship to God. Others hold that this also was the invention of the New Testament writers (pp. 14f.). 10. The resurrection doctrine was due to psychic experiences of "visions" of a "risen" Jesus, but not based on objective fact. So also all the miraculous elements of the early church are to be explained on purely natural grounds in terms of religious psychology (p. 17). 11. The supernatural Christ of Paul and other New Testament writers was the result of the first interpreters' fancy (p. 18). 12. Jesus did not set himself forth as an object of worship. The religion of Jesus must be sharply distinguished from his person. He may be a religious example to us. He is not an object of worship. The modern "liberals" are agreed on the essential features in the above outline, although there are some differences among themselves on minor points (p. 28). The opponents of this "liberal" conception of Jesus are the adherents of the older Christology, the "modern positivists" (the Ritschlians), and the radicals who would convert Jesus into a myth (p. 28).

Professor Case insists that conservative theologians cannot refute the radicals, since there is no common ground on which the debate may proceed. "Therefore, for practical purposes, if on no other grounds, it is desirable to meet the opposition at its own point of attack." The radicals attack the liberal view directly. Hence, the question is: "Can his (Jesus') existence be successfully defended from the 'liberal' theologian's own position? This is the present problem" (p. 30f.).

Professor Case passes in review a number of modern "radical" views, all of which deny the historic Jesus. One view traces Christianity to social movements of the time; another makes it a composite of oriental religions or pagan myths; others trace the Christian religion to a gnostic source; yet others claim that Jesus and Paul arose as fictions, out of the Babylonian legend of Gil-

gamesh; still others that Jesus was originally a Jewish pre-Christian Jesus. From these the mythical figure of Jesus arose in one way or another to meet a practical need, as a concrete personal embodiment of religious ideas.

We cannot here pursue the ingenious methods of the "radicals" in setting aside the historical Jesus. Of course, from his own standpoint, Professor Case refutes them. The grave aspect of his argument is his concessions to the radicals, which undermine his own positions. Professor Case declares that when all the evidence against the historicity of Jesus is surveyed it is found "to contain no elements of strength"; they are without "substantial basis," the bulk of the testimony "is unceremoniously set aside" by a "negative procedure"; this is in the interest of a hypothetical reconstruction based upon "obscure and isolated points"; the chief strength of the negative view is "the intangibility of the data on which it rests." Quoting Weiss, Professor Case concludes that "it is the most difficult task in the world to prove to nonsense that it is nonsense" (pp. 130-2).

Professor Case, however, writes from the standpoint of the "liberal" theology, a fundamental presupposition of which is the exclusion of all supernatural elements from the actual Jesus of history. Now, the "radicals," rejecting the supernatural themselves, point to the fact that the Gospel records are honeycombed throughout with the supernatural, and that the primitive and later Christian faith was in an exalted supernatural Christ. Professor Case, speaking for the liberals, alleges certain "pragmatic" interests or needs which account for these elements. The authors of the Gospels felt these needs and invented ideas to meet them. Men wanted a Saviour. Christ was conceived as returning from Heaven in glory to save. The life of Jesus could not meet the need, since it ended in disaster. With Paul the resurrection was a cardinal conception designed to meet a "pragmatic"

need. The Jews demand a "sign" of Messiahship in the earthly career of Jesus. To meet this need the Messianic claims of Jesus and other Messianic attestations are introduced into the records, for example, the transfiguration scene, the virgin birth stories, and John's *Logos* doctrine (pp. 155f.). The teachings and miracles are self-attestations of Jesus inserted in the record to meet another "pragmatic" need, the requirement that he make good the claim to be the son of God (pp. 157f. and p. 167). Let the reader note Professor Case's form of argument. He replies to the "radicals" by attempting to show how the unhistorical elements in the Gospels arose to satisfy "pragmatic needs." The elimination of these elements does not affect the element of real history in the records. The argument amounts to this: The pre-supposition excludes the supernatural. The supernatural in the records, in accordance with the pre-supposition, is unhistorical. Pragmatic needs led to their insertion. This leaves the natural elements intact. Yet Professor Case seems to imagine that this sort of reasoning ought to be taken seriously. On the positive side, in this connection, little argument is advanced to prove the historicity of Jesus. To deify men was a common practice. Jesus' sufferings won the reverence of his followers; and it seems impossible to imagine a company of believers sacrificing their lives for a fictitious person of whom they declared they had been companions.

Professor Case shows from the writings of Paul, from the Gospels, and from extra-Biblical sources that Jesus did exist. This seems to be a rather microscopic minimum as the outcome of so extended an argument, especially to those of a robust Christian faith. But we do not begrudge any trembling soul the comfort he may derive from the assertion that there was once such a person as Jesus.

We turn next to Case's *The Evolution of Early Christianity*. Our purpose requires only a brief account of

this volume, setting forth its main purpose. In it Professor Case emphasizes the principle of evolution in accounting for early Christianity. He rejects the Protestant and Catholic conception of development, as a matter of course. He rejects German idealism in its Hegelian form as an inadequate statement of the principle because it conceives the universe as a whole, the Absolute, as imposing itself upon the process in a way which destroys man's freedom, and also because it is abstract and unhistorical. Case opposes Tröltzsch, who considers Christianity the absolute religion, because this view implies a "static" element in Christianity, something distinctive and final (pp. 10-14). Case has no use for the word "static," and he rejects the idea of any "final" or "ideal" element in Christianity at any particular stage. He says: "Certain results attained may be exceptionally valuable, but according to a genuinely developmental conception of life these attainments cannot be called completely ideal or absolute. In fact, such terms are not consonant with the notion of vital growth" (p. 15). The true religious development must always aim "to transcend all so-called previous ideals" (p. 15). "This does not imply a depreciation of the past, but only the abandonment of the Platonic Absolute in favor of a strictly empirical criterion for estimating the worth of religious values" (p. 15). This radical conception of development is of course opposed to any past Christian as well as Platonic Absolute. Case rejects the more recent Ritschlian view, that Christianity is essentially sonship to God the Father, as embodied in Christ's experience, because this also retains a "static" minimum which is incompatible with a genuinely developmental principle. There is no irreducible "essence" of Christianity. There is no "static" remainder of any kind. Elements are essential to one generation which are not essential to another. Everything in its day. Case rejects thus the distinction between

"genuine" and "spurious" elements, because the so-called "spurious" elements may be "genuine" to the experience of some other period (p. 24).

The conclusion of Professor Case on the subject of the developmental principle is as follows: "In this fundamental and comprehensive sense Christianity is coterminous with the actual religious living of individuals and communities who from generation to generation have inherited the Christian name and made the religious attainments of former Christians a part of their own world of objective reality. Historical Christianity is a result of this religious living, and must of necessity show a variety of features corresponding to different conditions of life at different times and in different localities. A quantitative definition of this religious movement must, if it is to be comprehensive or even representative of the whole, be true to the totality of past historical phenomena, and must accurately anticipate all future variations" (p. 25).

In the second chapter Professor Case further develops the principle, as follows: "From this point of view" (that is, vital development) "the primary activity which called the Christian movement into existence was not the *ab extra* insertion of some other-worldly quantity of ritual, doctrine, or ethical instruction into the realm of human experience, but an outburst of spiritual energy on the part of Jesus and his followers striving after new and richer religious attainments under the stimuli of a new and more suggestive environment" (p. 28). This last quotation indicates clearly the whole argument in the book. Environment is a prime factor in religious development. There is no "absolute" of any kind to be found anywhere. There is nothing "static" or "final" for us either in the teaching of Jesus or in his person. Then Professor Case discusses in eight chapters various factors in the environment of early Christianity which contributed to its formation. Among these are the "Mediterranean

World," "Jewish Connections," "Gentile Religions," "Emperor Worship," "Philosophical Speculation," "Hellenistic Religions of Redemption."

In general, Professor Case assumes that if an idea is found in the environment of primitive Christianity it is the source of the Christian teaching. For example, "there was prevalent a general desire for deliverance from present evils by seeking the aid of a heaven-sent helper" (p. 218f.). Christianity, of course, must have borrowed this and other items. Writers like Professor Case do not seem to have realized that there is a far more logical way of reasoning about Christianity than to suppose it must have borrowed practically everything from environment. Why not suppose that Christianity is God's answer to human craving as embodied in these elements, and that Jesus, as God's revelation to man, is His answer to man's questionings about Him?

What is Case's view as to Jesus' person? This has already appeared in various items of the preceding review. We add only a few expressions to show how completely, for Case, Jesus is on a level with the human at every point. Jesus believed that God was his Father. His personal religious life is the supreme thing about him. Failure to realize this has been the "weakness of theologians from the beginning" (p. 339, "Historicity," etc.). The "perfect humanity" of Jesus and his "absolute deity" are the foci of past thought about him. Modern thought conserves the first, but for it the second "presupposes a metaphysical theory now become for many modern minds obsolete and unworkable" (p. 343, "Historicity"). As we have seen, the supernatural is by presupposition excluded from Professor Case's view. The deity of Jesus in the real sense is therefore out of the question for him. His religious life inspires us, "he becomes a most valuable aid to a better vision of the Father" (p. 344). He helps us by setting us a religious example. The following makes the point clear: "It is not

strange that Jesus' early followers should ultimately have made him the object of their worship, or that men to-day should be similarly moved; but we must not lose sight of the fact that his personal religion rather than the religion about him was of fundamental importance. He lived religiously and thus inspired believers to live similarly." But, mark you, there is nothing "static" or "final" for us even in Jesus' religious experience. The "developmental" principle forbids this (p. 336, "History").

Professor Case writes in a clear and interesting style. His pages exhibit a wide acquaintance with current thought about the New Testament, especially current German thought. His numerous footnotes bristle with the names of German critics. In combatting the German radicals even, he rarely wanders from prevailing German views.

A word needs to be said about Professor Case's use of the terms "radical" and "liberal." He speaks from the standpoint of the "liberals" against the "radicals." But the "liberals" agree with the "radicals" in the crucial matter of the supernatural. This rejection of the supernatural is usually held to be the distinctive mark of the "radical." It is certainly decisive and "radical" in its effect upon a man's general view. The "liberals" in Professor Case's books agree with the "radicals" in rejecting the supernatural, in assuming the theologizing tendency which was designed to meet "pragmatic" needs, and in regarding vast sections of the Gospels and Epistles as the product of this tendency. The only important point of difference is that the "liberals" hold that there was once a good man named Jesus, who walked the earth in Palestine, while the "radicals" deny even this minimum of fact in the alleged historical records.

Does Professor Case really answer the radicals? The reply must be that he only does so by playing fast and loose with the principles of historical criticism. He ap-

plies those principles and finds a pale, shrunken, residual, pious person called Jesus, rather than the redeeming Christ of Christianity. But he refuses to apply critical principles to the parts of the record which present a supernatural redeeming Jesus Christ. To these passages he comes with a "worldview" whose presupposition is the rejection of the supernatural. There are no valid critical grounds for rejecting these passages. They abound in the Gospel of Mark and in the document behind Matthew and Luke. The supernatural element is inwrought in the very texture of the oldest documents. But the "liberals," by presupposition, cannot accept the supernatural. Hence, they must find a view which explains its presence in the record. "Pragmatic" interests are the key to the problem. They proceed to assign a variety of "needs" which the early Christians felt that they must meet. The process gave as a result the supernatural Jesus of faith.

The "innocent bystander" who is willing to accept any kind of a fact, natural or supernatural, may observe this battle between "radical" and "liberal" without danger. The radical replies, "You 'liberals' are critically arbitrary and inconsistent. You talk much of criticism, and then along comes your 'worldview' and pulverizes it. You 'liberals' invent 'pragmatic' causes to explain phenomena instead of finding causes in action. You 'liberals' postulate a group of writers about Jesus who are obsessed with a mythologizing, theologizing passion for invention, men swept away from facts by their desires and practical needs for the most part, and yet in other respects sane and unbiased narrators of sober truth. You 'liberals' boast of an objective scientific attitude to reality, and then apply a double standard in order to get a particular result. You talk of 'pragmatic' needs. Why not be consistent as we are and say that your pale residual Jesus who thought God was his father was also invented to satisfy a 'pragmatic' de-

mand? You assume a feeble, pious Jesus as the microscopic residuum of Gospel truth, but you fail utterly to show how this being ever came to be the colossal Saviour-Jesus of the New Testament. You postulate causes which are no causes for effects with which they have no discernible connection."

In reality the Jesus of the "liberals" is as much of a myth as the Jesus of the "radicals" if we are to let the New Testament records speak at all. Professor James, referring to a certain kind of argument, has said, if you empty a bag of beans on a table and arrange them in a uniform manner, you can easily obtain any preconceived figure by removing the beans which do not belong to the figure. So also if you retouch, readjust, rearrange, and eliminate sufficiently in dealing with the Gospel material, you can artificially secure any result you wish. A "lightning crayon artist," with a blackboard and an outline of the figure and face of Napoleon to begin with, can, with comparatively few touches, convert it into the likeness of Daniel Webster, and the latter in turn into that of George Washington, and so on indefinitely. A little more or a little less of chalk, a slight change in feature or outline, a little erasure or addition, and behold, the transformation. The Jesus of the "liberal" theology is produced in quite an analogous way. Certain features are selected and torn from their setting in the original and juxtaposed and declared to be the "original" Gospel picture. In fact, the results of recent criticism have left the "liberals" in a very unenviable position. They are compelled to attempt the very hazardous enterprise of walking a tight-rope stretched above the gulf of supernaturalism on the one hand and the gulf of complete negation on the other. They do not succeed in the undertaking.

One of the least satisfactory of the features in these two volumes by Professor Case is the philosophic aspect of the discussion. In very large measure he leaves the reader to guess the ultimate elements of his worldview.

In *The Historicity of Jesus* we obtain a passing glimpse of the "liberal" world-view in the presupposition against the supernatural. In *The Evolution of Early Christianity* we have what the author describes as the developmental view of the universe. But he discards so many forms of the developmental theory that there seems little or nothing left except the conception of bare change. He rejects the idea that Christianity has any static element whatever.

The trouble with Professor Case's evolutionism is that it is loose at both ends. We never hear from him a word as to how the process of change began, nor how it will end. We are told rather that it will never end. The latter thought is intelligible if a principle of change is introduced and change is made rational and believable as a principle of progress. Men generally will admit the principle of development when properly defined. But mere change is no better than an eternal "marking time." A universe that can only say, "I have no idea where I am going; I only know I am on the way," is not a very intelligible place in which to live. Professor Case speaks indeed of God and of the belief of Jesus that God was his Father. But this does not necessarily imply any definite knowledge of God. It was the reaction of the consciousness of Jesus, let us say, upon the infinite. But how do we know it was superior to the corresponding reaction of Plato and Gautama Buddha? Professor Case supplies no criteria for determining this point. He rather makes the reactions of all three equally true and equally valid. Certainly Jesus gives us nothing final. Has God a purpose in the world? If so, we assert, there must be a "static" element tucked away somewhere in the folds of reality. Movement towards a goal, even eternal movement towards a fleeing goal, is intelligible, but not a whirl-a-gig movement or a toboggan slide into mere emptiness.

The only clear and definite quality attributed by Professor Case to the "development" he postulates is that it is historical. Hegel was abstract; Case looks to the concrete events of history. But there is no distinctive element in the Christian movement, either in the origin or outcome. Christianity is not an "essence" or set of truths or doctrines. It is a life movement with many elements. Everything counts, contradictory aspects as well as others, Catholic as well as Protestant. In *The Evolution of Early Christianity*, as we have seen, many elements were combined, many influences coöperated. All are equally valid. In *The Historicity of Jesus*, Case declares, in replying to the "radicals," that the numerous elements which he eliminates are "fungoid" growths, and not the original Jesus and his teachings. But in *The Evolution of Early Christianity* there are no "fungoid" growths. Everything is equally a part of the Christian religion which influenced it. A part of all it ever touched belongs to its essential nature.

The informed reader will have little difficulty in locating this general conception of evolution or development in relation to philosophic world-views generally. It is simply phenomenalism with a pantheistic basis. Any sort of theism implies purpose in the Christian movement. Purpose in turn requires an energy moving towards a goal amid oppositions. The nature of the goal will determine the quality of the purposive energy. Thus the purposive energy will necessarily be distinctive. It will consist of particular forces, not a conglomerate of meaningless tendencies. Pantheism, on the other hand, denies personality in God and conceives all phenomena as manifestations of some ultimate impersonal substance or principle which is devoid of purpose. Everything is as good as everything else. There is no criterion of excellence, no standard of comparative values, no distinction between good and evil, or truth and error in a pantheistic system.

Professor Case contends for freedom without defining it. Freedom is pure fiction in a pantheistic scheme of things. Professor Case's conception of Christianity, that it is made up of everything in general and nothing in particular, fits into a pantheistic frame as in no other, although he does not avow explicitly that he is a pantheist. If he is not, his view needs defining more fully, and if it is stated in any kind of theistic terms, it will have to be materially modified from the statements in the books before us.

Professor Case asserts that the believers in the supernatural cannot answer the "radicals" simply because the presupposition of the supernatural at once excludes all common ground on which the disputants may stand for argument. He himself adopts the presupposition of the "radicals" against the supernatural and thinks he answers them. But when the war is over the spoil of the "liberal" is of no great magnitude, a minimum Jesus who was good, but who might in a sense be dispensed with altogether. Logically Case's "developmental" and "historical" principle compels him to dispense with Jesus. Jesus can only serve his age, not ours. Professor Case thus holds that in the last resort it is a contest of world-views, or presuppositions. The debate between the "liberal" and the radical," on the one hand, and the evangelical on the other hand, is really, from Case's standpoint, an issue fundamentally as to world-views. As an evangelical, I reject this statement of the issue. The issue is fundamentally an issue as to facts. World-views, if worthy of consideration, are grounded upon facts. The world-view which admits the supernatural element in Christ's action in history is grounded in facts. The supernatural is inwoven and inwrought in the Gospel records so completely, so vitally, so organically, that to tear it out is to leave the Gospels in shreds, just as the radicals contend. The supernatural is at the heart of the early creeds about Jesus, showing that His action on his-

tory from the beginning made the impression of a supernatural Christ, and so throughout the history. Christ's action to-day in Christian experience and life can only be explained in terms of the supernatural. Of course, this implies theism or a personal God. It implies a self-revelation of God in Christ, a self-revelation which is beyond man's unaided power of discovery. Human personality and the action of the human will on nature supplies the clew to the understanding of the supernatural. Will is not physical law. Will guides, modifies, directs, disturbs, readjusts, and in other ways utilizes the laws of nature, although of course it does not "violate" or destroy them. Human personality teaches this. The divine personality has spoken and acted in history. Now the "liberal" and "radical" world-view begins below personality in the sphere of physical law for the criterion of reality. It wants chiefly to save the cosmos, not man. Hence, it makes the physical order the measure and sum of the real.

The result is a feeble grasp of the conception of religion itself. Case quotes Bauer to the effect that man must conquer truth by inherent intellectual power. There is no revelation. There is only discovery. Man's destiny must be wholly "achieved," so far as his knowledge of the nature of reality is concerned. This is equivalent to saying religion is a soliloquy, not a dialogue. Man speaks, but God never speaks. Man has capacity to communicate his thoughts. God has no such capacity. If Professor Case is really theistic, we suppose he would urge here some principle of the divine immanence, God speaking through the natural reason of Man. But if so, God never succeeds in really saying anything. For it is the supreme lesson of the history of thought that the result of man's unaided search for God leaves an unstable content of thought. Professor Case says the "liberal" view of Jesus is that he shared that full "inspiration of the spirit which is available for every noble, normal,

spiritually-minded individual." But what shall we say of the ignoble, abnormal, unspiritually-minded individual? This is the final test of a religion: What can it do with a bad man? The Jesus of "liberal" and "radical" alike has no point of contact with the vicious and the incorrigible. The failure to appreciate the fact of sin and the task of redeeming sinners is a cardinal defect of the type of theology we are reviewing. Its adherents talk about religion and its task in a naive manner which is astonishing. Billy Sunday is far more learned in the realm of concrete human reality, in the practical knowledge of the human heart and the redeeming forces.

Most fundamental and significant is the "liberal" view of Jesus as presented by Professor Case. That view is already foreshadowed in clear outline in what has been said. A natural, not a supernatural Jesus, a good man, not a divine redeemer; an inspiring example, not a Saviour from sin. Questions of preëxistence, of the relation of Jesus to the Father in His essential nature, all questions of His divinity in any unique sense, are waived as having no pertinency. The religion of Jesus, not His person, is the chief consideration. All the supernatural elements are eliminated. All idea of a unique revelation of God in Christ is out of the question. Man can only achieve for himself knowledge of any kind. Religion is no exception. Jesus in His fellowship with God (whatever this may be) may prove a "valuable aid" in man's religious life. But after all there is a sense in which Jesus might disappear entirely as a historic figure without serious loss to the race.

It is entirely clear that the deity of Jesus has no place in Case's thinking. Indeed, he says, as we have seen ("Historicity," p. 28), that the "liberal" view is opposed by those who hold the older Christology and also by the "new positivists" in theology, by which he must mean the Ritschlians, who admit the divine function of Christ, but refuse to dogmatize about His divine nature.

Now, as to the deity of Jesus, of course there is room for differences in the formulæ by which men attempt to express it. The New Testament has little or no ontological teaching about Jesus in His relations to God. That is, it does not give us definitions of essence and philosophical distinctions as to relations in the Trinity. But it gives us a Christ who comes to us from the divine side. In Jesus we have an incarnation of God, a redemption from sin. He is God, manifest in the flesh. Case's view is absolutely incompatible with such a conception of Christ. Christ sinks to the level of a good man and kind teacher who found out for himself what he could about God and told us what his impressions were. His consciousness was just one of the many reactions upon the unseen world. All the leading teachers of religious ideas belong in the same class with him. It is obvious, therefore, that the Jesus of these two volumes leaves the old unstable equilibrium of thought about God which preceded Christ's coming, and which still exists where Christ is not confessed as Saviour and Lord. God has never spoken to men in any final or even clearly articulate way. Religion remains a half circle. It never has been and never can be completed. Reciprocal communications between God and man is impossible. Man may be "an infant crying in the night" forever; his cry may vary in its form from age to age, but his cry is never answered by any clear word from God.

The view in these volumes radically alters the Christian program. Ethical culture is about all that is left, and that on the natural plane. A doctrine of sin and redemption, coupled with an evangelistic propaganda, is incongruous with the view here considered.

The fundamental criticism of these two volumes is two-fold. First, the author refuses to let the documents of the New Testament speak for themselves. Second, he prejudices the whole case in his own favor by an arbitrarily selected world-view. The result is an *a priori*

method of approach which reaches a preconceived result. The books are seriously deficient in the objective scientific attitude of mind. Historical criticism has for a generation or two past been held up as the guide in Biblical studies. But criticism leaves the supernatural Jesus intact. Now, there is no pretence even of maintaining the historical critical attitude as the determining one by writers of this class. Theories of the universe drawn from the sphere of uniform physical law below the personal and religious level of human life are employed to explain all the phenomena, all the objective facts, all the concrete realities of New Testament teaching, of Christian history, and of Christian experience, which refuse to yield themselves to such explanation. Of course, if a writer sets out with the theory that the universe can only be constituted in a particular way, and that the Gospels could have arisen only in a particular way, we may expect ingenuity and plausibility in the methods employed to set aside those elements in the data which clash with the theory. But the process is not scientifically impressive, and, we are bound to add, not religiously edifying.

For our own part, we believe that Eucken has expressed the only self-consistent, logical attitude of mind for those who refuse the evangelical explanation of Jesus. Religion ought to be wholly emancipated from Jesus as an authority and left free to work itself out independently, or else we should accept Christ as the authoritative revelation of God to man. Eucken chooses the first alternative and eliminates Christ altogether. Professor Case at times seems to go nearly as far as Eucken in the place he assigns Jesus, although holding to his historicity.

This article has been prepared chiefly as a means of making clear the issue which now confronts evangelical Christianity. It needs to be made clear if we are to credit the signs and symptoms of confusion and bewilderment in some quarters.

Here are the two contrasted views of religion. One view says God is personal and purposive and redemptive. He has entered history and definitely revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. He has given us abiding and eternal truths. He is establishing a Kingdom and is moving towards a goal. The other view is that God is not personal or purposive or redemptive. He has not entered history and definitely revealed Himself in Christ. He has not given us abiding and eternal truths. All we have is "values" in religion. These are not static, but vary with each age. All religious "values" are equally good and valid for the people and the age. There is no definite purpose or goal, but only movement and change. In the latter view everything which has distinctive meaning for religion as such vanishes completely